

History 514: European Cultural History Since 1870

Fall 2005, 1651 Humanities, MW 2:30-3:45

Instructor: Dr. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu; 265-2578)

Office hours: MW 1-2:15 & by appt.

Teaching Assistant: Jared Buss

An erudite scholar once said that the twentieth century began with the death of God and ended with the death of Man. To discuss the meaning and validity of that statement is the goal of this course, an advanced undergraduate survey of European cultural and intellectual history since 1870. We pursue a number of themes, including the changing nature of selfhood, in its reflexive, bodily, and social dimensions; the changing meaning and role of theology and religion; relationships between “elite” and “popular” culture; the transformation of political ideologies; and social thought on gender, class, nation, and power.

Writing is a central part of the course. Writing assignments consist of responses to pre-circulated questions based on readings, lectures, and discussion; they include **four essays** of no less than four double-spaced pages and **a take-home final** of no less than eight double-spaced pages. Due dates appear in the course schedule. Papers submitted after the due date will lose two points for each day they are tardy. Rewrites are possible only for papers submitted on time, and in consultation with the instructor or teaching assistant; they are due one week after the essay has been returned in class. Rewrites do not guarantee a higher grade.

It is impossible to grasp the complexity of modern European cultural history without attending lectures and discussion sections. Attendance at discussion sections is required. Students lose one point for each unexcused absence in discussion. Students should have completed required reading for their weekly discussion meeting. Grading is as follows: 15 points for each of the four essays (60 points total); 15 points for discussion and participation; 25 points for the take-home final. On the basis of 100 total points, grades are determined as follows: A= 100-93; AB=92-88; B=87-83; BC=82-78; C=77-70; D=69-60.

Required Reading

Books are available for purchase at the Underground Textbook Exchange on State Street. The course packet is available at the Humanities Copy Center, 1st floor of the Humanities Building. The books as well as a copy of the reader are on reserve at Helen C. White. Readings from the course packet are identified with an asterisk in the list below.

Roland N. Stromberg, *European Intellectual History since 1789* (Prentice-Hall) 6th ed.

*Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge University Press, 2002 [1886]), 3-4, 34-57.

*Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism* (Charles Scribner’s, 1958 [1905]), 155-83.

*Filippo Marinetti, “Manifestos [1909-19], “ in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. R. W. Flint (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1971), 39-79.

- *Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel* (Howard Fertig, 1996 [1920]), 92-120.
- *Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford University Press, 1993 [1918/1928]), 27-54.
- *Bertrand Russell, "Why I Am Not a Christian [1927]," in *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion*, ed. Al Seckel (Prometheus, 1986), 57-71.
- José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Norton, 1957 [1930])
- *Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament" [1927]" in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. Thomas Y. Levin (Harvard University Press, 1995), 74-86.
- *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, rev. ed., ed. Eberhard Bethge (Touchstone, 1997 [1953]), 271-366.
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Touchstone, 1996 [1958])
- George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (Signet, 1946 [1945])
- Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (Vintage, 1991 [1955]), 1-138.
- *Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Vintage, 1989 [1952]), 139-98.
- Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Hill and Wang, 1972 [1957])

Course Schedule and Lecture Topics

Part One: European Culture and Society, 1870-1914

- 9/7 Introduction
Reading: skim Stromberg, 77-131
- 9/12 Nineteenth-Century Contexts
- 9/14 "Suppose that Truth is a Woman": Nietzsche Beyond Good and Evil
Reading: Stromberg, 132-58; Nietzsche, 3-4, 34-57
- 9/19 Sigmund Freud, Vienna, and the Crisis of the Rational Self
- 9/21 "Eat well or sleep well": Max Weber and the Spirit of Capitalism
Reading: Stromberg, 159-87; Weber, 155-83
- 9/26 Dionysian Self?: Popular Culture Before World War I
- 9/28 Why Filippo Marinetti Loved War and Technology, and Hated (?) Women
Reading: Marinetti, 39-79
Essay #1 due

Part Two: The Thirty Years' War, 1914-45

- 10/3 Did a "New Man" Emerge from the Trenches?: Ernst Jünger's *Storm of Steel*
- 10/5 The Totalitarian Self: Lenin and Mussolini
Reading: Stromberg, 188-221; Jünger, 92-120
- 10/10 A Wholly Other God: Karl Barth's Theology of Crisis
- 10/12 "Why I am not a Christian": Bertrand Russell and Religion in the 1920s
Reading: Barth, 27-54; Russell, 57-71
- 10/17 Käthe Kollwitz and the Culture of Mourning
- 10/19 Why did Jose Ortega y Gasset Hate Mass Culture?

Reading: Ortega y Gasset, chs. 1-2, 5-6, 8, 10-11, 13-15

Essay #2 due

10/24 Josephine Baker, the Banana Dance, and Sexuality

10/26 Taking Mass Culture Seriously: Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin

Reading: Stromberg, 222-48; Kracauer, 74-86

10/31 Adolf Hitler's Political Religion

11/2 A Spoke in the Wheel: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Resistance

Reading: Bonhoeffer, 271-366

11/7 Victor Klemperer and the "Jewish Question"

11/9 Primo Levi and the Culture of Survival

Reading: Levi

Essay #3 due

Part Three: War and "Post"-War

11/14 C.S. Lewis and "Mere Christianity" in World War II

11/16 George Orwell's Animals

Reading: Stromberg, 249-75; Orwell

11/21 Existentialism and Jean Paul Sartre

11/23 Is Life Worth Living?: Albert Camus

Reading: Camus, 3-138

11/28 "One is Not Born, But Becomes, a Woman": Simone de Beauvoir

11/30 Lennon, Lenin, and the Triumph of Hedonism in the 1960s

Reading: Stromberg, 276-305; De Beauvoir, 139-98

Essay #4 due

12/5 Roland Barthes, Big-Time Wrestling, and the Death of the Author

12/7 Michel Foucault's Imprisoned Self

Reading: Stromberg, 306-40; Barthes, 11-12, 15-28, 36-42, 50-55, 58-64, 68-77, 84-93, 97-102

12/12 Did Jacques Derrida Have a Theology?

12/14 Conclusions and Review

12/16 **Takehome final exam due in 4101 Humanities by noon**