A study of the history of opinion is a necessary preliminary to the emancipation of the mind.

- John Maynard Keynes

This course is an introduction to the main currents of European thought in the twentieth century—a century historian Eric Hobsbawm has rightly termed the "Age of Extremes."

Focusing on shifting and competing conceptions of selfhood and society, it will place modern European culture and the intellectuals who forged it within the context of the ordeals of two world wars; a host of revolutions (scientific, sexual, Bolshevik, fascist, and "velvet"); the Holocaust and Cold War; the collapse of European colonialism; and the expansion of American empire. We will center on French and German thought, but other regions of the modern European mind—British, Italian, Polish, Czech, émigré American—will also weigh in.

**BOOKS**


Henri Bergson, *Introduction to Metaphysics*

Albert Camus, *The Stranger*

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*

Peter Gay, ed., *The Freud Reader*

Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*
Micchiro Kaku, *Einstein's Cosmos*
John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*
Primo Levy, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*

Additional short readings on electronic reserve are marked with an asterisk (*). Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Truth: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger* is out of print, but used copies are readily available via the internet if you wish to purchase one.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Weekly Comments:** Each week, each student should come to one of the discussion sessions with a brief comment (no more than a page) on a significant issue that a passage in the reading assigned for that day has raised for him or her. These comments will be collected but not graded.

**On a Desert Island:** A brief (500 word) essay on the book that has had the greatest impact on your own thinking, indicating why it is that you believe it has had the influence on you that it has. This assignment will also be ungraded. Due 30 September. If you have taken an intellectual history course from me before and hence have already completed this assignment once, you need not do so again unless you wish.

**Paper:** One short (1500–2000 words) paper on Albert Camus's *The Stranger*. Begin reading the novel as soon as you can. This paper is due 9 December.

**Take-Home Examinations:** Two take-home hour essay examinations (due 16 October and 6 November), and a take-home final essay examination (due 16 December).
GRADING

Grading in the course will be weighted as follows: final examination (30%); each of the hour exams (15%); paper (20%); and discussion participation, including weekly comments (20%).

FILMS

I have indicated on the syllabus some films you might like to watch as the course moves along: Metropolis (1926); October (1927); Un Chien Andalou (1928); Grand Illusion (1937); Night and Fog (1955); Breathless (1960); Battle of Algiers (1965); Blow-up (1966); Aguirre: The Wrath of God (1972); Scenes from a Marriage (1974); Man of Marble (1977); Tin Drum (1979); and The Lives of Others (2006). You are not required to view these films, but they may enhance your experience of the course and you will have the opportunity to write about a film on the final examination if you wish. One documentary film, Derrida, is required viewing, and is available on reserve in the Art Library and on various DVD and streaming services.

CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

I will ordinarily lecture once a week. The other two classes each week will ordinarily be devoted primarily to a discussion of the assigned readings. Students are expected to attend and participate actively in these discussions, which are the core of the course. The faculty of the Department of History believes that attending class is essential to mastering the content of its courses, a belief sustained by years of monitoring the consequences of poor attendance. Students who miss class should inform me of the reason for their absence, in advance if possible.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.
SCHEDULE

The twentieth century is only the ever-renewed effort to understand it.

-Franco Venturi

31 August    Introduction to the Course
Reading: Peter Gordon, "What Is Intellectual History"*

FIN DE-SIÈCLE I

The world now laughs, rent are the drapes of fright/The wedding is at hand of dark and light.

-Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil

2 September    Thus Spoke Zarathustra

4 September    Reading: Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals.

7 September    Labor Day. No Class.

9 September    Reading: Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness.
Film: Aguirre: The Wrath of God.

CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Between the idea/And the reality/Between the motion/And the act/Falls the Shadow.

-T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"

11 September    Fragmented Selves/Iron Cages


Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"*
18 September  Reading: Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation"*
Max Weber, "Bureaucracy"*

Film: *Metropolis.*

MODERNITY AND MODERNISM

Drunk on gin the Paris nights/Blaze with electricity/The trolleys flashing greenish lights/Warble along the staves of tracks/The madness of machinery.

- Guillaume Appollinaire, "La chanson du mal-aimé"

21 September  All that Is Solid Melts into Air

On a Desert Island Essay Due.


25 September  Reading: Michio Kaku, *Einstein's Cosmos.*

28 September  Reading: Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"*

Film: *Un Chien Andalou.*

THE GREAT WAR

... But many there stood still/To face the stark, blank sky beyond the ridge,/Knowing their feet had come to the end of the world.

- Wilfred Owen, "Spring Offensive"

30 September  Guns of August

2 October  Reading: John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace,* ix-xxxvii, 3-55, 226-298.

Film: *Grand Illusion.*

5 October. No Class. Fall Break
Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.

- Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

7 October Viennese Circles

9 October Reading: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.373-7*

12 October A Master Out of Germany

14 October
Reading: Martin Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?" in *Heidegger, Basic Writings*, 89-110.
Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language"*

16 October No Class. First Exam Essay Due.

BARRICADES AND BARBED WIRE

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world; the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned; the best lack all convictions, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.

- W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

19 October Neo-Marxism East and West

21 October Reading: V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (excerpt)*
V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (excerpt)*
Film: October.

23 October  Reading: Theodore Adorno, "Perennial Fashion--Jazz"
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility"

26 October  Blood and Steel

28 October  Reading: Benito Mussolini, "Fascism"
Carl Schmitt, "On the Contradiction between Parliamen
tarism and Democracy"
Carl Schmitt, "The Concept of the Political"
Ernst Jünger, "Total Mobilization"

30 October  Reading: Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University"
Martin Heidegger, "Political Texts, 1933-1934"

Film: Tin Drum.

DEATH CAMPS AND GULAGS

He looses his hounds on us grants us a grave in the air/he plays with his vipers and daydreams der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland.
-Paul Celan, "Deathfugue"

2 November  Reading: Primo Levy, Survival in Auschwitz.

Film: Night and Fog.

4 November  Reading:

Film: Man of Marble.

6 November  No Class. Second Exam Essay Due.
FRENCH LESSONS

Consumer society must die a violent death. Alienated society must die a violent death. We want a new and original world. We reject a world where security against starvation is bought for the risk of death by boredom.

—Graffiti on the walls of Paris, May 1968

9 November    Agents and Structures

11 November    Reading: Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism Is a Humanism, 17-72.
                Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" in Heidegger, Basic Writings, 213-265.
                Film: Breathless.

13 November    Reading: Claude Levi-Strauss, "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology"*
                Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth"*                    
                Gary Gutting, "The Structuralist Invasion"*               

16 November    The Spirit of '68

18 November    Reading: Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality.
                Garry Gutting, "Foucault"*

20 November    Reading:
                Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"*
                Derrida (film).
                Gary Gutting, "Derrida"*
                Film: Blow-Up.
DIFFERENCE

Before the Other, the I is infinitely responsible. The Other is the poor and destitute one, and nothing which concerns this Stranger can leave the I indifferent.

-Emmanuel Levinas, "Transcendence and Height"

23 November On the Margins

25 November No Class. Thanksgiving

30 November Reading: Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (excerpt)*
Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"*

Film: Scenes from a Marriage.

2 December Reading: Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (excerpt)*
Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness"*

Film: Battle of Algiers.

FIN DE-SIÈCLE II

When everything was fine/And the notion of sin had vanished/And the earth was ready/In universal peace/To consume and rejoice/Without creeds and utopias,/I, for unknown reasons,/Surrounded by the books/Of prophets and theologians,/Of philosophers, poets,/Searched for an answer,/Scowling, grimacing,/Waking up at night, muttering at dawn.

-Czeslaw Milosz, "A Poem for the End of the Century"

4 December The Spirit of '89

7 December Reading: Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"*
Raymond Aron, "The Future of Secular Religions"*

9 December The Autumn of Nations

The Stranger Paper Due.
11 December  Reading: Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless"*  
Jürgen Habermas, "1989 in the Shadow of 1945"*  

Film: The Lives of Others.

16 December  Final Examination Due.