

HONR 216: ENCOUNTERING CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

John Felice Rome Center
Spring 2026
Wednesdays 2:30-5:30
Dr. Anne Wingenter (she/her)
Email: awingen@luc.edu

Student Drop-in Hours: Wed, 12:00-2:00pm and by appointment. If you cannot make it to my regularly scheduled drop-in hours, email me to set up a different time that works for us both. You can expect a response to email within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 on weekends and holidays.

Course Description

This course will offer a selective survey of the history and culture of Europe from the turn of the 20th century through the present. We will engage with the history, literature, film and art of the period from the perspectives of multiple disciplines. Because the course is based in Rome, we will make use of the city as a primary source, incorporating a number of site visits into the class schedule. Students will also be encouraged to plan and consider their travel as a form of first-hand encounter with contemporary Europe and will have the option of building a semester project around their experiences.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- conduct a multi-disciplinary analysis of contemporary European culture.
- understand the complex relationships between events and ideas from various fields.
- ascertain the influence of intellectual and cultural trends on society.

Required Text / Materials

1. Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*. Mariner Books, 2000
2. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*. Touchstone, 1996 (complete by Week 9)
3. Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. Harper, 1999 (complete by week 11)
4. Additional readings provided via Sakai

Recommended: Felix Gilbert and David Clay Large, *The End of the European Era: 1890 to the Present*. W. W. Norton & Company; Sixth Edition, 2008 (On Reserve in the IC)

Assessment Components

- Participation 10 %
You are responsible for each week's readings and should come to class with specific questions and comments in mind. Our conversation will depend on the participation of all of the members of the class. I reserve the right to administer reading quizzes should it become apparent that students are not keeping up. Lectures in this class do not duplicate the readings; instead they are meant to provide the general narrative of European cultural and intellectual history and set the context for the primary sources we will encounter throughout the semester. As part of your participation grade, you will be required to introduce/lead class discussion at least once during the semester.
- Weekly Comments 10%:
By noon on Tuesday of each week, you must compose and post to the discussion board questions and/or comments based on the primary sources for the week. These should be approximately 150-250 words and should do the following:
 - 1. Identify a major theme or, if you can, multiple themes of the readings
 - 2. Express any thoughts or opinions on, or reactions to, the sources
 - 3. Speculate about what the source can tell us about the context of the period.
 - Questions for discussion are also welcome.

Note: Even if you are struggling to understand a given source, you can use the asynchronous discussion to help. Consider writing a post that tries to explain what is confusing or that attempts to work out what you would need to help you better understand.

Also Note: I am committed to creating a positive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and valued as a source of strength. I request that all students work with me to create a classroom culture based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. As a class we will approach all discussions (both online and in person) with respect and civility. Disagreements and debates in academic discourse are expected and welcome, but personal attacks are never OK, and will not be tolerated. I strive to ensure an open and welcoming classroom for all students. If I fall short of that goal, please do not hesitate to come and talk to me. We are all learning together.

- **Midterm Exam** 20%
The midterm exam will take place during week 7 of the semester. It will consist of a mix of map, short answer and essay questions
- Semester Project 40%
Part 1 (15%) Project proposal and working bibliography – In the first weeks of the semester, you should be thinking about what aspect of contemporary European history or culture you wish to explore and checking to see what information is available to you. During week 4 you will turn in a working proposal and bibliography. This should describe the subject you wish to explore, your approach to the subject, and the form your project will take. The working bibliography must contain at least ten sources (and your final paper must use at least 10 sources) with annotations beneath each explaining how it is relevant to the subject and how you will use it. Your project must also use at least one site as a source. This might be a monument, museum, business, institution, etc. Your bibliography may conform to any of the standard styles. (ie. Turabian, MLA, etc. – format guides available online) but must be consistent throughout.
Part 2 (25%) The project itself – By week 10, you will turn in/present your final work. This might be a standard research paper (approx. 10-12 pages), a PowerPoint presentation (approx. 20 minutes), a photographic essay, an audiovisual project, etc. The ultimate form is up to you (though it must be approved by me – see above). We will dedicate our class during week 10 (or earlier on a voluntary basis) to your presentations of your work.
- Final Exam 20%
This will include a variety of question types and will focus on material covered since the mid-term.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor's discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

Once-a-week classes:

- After 1 absence, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 3 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F)

Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Loyola University Chicago, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

Failing to meet the following academic integrity standards is a serious violation of personal honesty and the academic ideals that bind the University into a learning community. These standards apply to both individual and group assignments. Individuals working in a group may be held responsible if one of the group members has violated one or more of these standards.

1. Students may not plagiarize; the use of AI is considered plagiarism too and treated as such.
2. Students may not submit the same work for credit for more than one assignment (known as self-plagiarism).
3. Students may not fabricate data.
4. Students may not collude.
5. Students may not cheat.
6. Students may not facilitate academic misconduct.

Follow this link for more details about these standards, sanctions, and academic misconduct procedures:

https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Statement on Title IX

The Rome Center follows Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

How to succeed in this course

The material we will cover in this course is challenging, controversial and can be disturbing. We will engage with texts and artifacts of very dark periods in history and with ideas that are still being debated and shaping our contemporary world. I have found that students who are most successful in this course are those who attend class consistently, complete all assignments, thoughtfully review feedback, and take advantage of the academic support resources made available by the university. Students who grow their abilities the most also monitor their own progress against weekly learning objectives, make use of my office hours, and are quick to reach out when they find themselves struggling. If you are having a hard time with course material or keeping up with the pace of the class, please do not wait until the end of the term to seek guidance. I will be in a much better position to support your learning if you seek support as soon as you are experiencing difficulty.

Course Schedule

PART I: La Belle Époque

Reading: Eksteins xiii-xvi, 1-94

(Recommended: Gilbert and Large, Chapters 1 and 2)

Week One: (Jan 21) General overview and late 19th-century context

Reading: Steven E. Aschheim, "Max Nordau, Friedrich Nietzsche and Degeneration."

Week Two: (Jan 28) Irrationalism

Reading: Excerpts from Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, F.T. Marinetti, *The Futurist Manifesto*,

Week Three: (Feb 6 FRIDAY CLASS) Reading a city – on site

Reading: Excerpts from Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, and from Roman Presences

PART II: WWI and the Crisis of Modernity

Eksteins, 95-238

(Recommended: Gilbert and Large, Chapters 3 and 4)

Week Four: (Feb 11) The War begins

Reading: Dada Manifestos, Pre and post-WWI British War Poets,

Proposal/annotated bibliography due on Sakai

Week Five: (Feb 18) WWI and its Aftermath

Reading: Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, Georges Duhamel *Civilization* (excerpts)

PART III: The Rise of Authoritarian Regimes

Eksteins, 240-331

(Recommended: Gilbert and Large, Chapters 5-8)

Week Six: (Feb 25) Italian Fascism

Reading: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism"

Class on site at the Foro Italico – Meet in Piazza Lauro de Bosis

Week Seven: (Mar 4) Mid-term exam

Spring Break (Mar 6-14)

Week Eight: (Mar 18) Nazism

Reading: Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (excerpts)

Film: Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens*

Week Nine: (Mar 25) The Shoah

Film: *Night and Fog*

Reading: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

PART IV: Recovery and Reform

(Recommended: Gilbert and Large, Chapters 9-11, 15-17)

Week Ten: (Apr 1) Presentations

Final project due by midnight on Nov 17

Week Eleven: (Apr 8) Europe after WWII

Reading: Excerpts from Sartre "Existentialism is Humanism" and Milosz, *The Captive Mind* Sakai

Week Twelve: (Apr 15) Cold War Culture: Behind the Iron Curtain

Reading: Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*.

Week Thirteen: (Apr 22) Globalization and the changing face of Europe

Reading: TBD Sakai (Class on Site)

Final Exam: TBD