Hist 4390.001
TR 11:00-12:15    BH 207
Topics in History: The History of Modernity in the European World
Spring 2018

Course Description:
Despite its apparent common sense qualities, the idea of the modern and modernity is actually an historically recent phenomenon. This course will trace the birth of “the modern” in Europe from the Enlightenment through to the beginnings of post-modernity by focusing on the following thematic moments in both continental Europe and its imperial possessions: the birth of a self-conscious modernity, secularization and the nineteenth-century crises of faith, anti-modern politics and totalitarianism, existentialism, post-colonialism, and post-modernism. Throughout, we will consider the relationships between politics, aesthetics, violence, sexuality, and notions of progress.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Successful students will
- read and analyze original sources (documents from the past)
- learn to develop historical interpretations (in class & in writing)
- discuss the various ways and contexts in which the idea of modernity has been framed
- write critically and historically in a range of assignments

Course Materials:
The following are the required textbooks. Students may rent the texts, buy them, or find them at a local library. Professor Johnson will work to get copies placed on reserve at Bell Library as well. The editions listed below are preferred. If you access older editions make sure that you’re on the same page as the reading schedule (literally). If you choose to share texts with a classmate, make sure each student has equal access to the materials. Students not sure about their ability to access the required texts should see Professor Johnson about strategies for moving forward successfully.


In addition, there are a number of documents placed online on the course’s Blackboard page. These are also required readings. Students should also come to class with a writing utensil and paper for note taking every class period. The professor will not provide these.

**Assignments and Grading:**

There are three main components to your overall, final grade.

1. Participation: 20%
2. Essays: 30% (2 total: #1 - 10%, #2 - 20%)
3. Reading Responses: 50% (10 total, 5% each)

Participation: Regular and thoughtful contributions to classroom discussion (when appropriate), attentiveness, active note taking, arriving on time, and minimizing distractions (for yourself and others) all constitute your participation. While attendance is a minimum, note that simply attending class does not count as participation. If students are unsure how to best participate in the class, they should meet with the Professor to discuss successful strategies.

*In-Class Group and Individual Writing Assignments:* Short group and writing assignments will be administered in class throughout the semester. When collected, these assignments will be factored into the class participation grade. Missed assignments cannot be made up.

*Quizzes:* The Instructor reserves the right to administer pop quizzes on the day’s assigned reading. If missed, these quizzes cannot be made up. Quiz scores will be factored into the overall class participation grade.

*Attendance:* Regular attendance is required for this course. Students may miss one class period without any excuse provided or documentation. Each subsequent absence will negatively affect the student’s participation grade. Excessive absences may result in a failing participation grade.

*Essays:* Essays will be completed outside of class using in-class readings, lectures, and class discussions. No outside research will be permitted. Evidence of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failure. Essay expectations and standards will be covered in class. Students should consult Professor Johnson with any questions or concerns regarding these standards.
Extensions: Extensions on essays will only be considered 2 or more days in advance of the essay deadline, excepting emergency situations. The granting of an extension is at the sole discretion of Professor Johnson.

Deadlines: Late essays will be marked down by one full letter grade for every day late. Essays not turned in after five days beyond the deadline will not be considered for a grade.

Reading Responses: Reading responses are due on Blackboard before the start of the assigned class. Responses must be a minimum of one double-spaced page in Times New Roman 12pt font, and each response must critically engage with one or more of the assigned readings. This means merely summarizing the main points of the readings is not sufficient. Responses should pose critical questions, offer analyses of the text, and/or offer thoughtful criticism. For this course, students may easily default to reflecting on what a given text has to say about modernity.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.
If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. *Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.* Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 6th, 2018 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Use of Electronic Materials:**
In general, the use of printed material is preferred, as well as the use of tablets without keyboards. Other electronic devices will be permitted as long as they do not adversely affect the classroom atmosphere. If the use of electronic devices becomes a problem, the professor reserves the right to ask the student to leave the classroom.

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**Class and Reading Schedule**
Nb: All readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available as pdfs on the course Blackboard page. All readings listed below are required unless otherwise noted.

Jan 16: Syllabus, Introduction to Key Themes and Time Periods

Unit One: The Birth of self-conscious modernity

Jan 18: The New, Better than the Old
Peter Gay, “Ancients and Moderns,” The Enlightenment, Vol I*
Voltaire, “Ancients and Moderns,” Philosophical Dictionary*

Jan 23: Revolution in time(s)
Reinhart Koselleck, “Historical Criteria of the Modern Concept of Revolution,” in Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*

Jan 25: Historical Progress and Development
Eric Hobsbawm’s introduction to the assigned edition of The Communist Manifesto

Jan 30: Historical Progress and Development, ctd.
Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto
    Reading Response 1 Due

Feb 1: Modern Painting
T.J. Clark, “The Environs of Paris”*

Feb 6: Bohemian Modernism
Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life”*
    Reading Response 2 Due

Unit Two: Crises of Faith and Reason – Secularization and Psychoanalysis

Feb 8: Biological Challenges to Religious Narratives
Darwin, selections from On the Origins of Species*

Feb 13: Sociological Challenges to Religious Narratives
Durkheim, “Introduction,” Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

Feb 15: Psychoanalysis and Civilization
Freud, Section 1, Civilization and Its Discontents
Feb 20: Psychoanalysis and Civilization, ctd.
Freud, finish Civilization and Its Discontents
Reading Response 3 Due

Unit Three: Twentieth-Century Art and aesthetics

Feb 22: The fin-de-siècle and imperial modernity
Carl Schorske, “Mahler and Klimt: Social Experience and Artistic Evolution,” Daedalus
111, no 3 (Summer 1982): 29-50*

Feb 27: Modernism and Empire
Modernism, Part I” West 86th 18, no 2 (Fall-Winter 2011): 139-181.

Mar 1: Modern Forms
Walter Benjamin, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”*
Reading Response 4 Due

Mar 6: Modern Forms: breaking boundaries
Arnold Schönberg, “Composition with Twelve Tones”*

Essay 1 Due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm, March 5
Specific Instructions and Prompts to be Handed out in class by February 20

Unit Four: Totalitarianism and (anti-)Modern Politics

Mar 8: Fascism and Nazism’s Alternate Modernities
Mussolini and Gentile, excerpts from Fascism (1933)*; selections from Schmitt, The
Concept of the Political*
Reading Response 5 Due

Mar 20: Fascist Modernism, ctd.
Ruth Ben-Ghiat, “Introduction,” Fascist Modernities*

Mar 22: The Frankfurt School
Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Concept of Enlightenment,” Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Mar 27: Frankfurt School, ctd.
Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Culture Industry,” Dialectic of Enlightenment*
  Reading Response 6 Due

Unit Five: Existentialism and Modern Identity

Mar 29: Existentialist Responsibility 1
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The War Has Taken Place”*

April 3: Existentialist Responsibility 2
Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”*
  Reading Response 7 Due

April 5: Existentialism and Identity
Sandrine Sanos, “Being a Woman: The Making of a Feminist Philosophy,” Simone de Beauvoir*

April 10: Existentialism and Identity 2
Simone de Beauvoir, excerpts from The Second Sex*
  Reading Response 8 Due

Unit Six: Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism

April 12: Challenging the West’s Privileged Position
Begin Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism

April 17: Challenging the West, ctd.
Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism
  Reading Response 9 Due

April 19: Deconstruction
Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”

April 24: Deconstruction, ctd.

April 26: Postmodernity
François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, “Introduction,” Chapter 1
  Reading Response 10 Due
May 1: Postmodernity, ctd.
Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Chapters 4, and 5

**Final Essays Due on Blackboard by 11:59pm, May 8**