

History 361: Modern European Thought and Society
Spring Semester, 2020

307 Gregory Hall
MWF 12:00–12:50 p.m.

Ryan Allen
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300B Gregory Hall
MW 1:00–1:50 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course surveys European social thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It examines critical moments when major intellectual figures turned their attention to the age's most urgent social problems. The social realities they confronted included capitalistic alienation, nationalistic fervor, bureaucratic control, sexual repression, anti-Semitism, gender inequality, racism, and humanity's growing domination of nature. Course readings are quintessential expressions of modern social thought whose influence is still palpable and whose ideas are still relevant. We will assess works written by Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Freud, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Fanon, and Lefebvre. All of the assigned reading is primary. Lectures will provide the social and political context of these figures, as well as interpretations of the texts. Throughout the semester, we will use imaginative literature, film, and the arts to better understand the climate that shaped European thought and society in the modern age.

The first objective of this upper division history course is to understand a specific piece of the past: how European intellectuals confronted the most pressing social problems of the modern era. The second objective is to demonstrate the value of adventurous books, big ideas, and the historical humanities. "Modern European Thought and Society" achieves these objectives by discussing assigned readings and critically examining textual sources. The aim is to sharpen students' oral expression and written analysis. In three papers, students will identify a work's major arguments, evidence, and assumptions as well as make connections between readings by comparing across genres. To this end, students will also prepare a short presentation and class discussion that examines a piece of imaginative literature in the light of our course readings.

Assigned Readings

Five books are required for the course. They are available for purchase at the Illini Union Bookstore. All other readings are available through the course's Compass website, which can be found at: <https://compass2g.illinois.edu>

Robert Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1978)
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Dover, 2003)
Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2010)
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (Schocken, 1995)
Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity* (Verso, 2011)

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Participation: 20% of course grade

Attendance is required. For each class meeting, complete the assigned readings before class and bring a copy of the reading and any notes you have made to class. You are expected to participate in class discussions throughout the semester.

Two Short Papers: 40% of course grade (20% each)

For the first paper, you will examine Marx's concept of alienation in capitalist society or Nietzsche's critique of European nationalism. This paper is due in class on Friday, March 13. In the second paper, you will analyze Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* or Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. The second paper is due in class on Monday, April 20. These papers should be between five to seven double-spaced pages. Detailed instructions will be distributed before the papers' due dates. These papers are designed to evaluate the quality of your engagement with the course readings and class lectures. Your success in this course is important to me, and I encourage you to speak with me about paper ideas, outlines, and drafts.

Presentation: 20% of course grade

You will prepare one in-class presentation that examines a piece of imaginative literature in the light of our course readings. This short presentation and class discussion should introduce the author's life and times, offer a close reading of the work, and make connections to other course readings. I will provide more detailed instructions in class on Friday, January 31.

Final Paper: 20% of course grade

You will write a final paper comparing existentialism's ethics of responsibility with Lefebvre's project for a new romanticism. Detailed instructions will be distributed before the paper's due date. I encourage you to speak with me about paper ideas, outlines, and drafts. The paper should be between six to eight double-spaced pages and is due no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, May 15.

Academic Integrity

As with all your courses at the University of Illinois, you are required to adhere to the University's policy on academic integrity. This policy is described in detail at: <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/>

Accommodation and Disabilities

The University of Illinois provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. The Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES), located at 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820, coordinates all documentation and accommodation of disabilities. The DRES telephone number is (217) 333-4603 and their website can be found at: <http://disability.illinois.edu>

Course Schedule

This course schedule may change. Students will be notified of any changes in class.
NB. Readings marked with an * are available on our course Compass website.

Introducing Social Thought

W January 22	Syllabus
F January 24	* Stendhal, "Prefaces," <i>Love</i> , 25–37
M January 27	* Stendhal, "Concerning the Education of Women," <i>Love</i> , 181–95
W January 29	* Émile Zola, "The Experimental Novel," 164–77
F January 31	* Émile Zola, "J'accuse," 43–53 Instructions for Presentations

Part One: Capitalist Society and Marx's Concept of Alienation

M February 3	Friedrich Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx," 681–2 * Karl Marx, "The Historic Significance of the Commune," <i>The Paris Commune, 1871</i> , 90–105
W February 5	Karl Marx, "Introduction," <i>Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right</i> , 53–65 Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 143–5
F February 7	Karl Marx, "Alienated Labor," <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844</i> , 66–81 Karl Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes," <i>The Holy Family</i> , 133–5
M February 10	* Honoré de Balzac, "The Unknown Masterpiece," 39–65 Presentation
W February 12	Karl Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i> , 146–200 Karl Marx, "Speech at the Anniversary of the <i>People's Paper</i> ," 577–8
F February 14	Karl Marx, <i>Wage Labour and Capital</i> , 203–17 Karl Marx, "Commodities and Money," <i>Capital, Volume One</i> , 302–29

Part Two: Overcoming Nationalist Fervor: Nietzsche's "Good Europeans"

- M February 17 * Friedrich Nietzsche, "Preface," *Ecce Homo*, 217–20 (§ 1–4)
* Friedrich Nietzsche, "Why I Am So Clever," *Ecce Homo*, 236–58 (§ 1–10)
* Friedrich Nietzsche, "The European Man and the Abolition of Nations," *Human, All Too Human*, 61–3 (§ 475)
- W February 19 * Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 287–90, 304–13, 338–41 (§ 347, 356–8, 377–8)
- F February 21 * Friedrich Nietzsche, "Preface," *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1–3
* Friedrich Nietzsche, "Peoples and Fatherlands," *Beyond Good and Evil*, 173–85 (§ 240–9)
- M February 24 * Hermann Hesse, "Zarathustra's Return," 86–117
* Hermann Hesse, "Letter to a Young German," 118–22
* Hermann Hesse, "Nobel Prize Banquet Speech"
Presentation
- W February 26 * Friedrich Nietzsche, "Peoples and Fatherlands," *Beyond Good and Evil*, 185–98 (§ 250–56)
- F February 28 * Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the New Idol," *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 160–3
* Friedrich Nietzsche, "Foreword," *Twilight of the Idols*, 31–2
* Friedrich Nietzsche, "What the Germans Lack," *Twilight of the Idols*, 71–7 (§ 1–7)
Instructions for First Paper

Part Three: How Ascetic Rationalism Remade the World: Weber on Bureaucracy and Capitalism

- M March 2 * Marianne Weber, "The New Phase," *Max Weber*, 265–304
- W March 4 Max Weber, "Introduction," *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 13–31
- F March 6 * Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," *From Max Weber*, 196–244
- M March 9 * Franz Kafka, "In the Penal Colony," 191–227
Presentation
- W March 11 Max Weber, "The Problem," *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 35–78

F March 13 Max Weber, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism," *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 155–83
First Paper Due

March 16–20 **No Class Meeting:** Spring Break

Part Four: Freud on Guilt, Sexual Repression, and the Travails of Contemporary Civilization

M March 23 * Sigmund Freud, "An Autobiographical Study," 3–41

W March 25 * Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," 179–200

F March 27 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 23–56

M March 30 * D. H. Lawrence, "England, My England," 3–47
Presentation

W April 1 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 57–101

F April 3 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 103–149
Instructions for Second Paper

Part Five: Anti-Semitism and Sartre's Account of "Bad Faith"

M April 6 * Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, 235–55

W April 8 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 7–58

F April 10 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 59–153

M April 13 * Gregor von Rezzori, "Troth," *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*, 190–242
Presentation

W April 15 * Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction," *The Second Sex*, 3–17
* Simone de Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love," *The Second Sex*, 683–708

F April 17 * Frantz Fanon, "Introduction," *Black Skin, White Masks*, xi–xviii
* Frantz Fanon, "The So-Called Dependency Complex of the Colonized," *Black Skin, White Masks*, 64–88

Part Six: Toward a New Romanticism? Lefebvre's Response to Postwar Modernity

- M April 20 Henri Lefebvre, "Introduction," *Introduction to Modernity*, 1–6
* Henri Lefebvre, "Toward a Leftist Cultural Politics," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 75–88
Second Paper Due
- W April 22 Henri Lefebvre, "What is Modernity?" *Introduction to Modernity*, 168–238
- F April 24 Henri Lefebvre, "Towards a New Romanticism?" *Introduction to Modernity*, 348–88
* (optional) Ryan Allen, "Resurrecting the Archaic," *Modern Intellectual History* (2019), 1–23
- M April 27 * Charlotte Delbo, "February," *The Massachusetts Review* (2019), 17–27
* Charlotte Delbo, "The Measure of Our Days," *Auschwitz and After*, 254–88
Presentation
- W April 29 Henri Lefebvre, "Nature and Nature Conquered," *Introduction to Modernity*, 132–56
- F May 1 Henri Lefebvre, "Notes on the New Town," *Introduction to Modernity*, 116–26
Henri Lefebvre, "Renewal, Youth, Repetition," *Introduction to Modernity*, 157–67
Instructions for Final Paper
- M May 4 Course Wrap-up
- W May 6 **No Class Meeting:** You might use this time to draft your final paper.
- F May 15 **Final Paper Due:** Your final paper is due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 15. Please e-mail your paper to me as an attached Microsoft Word document at rallen11@illinois.edu