

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES**

**WORLD CULTURES
THROUGH LITERATURE AND THE ARTS:
WCL 2351: Representations of Conflict
And Violence in Modernity
LEC 21030**

Fall 2009

Tuesday-Thursday 1:00PM - 2:30PM – Room AH 204

**Taught and Coordinated by
Professor Marc Zimmerman (MCL/WCL)**

**Office Hours: T-TH, 11:00-12:30 p.m. and by appointment– 611 AH
Tel.: (713) 743-3044- <mzimmerman@uh.edu>**

Compilers of Section Files and Topics:

Professor	Area
Hosam Aboul-Ela (English):	Middle East
Hildegard Glass (MCL, German):	World War I and Holocaust
Maria Elena Soliño (Hispanic Studies):	Goya and Picasso in Spain
X. Sharon Wen (MCL, Chinese):	Sino-Japanese War
Marc Zimmerman (WCL):	Mexico/ Picasso extra

Course Description

This course seeks to orient students to world cultural processes through a study of works of literature and visual arts in relation to selected historical and thematic emphases. This current choice of topics will focus on the question of conflict and/or war as emerging in given historical moments (Modernity) and conjunctures in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and Middle East.

A major dimension of the course has been its use of technology to enhance the classroom experience and allow for more focused and effective classroom interactions. To this end, many of the materials will be available on WebCT, where students will also find prepared video clips, digitalized slides, power point presentations, etc. Other materials, such as the films that will be shown during the course, will be available in MCL's Language Acquisition Center, AH 311. The combination of technology-based inputs and the course data-bank will enrich classroom sessions and provide the basis for discussion.

In the past, the professors who compiled these materials have actually presented them in class. However, this year, the course was opened and developed too late to coordinate with the schedules of the professors. So, while they will be invited, there is no guarantee that they will appear. Therefore students will themselves work with the professor in charge to present materials by giving short presentations and contributing to general discussion.

Grading and Policies

****Please note:** Course policies are subject to change. Any changes will be posted on our Webct site and announced in class. Students are responsible for staying up to speed on any changes.**

Films and Readings

You are responsible for viewing films and reading course materials outside of class. In class, we may only be able to examine

Quizzes

Pop quizzes may be given regularly over the materials that you have been asked to prepare for class. If you watch our films and do the readings attentively and on time, these will be extremely easy for you. If not, your course grade will suffer. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Papers

Paper topics will be distributed in class and posted on our Webct site two weeks prior to their due dates. Papers must be submitted on time to receive full credit. Late papers will be lowered one letter grade for each day they are submitted past the due date (i.e. a “B+” paper submitted one day after the due date will be lowered to a “B”).

Please see the last page of this syllabus for a detailed guide to how paper grades are determined in this course. Papers are graded primarily on the basis of content and how clearly you communicate your ideas, but proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, etc., are also needed to earn a good grade. If you have problems with these aspects of your writing, you may wish to make use of the University’s Writing Center. Your final paper will indicate your level of preparedness for writing more advanced critical work in film studies, in the World Literatures and Cultures Program, and in any upper-level humanities course.

A Word on the Papers

Students will receive three 3-page paper assignments and a final essay exam or final paper assignment. They only need to do 2 of the 3 3-page assignments, although they may do the third for special extra credit (see below).

Papers must be submitted on time to receive full credit. Late papers will be lowered one letter grade for each day they are submitted past the due date unless I have granted you an extension (i.e. a “B+” paper submitted one day after the due date will be lowered to a “B”). Your final assignment will indicate your level of preparedness for more advanced work in world cultural studies.

All papers written for this class will be submitted by the due date through Webct’s Turnitin, to prevent acts of advertent and inadvertent plagiarism (see below).

MCL's Urban Research Initiative and this course.

MCL and WCL therein are developing an Urban Research Initiative, a project aimed at focusing on urban questions in Houston and the world. As part of the project, WCL 2351 will develop urban emphases in relation to our theme of the representation of war and conflict during the final weeks of this semester. Most important for you and your grades will be this semester's URI assignment as described below.

In groups, students will develop projects of research and analysis based on a literary text in relation to a film from the list below; they will present their projects to the class; and will submit a short written analysis focused on the representation of urban space, issues and conflicts in the chosen works—how the works present the connections characters establish with each other and with their environments, as well as the connections readers/ viewers establish with those same characters and environments. Each group must conduct research for the project and submit a bibliography of the sources they consult with their written analysis. Students will have distinct, clearcut roles in the collective project, and will write individual papers and receive individual as well as group grades for their work. Although the exact nature of the project will vary according to the works, themes and issues chosen, all of these projects will consist of the following three parts:

1. Research

Each student will conduct research into each textwriter's or director's country or area of origin, into the text's historical importance, and/or into the city in which the text and film are set. A short bibliography of all materials consulted will be submitted with the student's written analysis.

2. in-class Presentations

Each student will analyze how the text and film's urban setting(s) shapes story, characters, the experience of the viewer/reader, or a specific theme or issue that is relevant to the overall course. Students will incorporate any important or relevant findings from their research into these presentations, and receive feedback from their peers.

3. Written Analysis

All students will submit a short written analysis based on their presentation. The best of these will be posted on the MCL website.

List of Possible Text/film Pairs (Choose 1 or propose one yourself)

The Trial (Kafka, Orson Welles—also play by Andre Gide)
Slaughter-House Five
Memories of Underdevelopment
Great Expectations
Blindness
Bartleby
The Overcoat

The Kite Runner
The Third Man (see also: *Incompetance*)
The Plague
Hiroshima Mon Amour (Duras' screenplay and Renais' film)
An Ordinary Man/Hotel Rwanda
Slumdog Millionaire
1984

Grading: Participation and possible quizzes 20%; Two essays 15% each=30%; Urban Research Project, 25%; final exam assignment 25%.

Grading Scale

93-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	0-59	F

WCL 2351 EXTRA CREDIT:

Extra credit work can be extremely valuable especially for students encountering or anticipating difficulties with their work, but also for students seeking a richer course experience. It is especially recommended for students who receive lower grades on a given assignment.

25% SPECIAL EXTRA CREDIT. If a student does below a C on one of the two papers assigned s/he may opt to write on the third assignment. Remember, however, that only work of B or above will count.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is an act of intellectual dishonesty that consists of passing off another's words as one's own. Sanctions for infractions of plagiarism are serious, and may result in failing a course and being placed on academic probation. You may, of course, consult other sources for your papers in this course. However, you must cite those sources in a bibliography. If you use another person's words or thoughts in whole or in part in your papers, be sure that your work clearly acknowledges your sources.

We understand that many students are still not aware that by not correctly citing the sources of their references, they are, in effect, plagiarizing from those sources. For this reason, we include the following statement from the MLA Style Manual:

Derived from the Latin *plagiarius* ('kidnapper' and also 'plagiarist' in the modern sense) plagiarism is defined by Alexander Lindley as "the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind and presenting it as one's own" (Plagiarism and Originality). Plagiarism may take the form of repeating another's sentences as your own, paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own or even presenting someone else's line of thinking in the development of a thesis as though it were your own. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from another. Although a writer may use other persons' words and thoughts, they must be acknowledged as such.

Please make certain that your work clearly acknowledges that of others. Sanctions for infractions of plagiarism are serious, and you are referred to the statement on Student Disciplinary Procedures that appears in the Graduate College Catalog. Academic dishonesty more generally is described at the website: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/grad/regulations/index.shtml>

Repetition of Papers Used in Other courses

Papers written for another class cannot be used –entirely or partially– to fulfill the requirements of a different course. This will be considered an act of *academic dishonesty*. If you want to incorporate some materials from a previous research paper, you need to get a written authorization from both professors, the one for whom the paper was written originally, and the professor of the current class. If you are discovered not complying to this regulation, you will be facing sanctions ranging from a lowering of the grade on the paper to failing the class.

Cell-free and wireless-free environment

Cell phone use of any kind is not permitted in class. If you use your laptop to take notes, you are not allowed to check your email during class, and must turn off your computer's wireless connection. Your participation grade for the semester will be lowered for every instance of unauthorized text messaging or email checking, or if your phone rings during class. If there is a good reason why you must leave your phone on during class (such as a family or personal emergency), please tell me before class begins. Excessive use of your cell phone or other wireless devices constitutes disruptive behavior. It is disrespectful to other students and to me, and may lead to you being dropped from this course.

In order to reference this course's Webct readings during class, you are encouraged to print them out or download them to your computer, or take detailed notes on them. You will not be allowed to use any wireless connections to retrieve these readings from our Webct site during class. Also, no wireless e-mail checking will be allowed.

Failure to comply with these class rules may result in the violating student being instructed to leave the classroom. Students who continue to violate these rules may be sanctioned with disciplinary action, which may affect their course performance and success. In extreme cases, repetitive non-compliance could potentially result in withdrawal from the course.

Submitting Papers and Turnitin.com

All students must **upload an electronic version** of their paper to turnitin.com through webct Blackboard **BEFORE** the beginning of class on the paper's due date. Papers uploaded to turnitin.com after class time will be considered late. You will not receive a grade for any paper until it is uploaded to turnitin.com.

Extensions for Papers

As a general rule, I only grant extensions for papers in cases of genuine emergency or for other extreme circumstances, and written documentation must be provided. Lack of preparation on your part does not constitute grounds for an extension.

Questions about Papers

Please come talk to me in my office hours if you need help developing ideas for your papers. I am also happy to answer any specific questions that you may have about drafts of your papers. However, I will not read drafts of your papers and tell you what all their problems are or if they are any good. This is unfair to every other student in this class, because it is asking me to unofficially grade your paper and allow you to resubmit without deducting from your grade.

I do not respond to questions about papers less than three days before their due dates; if you would like my help, you must plan ahead. I also do not respond to questions about papers on the day that they are returned to you. I am happy to discuss your grade with you, but you must first

consider the comments I have already written on your paper. I put a lot of work into the comments that I write, and I do not like feeling that I have wasted my time and energy.

Email Policy

You are encouraged to email me with questions that you may have about our course material or requirements. However, I will not respond to emails asking for information that I have already announced in class or posted on our Webct site. Also, use common sense when sending me emails—I cannot give adequate responses to certain kinds of questions over email. Questions that require long responses should be asked either at the end of class or in my office hours, not by email. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered from other students or from me **in my office hours**. I do not respond to emails asking about what was covered in class.

Participation

Active participation is essential in this course, and it can take many forms. This includes arriving to class on time, taking notes, asking thoughtful questions, advancing good critical ideas in class discussions, and listening to the ideas of others. Participation in Web CT discussions with other classmates is also encouraged. Students who are disrespectful of others or disrupt class will receive low participation grades and may be dropped from the course. Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones or other electronic devices that may disrupt the class, leaving class before it ends, sleeping in class, doing homework for other classes, and exchanging notes with other students. If you have a legitimate reason for leaving class before it ends, you should notify me at the beginning of class and sit near an exit so that you can leave quietly and discreetly. I do not hesitate to drop students who are consistently disruptive. For the relevant university regulation, I refer you to the following statement from the on-line undergraduate catalog:

“An instructor may drop students for any one of the following reasons:

- a. Lack of prerequisites or corequisites for the course listed in the latest catalog, but only through the last day for dropping courses. Students who have not met the prerequisites will be dropped without a tuition refund if the drop date is after the refund date. (Students who enroll in a course for which they are not eligible and then remain in the course knowingly misrepresent their academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites and violate the university's academic honesty policy.)
- b. Excessive absences, but after the last day for dropping courses only with the approval of the dean of the college in which the course is being offered.
- c. Causes that tend to disrupt the academic process (except those actions involving academic honesty, which come under the jurisdiction of the academic honesty policy), but after the last day for dropping courses only with the approval of the dean of the college in which the course is being offered. *Disruptive behavior includes the use of or the failure to deactivate cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices likely to disrupt the classroom.* Students may make timely appeal of charges through the office of the dean of the college in which the course is taught.

Also consult the section of the Student Handbook entitled "Disciplinary Code" (p. 68), as well as the section of the on-line undergraduate catalog entitled "Maintaining a Learning Environment."

Attendance

You are allowed three unexcused absences in this course without any changes to your course grade. Your **course grade** will be lowered by one letter grade for every unexcused absence thereafter (i.e. if you have 5 unexcused absences and your course grade is a "B+," it will be lowered to a "B-"). Documentation must be provided for an absence to be excused. Please note that absences resulting from things such as family vacations, job interviews, or work are rarely excused. I am also extremely skeptical of excuses pertaining to dead grandparents, recurring car trouble, oversleeping, and alarm clocks and watches that fail to work.

Required Textbooks (Note. This is the revised list—not all books are in yet).

Voltaire. *Candide*. Dover Thrift Issue. ISBN 0486266893.

Alejo Carpentier. *The Kingdom of this World*. NY: Farrar Straus 2006.

Isbn 0374530114

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. Dover Publications. ISBN 0486264645.

Carlos Fuentes. *The Old Gringo*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux (2007) - Paperback - 199 pages - ISBN 0374530521

Candace Ward, ed. *World War One British Poets: Brooke, Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg and Others*. Dover Publications. ISBN 0486295680

Albert Camus, *The Stranger*. Trans. Matthew Ward. Vintage international 1989. ISBN: 9780679720201

Recommended as good sources for ideas to apply to your papers:

For students with last names A-M

Chris Hedgees [War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning](#). New York : PublicAffairs, 2002.

OR For students with last names N-Z

.Alain Badiou. *The Century*. Polity Press. ISBN-13: 978-07456-3632-0

**Tentative Schedule: WCL 2351
Professor Zimmerman**

Week 1: Course Introduction

August 25 **Purpose, procedures, requirements, schedule. Introductions. The Theme of Representation.**

Aug. 27. **Some initial thoughts and images: human conflict, territorial wars, the struggle for survival and hegemony, ancient war, etc.**

Biological and anthropological roots of conflict, violence and war. Territoriality, sexual domination. Social Darwinism. Totem and taboo. Conquest, war and enslavement from ancient times thru 20th cent. A. Google and Webct: Some materials on/from Simone Weil, etc.

Week 2. War and Modernity: Goya, Picasso and Candide

September. 1 Viewing/reading. Materials on WebCT under Prof. Soliño and also on web about Goya's war sketches and Picasso's *Guernica*. Also see *General Materials*: MZ and others on *Guernica*. Viewing in class: Excerpts from LAC videos: *Goya En Su Tiempo & Picasso: War, Peace, Love* (1987).

September 3. Voltaire's *Candide*. **Introduction.** : Backgrounds on Leibnitz, Voltaire and the Enlightenment. Introduction—Leonard Bernstein. *Candide*, 1st 3rd.

Week 3: Candide

Sept. 8. *Candide*, the musical—scenes.

Sept. 10. *Candide*, 2nd 3rd..

Week 4: Candide & the Haitian Revolution

Sept. 15. *Candide*, rest of book.

Sept. 17. Alejo Carpentier, *Kingdom of this World*, Discussion I. Backgrounds, relation to French Revolution (CLR James, etc.)

Week 5: Kingdom of this World and Burn

September 22 *Kingdom of this World*, Discussion II

September 24 Scenes from *Burn*.

Week 6: Heart of Darkness. Film and Book

Sept. 29. *Heart of Darkness*, film. **Paper I due.**

Oct. 1 Book, discussion of first half.

Week 7. Heart of Darkness and Apocalypse Now

Oct. 6. Book, discussion of second half.

Oct. 8. *Apocalypse Now*—Film showing

Week 8. The Mexican Revolution.

Oct. 13. Art and Revolution in Mexico—film, slides, discussion.

Oct. 15 *The Old Gringo*, with excerpts from film version. Selections from John Reed.

Week 9. World War I

Oct. 20. World War I Poetry. Excerpt from Paths of Glory.

Oct. 22. Excerpts from book and film: *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Week 10 The Russian Revolution

Oct. 27 Excerpts from Potemkin, *Reds*. Selections from John Reed.

Oct. 29. Excerpts from *October*. PAPER II. due

Week 11. World War II & The Holocaust

Nov. 3. Intro to the Nazi regime. Scenes from *Triumph of the Will* and *The Damned*

. Discussion of Excerpts from *Maus* and Shoah materials. Bauman, etc. Discussion of materials and films.

Nov. 5. Scenes from *Shoah*. *Life is Beautiful*, etc. Music: Schoenberg: Survivor of Auschwitz

Week 12. The Sino-Japanese War & The Chinese Revolution.

Nov. 9. Film showing: Battle of Algiers, complete. AH 204.

Nov. 10. *The Last Emperor*. Theatrical release version—not director’s cut.

Nov. 12. Historical backgrounds. Japanese aggression and establishment of Manchurian government. Discussion of readings:

Readings: Webct: Selections: “When I was in Xia Village” by Ding Ling. Some selections from Mao-Tse Tung.

Week 13. Urban Research Initiative Unit IA: Algiers

Nov. 17. Albert Camus. *The Stranger*. Discussion

Nov. 19. *The Stranger*, film. Selected scenes. *Battle of Algiers*, first scenes of films.

Week 14. Urban Research Initiative, Unit IB,

November 24 Scenes from *Battle of Algiers* (see Nov. 9).

Final Discussion: *Stranger* and *Battle*. With excerpts from Stam, Fanon and Memmi.

November 26 Thanksgiving.

Week 15. Urban Research Initiative, Unit II. Project Presentations

Dec. 1. Student Presentations on Films/Book pairs: *The Trial*, *Slaughter-House Five*, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, *Bombay*, *Blindness*, *State of Siege*, etc. (see overall list above)

Dec, 3. Continuing Presentations and Final Comments.

Dec. 10, midnight. Urban Research and final papers due.