

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
 Department of Modern and Classical Languages
 WCL – World Cultures and Literatures

WCL 4351 – Section 1-LEC 31486

FRAMES OF MODERNITY I

From the 18th century through World War II

Thursday 2:30-5:30pm -- FH 218



Coordinator: Prof. Marc Zimmerman
 (713-743-3044 –<mzimmerman@uh.edu>
 Web Page: <http://www.class.uh.edu/mcl/>
 Office Hours: TBA, in AH 611

Faculty and Topics:

Richard Armstrong (Classic Studies): Freud
 Alessandro Carrera (Italian Studies):
 Urban Utopias; Nietzsche and Related Topics
 Hildegard Glass (German Studies): The Holocaust
 Robert Zaretsky (Honors College; French): Rousseau
 Sharon Wen (Director, Chinese Studies): Lu Xun
 Hosam Aboul-Ela (English Dept.): Edward Said
 Marc Zimmerman (MCL Latino/Latin American Studies):
19th and 20th Avant Gardes/ Marxist theory and Western Marxism
 & possibly others

The course gives undergraduate and graduate students a basic outline of some major historical and theoretical trends in Western and Eastern Culture from the birth of modernity to World War II. Significant texts on French Revolution, Marxism and Liberalism, Baudelaire, Dostoyevsky and the City, Freudian Psychoanalysis, Orientalism, Chinese Modernization, Totalitarianism and the Holocaust, and the likes of Rousseau, Nietzsche and Marcuse are analyzed and discussed by a team of qualified instructors. The students are expected to participate fully in the discussions.

Department of Modern and Classical Languages Special Policies – Academic Conduct

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All papers written for this class will be submitted by the due date through Turnitin, to prevent acts of advertent and inadvertent plagiarism.

Fundamentally, plagiarism is a deceit, an act of intellectual dishonesty that consists of passing off another's words as one's own. 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. For example; if you wrote a paper on the role of female characters in *War and Peace* for a class on Tolstoy, and later on you want to re-use selected fragments of this work (i.e. for a paper on female characters in XIX century narrative), you must obtain consent from both professors. If you don't comply with 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.

No wireless e-mail checking during class time 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 or structuring them. 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 of 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 it without any penalty to 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, never 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 are in violation of 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.

Textbooks and Electronic Alternatives

Berman, Marshal: *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Penguin 1988, ISBN: 0140109625.

Freud, Sigmund: *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Penguin 2002, ISBN: 0141182369.

Xun, Lu: *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, University of Hawaii Press, 1990, ISBN: 0824813170

Levi, Primo: *Survival in Auschwitz*, Touchstone Books 1995, ISBN: 0684826801.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Genealogy of Morals.* Alt: read on web at <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/Nietzsche/genealogytofc.htm>

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The First and Second Discourses*, St Martins, 1969, ISBN 0312694407.

Robert Blaisdell ed. *The Communist Manifesto and Other Revolutionary Writings.* Dover Publications, 2003. ISBN 0486424650 (pbk.)

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from the Underground.* : Dover Publications. ISBN 048627053X.

Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization.* Beacon Press

Edward Said, *The Edward Said Reader.* Vintage. ISBN 9780375709364

Requirements for Undergraduate Students:

Two Papers, minimum 1000 words or four pages each, counting 20% each of the final grade; a third paper, based on MCL's Urban Space project, of 1500-2000 words or 6-8 pages, and counting for 35% is due at the end of the semester, along with a final short summary statement (2-3 pages) focused on the final part of the course in relation to the whole, and counting 10%--plus 15% for attendance, participation and discussion in class.

For Graduate Students:

One regular paper and an Urban Space term paper of 15-20 pages.

Deadlines for Undergraduate Students

First Paper:	Thursday, Sept. 17
Second Paper:	Thursday, Oct. 22
Urban Space and final paper:	Monday, Dec. 10.

Aside from the Urban Research Initiative project essay (see below), regular papers will cover material prior to the assignment day and must be made up of three short essays (at least 330 words each). Students will choose one question out of a group of questions. Paper topics will be mostly based on the textbooks. So read!

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

Description of MCL's Urban Research Initiative

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 4351 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.

Students will present a text from the list below to the class and submit a short written analysis focused on the text's representation of urban space or urban problems. 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 the city in which the text is set. A 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's urban setting(s) shapes its story, its characters, a viewer's experience, 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. A list of possible texts includes:

Dickens, *Great Expectations*

Gogol, *Diary of a Madman* and other Petersburg stories

Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

Melville, *Bartleby*; Poe, *Man in the Crowd*

Richard Wright, *Native Son* or Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* or Rudolfo Anaya, *Albuquerque*.

Paul Auster, *New York Trilogy*.

Marshall Berman and Walter Benjamin on Baudelaire and Baudelaire poems cited.

Walter Benjamin, *Paris—Capital of the 19th Century* and selections from *Arcades Project*.

Franz Kafka, *The Trial*

Camus' *The Plague*

Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*

Jose Saramago, *Blindness*.

Eugene Ionesco, *The Killer*

Henri Lefevbre, *Every Day Life in the Modern world*

Russell Berman, Zygmunt Bauman and others on Brasilia.

Another text approved by prof.

Frames of Modernity I – Fall 2009

Tentative Weekly Schedule - Thursday 2:30-5:30pm -

- 1) Aug. 27. Introduction to the course, Prof. Zimmerman & Prof. Alessandro Carrera
Modernity's Imagination, Utopias and Dystopias. Prof. Carrera
Readings: *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (excerpts); Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* (excerpt); William Gibson, *The Gernsback Continuum* (short story).
Film clips: Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*; Charles Chaplin, *Modern Times*; Peter Cohen, *The Architecture of Doom*; William Cameron Menzies, *Things to Come*; King Vidor, *The Fountainhead*; Ric Burns, *New York, Episode 6 – PBS Series*.
- 2) Sept. 3. Prof. Zaretsky. Rousseau's Second Discourse and the French Revolution.
Readings: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse*.
Prefaces, Berman Prefaces, intro.
- 3) Sept. 10. Prof. Zimmerman. Marx and Modernity. Smith, Ricardo and Bentham, Utopian Socialists, Malthus Darwin & Social Darwinism. Hegel, Marx and the Communist Manifesto. Readings: The Communist Manifesto; Berman 15-35, 87-129.
Also Browse WebCT: Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution, other selections from Marx, etc.
- 4) Sept. 17. Prof. Zimmerman. Baudelaire and The Modern City
Readings: Berman, 131-171; Benjamin: Paris: Capital of the 19th Century/ Baudelaire/excerpts from Arcades Project (Webct). **First Paper due.**
- 5) Sept. 24. Prof. Carrera: Nietzsche and His Legacy.
Readings: The Genealogy of Morals. Read on web page
<http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/Nietzsche/genealogytofc.htm>
- 6) Oct. 1. Prof. Zimmerman Gogol and Dostoyevsky.
Readings. Gogol. The Overcoat <http://www.horrormasters.com/Text/a0857.pdf>
Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, (required) <http://www.horrormasters.com/Text/a0857.pdf>
and Grand Inquisitor (optional). Berman, 173-286.
- 7) Oct. 8. Prof. Armstrong. Subjectivity and Modernity.
Reading: Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.
- 8) Oct. 15. Profs. Armstrong and Zimmerman. Freud, Marcuse and other recent tangents
Readings: Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (Excerpts)
- 9) Oct. 22. Prof. Zimmerman: World War I and the 1920s-30s: From Marx to Lenin and the Western Marxisms, The Culture Industry and the Avant Gardes.
Readings: Webct Materials on Lenin, Weber, Lukacs, Gramsci, and the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Benjamin). MZ on surrealism, Chagall, Picasso, etc.
Film clips. Examples of Expressionism (The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari &/or Metropolis); Surrealism (Le chien andalou), Constructivism, futurism, etc. The Potemkin, Ten Days that Shook the world, Leni Riefenstahl, Triumph of the Will.
Second undergrad. Paper due. Grad. Short paper due.
- 10) Oct. 29. Prof. Hosam Abul Ela. Edward Said, and Orientalism (19th and 20th Centuries). Reading: *Edward Said Reader* (selections)

11) Nov. 5 Lu Xun, Mao Tse Tung and the Birth of Modern China.

Readings: Lu Xun, *The True Story of Ah Q*, from *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*. A selection from Mao Tse-Tung.

12) Nov. 12. The Origins of Totalitarianism—Professor Glass.

Reading: Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Web CT Vista).

13) Nov. 19. Prof. Glass. Totalitarianism and the Holocaust. Prof. Glass

Reading: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*.

Nov. 26. Thanksgiving.

14) Dec. 3. Profs Zimmerman, Carrera and others. Modernity, Destruction and Transformation of Urban Space and Final Thoughts for the course.

1. Hiroshima, Dresden, and the Bretton Woods Agreements, the Marshall Plan, and the problem of post-Holocaust Representation (Adorno, Dürrenmatt, Celan, Kafka, and Saramago) 25 min.

2. Models of Urban Space: The Expressway City and the destruction of urban environment. Robert Moses and the Cross-Bronx Expressway. 100 min.

3. Final comments and response by students and professors 25 min.

Readings: Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts in the Air*, 287-348.

Film clips: *New York* by Ric Burns, Episode Seven.

Thursday Dec. 10. Moved to Friday Dec. 11 if possible. 2:30-5:30 pm. Third undergrad papers & Presentations of Urban Research Papers. Pizza provided, sttdents to provide soft drinks, etc.

Papers turned in to Turnitin prior to exam time or considered late.