
LITERATURE & THE POLITICAL IMAGINATION in Fall 2019 (CL3060)

Course Code	CL3060	Professor(s)	Geoffrey Gilbert
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G108
Class Schedule	MR: 16:55-18:15 in G-207	Office Hours	Monday, 10:30-11:30; Tuesday 11:00-13:00, and by appointment
Credits	4	Email	ggilbert@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	825

Course Description

This course articulates a network of relations between literature and politics, knotted across an investigation of 'imagination'. The first part of the class will concentrate on popular political ideology in the second half of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century in Europe, as it was expressed in the movements that gathered under the banners of socialism, liberalism, communism, anarchism, and (proto-)fascism, and in the process of de-colonization. We will be historical, theoretical, and textual in approach: we will place the works we read within the political context of their moments; analyze them in relation to a corpus of political theory, and within the frames of more recent reflections on relations between literature and politics; and we will read the texts as texts – as complex, intensive, material and social instances of imagination. The combination of these approaches will provide us with both a genealogy for contemporary political thought and a resource in support of our contemporary political and literary creativity.

The course approaches politics and the political imagination through literature. When writing knows that it has other designs on the world than merely to 'reflect' it, it becomes literature and, in the same movement, becomes at least potentially political. Our focus will thus be less on the politics that literature represents – although we will be interested in the ways in which writers have described political systems and political actions – than on the political consciousness of literature, and on the written work as a kind of political action. So, for example, while Gaskell's *North and South* is a work about a moment of politics, describing and modeling the conditions that led to industrial action in Britain in the 1850s, it is also a political agent itself, in the way that it creates and directs the sympathies of the enlarging British reading public. Or, in the case of Jünger's extraordinary *Storm of Steel*, the formal libidinal energies of the prose may provoke and channel a very different kind of political imagination and political force than those represented in the work.

While we situate writing and reading in relation to its own historical and ideological moment,

we'll also be willing to be a-historical – how would the energies of these texts work today? How would we translate them into our contemporary historical and political experiences? What work can they do for us now?

The final weeks of the course will be dedicated to our contemporary political moment, and a range of modern and contemporary texts.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course successfully will demonstrate the capacity for responsible and imaginative textual interpretation.

Students will be able to situate literature in relation to historical contexts, and to reflect productively on the relation between text and context.

Students will have a solid basic knowledge of the major nineteenth century European Political Ideologies.

Local and Global Perspectives: Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate. (CCI LO1)

Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression: Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions. (CCI LO2)

Civic and Ethical Engagement: Students will demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations relating to specific societal problems, values, or practices (historical or contemporary; global or local) and learn to articulate possible solutions to prominent challenges facing societies and institutions today so as to become engaged actors at various levels in our interconnected world. (CCI LO4)

General Education

[PLEASE EDIT OR REMOVE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AS APPLICABLE]

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

Course Outline

Week	Monday	Thursday	Work due
1 (2-6 Sept)	I was absent	I was absent	
2 (9-13 Sept)	Introduction – ideology and imagination and contemporary politics	'Where is Ideology Now'; 'Imagination' from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy	
3 (16-20 Sept)	North and South 1	North and South 2 'liberalism' from <i>Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies</i>	
4 (23-27 Sept)	North and South 3 'socialism'	Imagining re. Gaskell	Creative exercise 1
At some point in week 4, we will have a make-up class to talk about the creative work you did with Gaskell, and to plan the readings for the last part of the semester			
5 (30 Sept-4 Oct)	Junger 1	Junger 2	
6 (7-11 Oct)	Junger 3 Inhabiting fascism	Conrad 1	Creative exercise 2
7 (14-18 Oct)	Conrad 2 Anarchism	Conrad 3	
18 October is mid-semester; mid-semester grades are due today			
8 (21-25 Oct)	Germinal 1 (fourierism)	Germinal 2 Marxism	Ox handbook
9 (28 Oct-1 Nov)	Germinal 3	NO CLASS	
4 November is the last day to choose CR/NCR or to withdraw from a class			
10 (4-8 Nov)	Lewis 1 Fascism again	Lewis 2	Creative exercise
11 (11-15 Nov)	NO CLASS	What are we afraid of?	
12 (18-22 Nov)	Imagining politics	Writing politics	

13 (25-29 Nov)	Trevino 1 Contemporary marxism	Trevino 2 Contemporary political imagination	Moten
14 (2-6 Dec)	Doing politics	conclusion	
12 December	final exam 14:30-17:00		

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
North and South	Gaskell, ELizabeth	Penguin	9780140434248	Yes
The Secret Agent	Conrad, Joseph	Penguin	9780141441580	Yes
Germinal	Zola, Emile, translated by Peter Collier	Oxford	9780199536894	Yes
Storm of Steel	Junger, Ernst, translated by Michael Hofmann	Penguin	9780241261996	Yes
It Can't happen Here	Lewis, Sinclair	Penguin	9780241310663	Yes
Cruel Fiction	Trevino, Wendy	Commune Editions	9781934639252	Yes
North And South	Elizabeth Gaskell	Penguin	9780140434248	Yes
The Secret Agent	Joseph Conrad	Penguin	9780141441580	Yes
Germinal	Emile Zola translated by Peter Collier	Oxford	9780199536894	Yes
Storm Of Steel	Ernst Junger translated by Michael Hofmann	Penguin	9780241261996	Yes
It Can't Happen Here	Sinclair Lewis	Penguin	9780241310663	Yes
Cruel Fiction	Wendy Trevino	Commune Editions	9781934639252	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own

attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Evaluation of work for this class will be based on four grades.

Assessment of your active participation in class (including presentations where demanded and occasional ungraded exercises, timely and thorough completion of the required reading, and engagement in class discussion) will comprise 20% of the final grade.

These will be a short informal midterm paper and two creative exercises in which you consider contemporary contexts for older writing. These elements represent 25% of the final grade.

The term paper will be a substantial essay reading one literary work in the light of politics and of contemporary criticism, and will be worth 30% of the final grade. An annex to the term paper, which may be creative, will connect up your reading of the text to one contemporary political movement, and will consider how you can engage yourself in productive relation to the aims and ideals of that movement

The final examination will test your broad comprehension of all of the works studies in class, and will be worth 25% of the final grade.

Other
