

CARLETON UNIVERSITY	
Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (EURUS)	
FYSM 1601	Fall/Winter 2012/2013
Literature and Political Change in Europe-DRAFT	
Time: TBA	Location: TBA
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introductory exploration of the selection of European literary and cinematic works, and political issues reflected in them. Our thematic focus for the course is **Literature and Political Change in Europe** and we will explore it by studying various works from multiple disciplines, including literature, film, art history, philosophy, anthropology within the context of political events that have been affecting European history. Thus, this course allows you to combine the study of literature with the study of its cultural, social and political context.

How are political events and tensions reflected in literary texts and influenced by literary developments?

As the introduction to some of the themes of politics through a selection of different artistic forms, the course will address such political topics as the relation of the individual to society and political authority. The course emphasis is on situating individual authors in a political context in order to develop a greater understanding of both the diversity of the European political cultures and the significance of artistic representations of political events that have been shaping Europe.

The course material will lead us on a journey of events, ideas and development that have been creating Europe since 17th century. In world historical terms, this has been the period of the achievement and collapse of European political and cultural hegemony. Although we shall look at other areas, our concentration will be on the changes that took place in the European World in the 18th and 19th centuries, the rise of European powers to world domination, the crises of politics and culture in the late 19th and early 20th century, the emergence of a bipolar Europe after 1945, political integrations and disintegrations after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the contemporary attempts toward unified Europe.

Emphasis will be on the defining and illuminating issues of freedom, faith, utopia/distopia, revolution/evolution, war and peace, love and hate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In the process of our study, we will explore diverse cultural and political histories reflected in the stories, novels, plays, movies, paintings, and other forms of art. The course will proceed simultaneously along two lines of inquiry. The first concerns the works of literature (and other art forms) directly: what, if anything, do these authors have to tell us about politics, including that most comprehensive of political themes, the good life? We will treat these sources as historical cultural documents that open a window on the society, trends, intellectual traditions and events of the era in which they were created. The second line will require us to reflect on our

own activity: what does it mean to "read" a "text" in a political manner? Is our objective to "find" meanings put into works by their authors, or does our reading reflect our own concerns and questions back to us?

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Students should:

- have a general grasp of major trends in European political history from the 17th century to the contemporary time;
- understand some of the basic over-arching themes in philosophy and literature and philosophy;
- be able to discuss ideas, critically analyze material, synthesize diverse disciplinary perspectives, present and debate arguments;
- the ability to work independently and collaboratively in drafting, writing and oral skills.

NOTE: The course assumes no prior knowledge of literatures, languages and cinema of Europe. All books are in English translation and movies with English subtitle. You are welcome and encouraged to read books in original languages.

COURSE TOPICS

The course is organized into four broad units as thematic frames for our discussion on several topics, including but not limited to issues of class & gender, social norms, the changing role of religion, individual, as well as political movements and trends.

READINGS

The readings are a combination of course reserves and on-line resources. While this course has no stated prerequisite, it is assumed that the students like literature and cinema, as well as sharing ideas and views with others.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. *The Stranger* by Albert Camus
2. *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
3. *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka
4. *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello
5. *Adam and Evelyn* by Ingo Schulze
6. *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley
7. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn
8. *We* by Evgeniy Ivanovich Zamyatin

NOTE: The detailed syllabus (with the Course Calendar, Supplementary Readings, Course Format & Requirements & Evaluation, and Academic Regulations and Accommodations) will be provided during our first session.