

Ideas that made Europe. A Cultural Approach to the Old World. *Mediterranean Studies*

Course contact hours: 45

Recommended credits: 6 ECTS – 3 US credits

OBJECTIVES

The main goal of this interdisciplinary course is to offer an approach, from the Cultural Studies perspective, to some of the most crucial ideas that have shaped, accompanied and influenced the development of the European civilization, its cultures, and by extension also the Western thought. The general structure of the semester revolves around ten specific or abstract concepts, such as love, otherness or fear, that are still today in constant evolution and signify a big part of the European collective identity. The conceptual, cultural and chronological dissection of each of these topics, together with the development of their most important branches, will allow a wider comprehension of the different realities that they have portrayed throughout the centuries. Ultimately, this subject aims to offer the tools to help students approach and better understand Europe and its intellectual roots from a critical perspective, by exposing the ways in which its societies and cultures, past and present, have ordered reality and how they have made sense of their world.

REQUIREMENTS

Fluent English

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To enable students to consider the past as an inherited tradition with traceable connections in the present.
2. To understand the implications of diverse techniques of interpretation often used by different academic disciplines.
3. To develop the habit of applying an independent and relativist approach and critique.
4. To deepen understanding of European civilization.
5. To become familiar and conversant with the major questions, concepts, theories, traditions and techniques of the social sciences and humanistic enquiry.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Balanced diversity of type of sessions: Lecture style, in-class debates about documentaries and/or reading material, in-class working sessions (for 'Class Activities' and 'Concept Research & Presentation' parts of the assessment), commented classmates presentations and at least one field trip and one Guest Speaker. Participation and intervention of students will always be encouraged in order to achieve a dynamic atmosphere during each lesson.

CONTENTS

- Week 1: Introduction. Cultural Studies, schools and authors
- Week 2: Cultural Studies, schools and authors
- Week 3: European Identity
- Week 4: European Identity
- Week 5: Public & Private Life
- Week 6: Public & Private Life
- Week 7: In class work and Mod-term Exam
- Week 8: Healthy & Sick
- Week 9: Fear, Violence & Death
- Week 10: Commented classmates' presentations on diverse topics
- Week 11: Commented classmates' presentations on diverse topics
- Week 12: Commented classmates' presentations on diverse topics
- Week 13: Commented classmates' presentations on diverse topics
- Week 14: In class work, review and guest speaker
- Week 15: Field trip and Final Exam

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Mid-term (25%): Multiple choice Exam
- Class Activities (30%): In-class written activities based on prior reading
- Concept Research & Presentation (20%): Group work
- Final exam (10%): Reflection essay
- Class participation (15%)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required readings (all these will be provided):

Selected chapters of:

- DURING, Simon, Cultural Studies, a Critical Introduction, Routledge, 2005.
- SIEDENTOP, Larry. Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism, Penguin, 2015.
- SMITH, Woodruff D., Consumption and the Making of Respectability 1600-1800, Routledge, 2002.
- DAVIES, Douglas, Brief History of Death, John Wiley & Sons, 2005.

Full articles:

- BRYSON, Michael & MOVSESIAN, Arpi, 'Fin'amor Castrated: Abelard, Heloise, and the Critics who Deny' in Love and its Critics, Open Book Publishers, 2017.
- TÖMMEL, Tatjana Noemi, 'Vita Passiva: Love in Arendt's Denktagebuch' in Artifacts of Thinking, Fordham University Press, 2017.
- SIRAISSI, Nancy G., "Medicine, 1450-1620, and the History of Science" in Isis , Vol. 103, num. 3 (sept. 2012)

Recommended reading:

- ABBOT, Elizabeth. History of Marriage. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd, 2011.
- ASMA, Stephen T. On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.
- BOURKE, Joanna. The Story of Pain. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014.
- BOURKE, Joanna. Fear. A Cultural History. London: Virago, 2006.
- DORMANDY, Thomas. Worst of Evils: The Fight against Pain. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006.
- KEARNEY, Richard. Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness. Oxford: Routledge, 2002.
- KERRIGAN, Michael. The History of Death: Burial Customs and Funeral Rites, from the Ancient World to Modern Times. London: Amber Books, 2007.
- MAY, Simon. Love: A History. New Haven: Yale UP, 2012.
- PAGDEN, Anthony. The Enlightenment: and why it still matters. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015.
- PLAMPER, Jan. The History of Emotions. An introduction. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015.
- PORTER, Roy. Blood and Guts: A short History of Medicine. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- SEIGEL, Jerrold. The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the Seventeenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.
- SMITH, Virginia. Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.
- WAHRMAN, Dror. The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-century England. New Haven: Yale UP, 2007.