

LITR 202: The European Novel

John Felice Rome Center

Spring 2023

Wednesday | 10am-12:30pm

Dr. Barbara Castaldo, Ph.D.

Email: bcastaldo@luc.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment, Wed./Th.

Course Description

The great European cities will be the focal point of this course. Rome, Paris, London, and Prague are the geographical settings of literary masterpieces written by European authors of the 19th and 20th centuries, describing the rise and the establishment of the modern European metropolis. We will work our way through realistic representations presenting the new urban settings, as well as explore fabulous portraits of imaginary cities that will question our models of the ideal city. All the writings we read will link the old world and the new by reminding us of the role and legacy of those ancient European cities.

This course hopes to generate possible answers to the related questions, posed by our authors, of “how does the urban environment meet or disattend expectations of citizens?” (Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin), and alternatively, “what does the architecture of cities tell us about the civilization itself?” (Pier Paolo Pasolini). Other questions of this course include: Are there city-types? (Italo Calvino) Do cities have a gender, even? (Virginia Woolf) Can a city be an active character and determine an influence on the fate and psyche of its inhabitants? (Franz Kafka)

Although our main concern will be literary descriptions of modern European cities, we will also consider related topics such as how politics, economy, class, gender, and other factors have an impact on shaping the city, and we will explore literature along with visual representations of the modern urban space through paintings, photography, maps and films.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Know major literary works and key authors of modern European literature.
- Understand the relation of those literary works to European society and culture.
- Know core themes and ideas in history and culture.
- Understand and describe literary works as modes of social inquiry representing specific historical and cultural contexts.
- Develop skills in reading, thinking, and writing critically through the composition of an academic essay and other homework assignments.
- Develop analytical skills and argue interpretations through class discussions.
- Identify different issues, authors, and works of art from a comparative perspective.

Required Texts

- Baudelaire, Charles. *Paris Spleen*, New Directions, 1970 (ISBN: 978-0811200073)
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*, Harcourt, 1974 (ISBN: 978-0156453806)
- Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*, Random House, 1998 (ISBN 0805209999)
- Pasolini, *Stories From the City of God*, Random House, 2019 (ISBN: 9781590519974)
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*, Harcourt, 1981 (ISBN: 9780156628709)
- Assigned readings posted on Sakai.

Films (available on Sakai)

Gladiator. Dir. Ridley Scott, 2000.

La Dolce Vita. Dir. Federico Fellini, 1960.

La Grande Bellezza (The Great Beauty). Dir. Paolo Sorrentino, 2013.

The Trial. Dir. Orson Welles, 1962.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being. Dir. Philip Kaufman, 1988.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation, and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absence will be permitted. **Unexcused absences beyond this will result in a 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”.** Consistent tardiness or long breaks out of class will also affect negatively your participation grade. The collective health of the JFRC is everyone’s responsibility. **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.**

Required Work

The course will fulfill its learning outcomes if you comply with the following requirements:

Reader Responses: To enhance both your reading and class discussion, for each class you will find a handout on Sakai with a list of topics/questions that we will discuss. Choose one or two questions that interest you and address them through some written notes, including a quotation or two as evidence in support of your claims. These meditations are a chance for you to consider the readings *before* coming to class. As the semester progresses, your responses should become more analytical and offer connections between the works, the authors, and the literary theories. Your Responses will also be useful when writing your final paper. **Please, note that I will ask you to discuss your Responses in class and that I might collect them. I will evaluate your Reader Responses in your final Participation grade.**

Participation: This course relies largely on class discussion, and the success of discussions depends upon your *active* presence, thus your presence and contributions are crucial - both to me and to your classmates. To help stimulate class discussions, you should come to class prepared on the assigned readings, and you should participate actively through your Reader Responses. I would like *everyone to speak at least once every class*. **Always bring the assigned text to class. Annotate it with questions and observations before you arrive. Have the reading in front of you during the discussion. If it is a file posted to Sakai, have notes of your comments and page numbers with you.** I recommend you take notes as we discuss: you will find your notes invaluable when you need to prepare for the quizzes or if you write a paper on the text.

Quizzes: There will be four in-class quizzes (multiple-choice questions) on all material covered (readings, lectures, discussions). **To succeed in the quizzes, it is essential to complete the assigned readings and to take accurate notes in class. The professor’s PowerPoint slides can be used for a quick review of the main points and are not meant to replace your own note-taking and readings of the material. The quizzes will be taken as scheduled: there will be no make-up for traveling reasons. Quizzes may be made up only in the event of serious illness and provided a doctor’s certificate is presented.**

Team Presentation: Each team will prepare one 20-25 minute presentation (about 5 minutes for each student) on one of the four cities. The team will choose one place used as a geographical setting in the literary reading for each

city and will present on history, architecture, and significance of this place within the city and the reading. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the presentations.

Meeting for Paper Proposal: about one week before the final essay is due, we will meet individually to discuss the topic, summary, and bibliography of your final paper. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the paper proposal. **Feel free to see me outside of class if you would like to discuss your paper proposal earlier or more at length than the official meeting schedule allows.**

Final Paper (5 pages, double-spaced): The final essay will show your ability to choose a focused question and thesis to guide your discussion, and to follow the conventions for writing about literature. See Assignments in Sakai for detailed instructions on the final paper.

Textbooks (TB): The kind of reading we will practice requires marking up a text and reading passages from the texts during all class discussions. For this reason, **you are required to bring your textbook to class. Different editions of books are strongly discouraged for this course:** we will need to have the same edition of the texts in order to read smoothly together. **You are requested to buy or order all your books during the first week of classes:** this is to ensure that you will receive them in time in case the bookstores run out of copies and you need to order them. Not having the textbooks in class will lower your participation grade.

Sakai: This course will be using Sakai. You are required to check the course site regularly for announcements, readings and assignments posted there.

Assessment Components

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|---|------------------------|
| • Participation/Attendance/Reader Responses | 20% |
| • Quizzes (4) | 40% (or each quiz 10%) |
| • Team Presentation | 10% |
| • Meeting for Paper Proposal | 10% |
| • Final Paper | 20% |

Grading

94-100: A	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+
90-93: A-	84-86: B	74-76: C	60-66: D
	80-83: B-	70-73: C-	59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

I expect that all work you produce for this course will be your own and that you will not submit work you have already completed for other courses. **Submitting the same Reader Responses of another student (if collected) will be considered plagiarism. Paraphrasing or otherwise copying work of another person without citing the source of the words and ideas will be considered plagiarism.** If you have any questions about using or citing texts, please talk with me.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. *As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate*

Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, during the first week of classes.

And finally... Welcome to this class! I find the study of literature both intellectually and emotionally fascinating (as well as a lot of fun), and I look forward to exploring it together. Please do not hesitate to converse with me about the course or the readings throughout the semester. As far as possible, I want to make sure the class meets your own academic goals as well as those I have outlined in this syllabus.

Course Schedule (syllabus may vary, make sure to check the updated copy on Sakai)

Week 1 Introduction to the course. Defining ‘place’ vs. ‘space’.
W 1/18

Week 2 Discussion of ancient Rome. Viewing of clips from the film *Gladiator*.
W 1/25
What does the architecture of cities tell us about the civilization itself?
- Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s views of Rome.
- Sigmund Freud’s Rome in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

Week 3 What does the architecture of cities tell us about the civilization itself? Pier Paolo Pasolini’s
W 2/1
Rome in *Stories from the City of God*.

Week 4 **Team presentation on Rome.**
W 2/8
Viewing of clips and discussion of films *La Dolce Vita* by Fellini, and *La Grande Bellezza* by Sorrentino.

Week 5 **Quiz 1.**
W 2/15
Introduction to Paris.
Walter Benjamin: *The Arcades Project* and *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*.
How does the urban environment meet or disattend the expectations of citizens?
- Walter Benjamin: *The Flâneur*.
- Charles Baudelaire: *Paris Spleen*.

Week 6 Charles Baudelaire: *Paris Spleen*. The theme of the crowd.
W 2/22

Week 7 **Team presentation on Paris.**
W 3/1
How does the urban environment meet or disattend the expectations of citizens? Charles Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen*.

Week 8: **Spring Break (March 3 – 12): no class on Wednesday, March 8**

**Week 9**

W 3/15

Quiz 2.

Introduction to London.

Two poems on London by William Blake and William Wordsworth.

Do cities have gender? Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.**Week 10**

W 3/22

Team presentation on London.Do cities have gender? Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.**Week 11**

W 3/29

Quiz 3.

Introduction to Prague.

Can a city be an active character and determine an influence on the fate and psyche of its inhabitants?

- Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*.- Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Viewing of clips from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Philip Kaufman.- Franz Kafka, *The Trial*.**Week 12**

W 4/5

Group presentation on Prague.Can a city be an active character and determine an influence on the fate and psyche of its inhabitants? Franz Kafka, *The Trial*.**Week 13**

W 4/12

Topic for final paper due.

Discussion of final paper topics.

Are there city-types? Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*.**Week 14**

W 4/19

Are there city-types? Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*.**Final paper due.****Week 15**

4/24-27 (TBA)

Quiz 4. Conclusions.