

Senior Seminars for European Studies Majors (EUROP 490R)

Course Overview

As the capstone course for the European Studies major, EUROP 490R draws upon a wide range of skills and insights from students' undergraduate education and synthesizes core concepts from the major. EUROP 200 (Intro to European Studies) and EUROP 490R bookend the European Studies curriculum, balancing out the extensive historical training students receive elsewhere in the major by focusing primarily on contemporary (i.e., post-1991) social, political, philosophical, and aesthetic trends. While the emphasis of any given section will depend on the instructor's expertise, the typical course will use a particular genre, theme, or movement to explore the lived experience of a wide range of twenty-first-century Europeans. Instructors should avoid privileging a certain nation or region, instead exploring points of similarity and diversity across the European continent.

Winter 2017 Course Description

Instructor: Rob McFarland (German)

Topic: "European Cities: Innovation, Integration, and the Landscapes of Creative Destruction"

What urban area serves as the world epicenter of innovation, creativity and cultural fusion? New York/Brooklyn? San Francisco/Palo Alto? Los Angeles/Hollywood? Increasingly, these American cities have competition from Copenhagen, Barcelona and Berlin.

For millennials, quality of life is one of the major draws to a city. In a recent survey of quality of life among world cities, the highest US city scored 28th, outshone by Helsinki, Hamburg, Vilnius and a host of European cities not only known for their cafés and operas, but for the "collision density" between artists, geeks, imams and entrepreneurs. While the European political right has long considered these urban centers as "cancers upon the body of the folk" (in the words of one Nazi sympathizer), Europe's cities were early adopters of globalization: places where new races, foods, ideas, and technologies regularly warped the world's mind.

In this course, we will look at the history of European cities as places of encounters, stresses, integrations, and innovations. We will explore Europe's cities following the Devil through Alain-René Lesage's Madrid, following Angels through Wim Wender's Berlin, following designer-clad divas through Agnes Varda's Paris, and following sari-clad mothers through Monika Ali's London. Why use literature and film learn about European cities? Because books are meant for cafés, films are meant for small off-cinemas in bustling neighborhoods, and discussion is meant for curry joints, tapas bars, currywurst stands, and döner kebab places.

Scheduled Courses

Winter 2018: "Now What for the EU?" (Wade Jacoby, Political Science)

Winter 2019: "European Film and 21st-Century Environmentalism" (Chip Oscarson, Scandinavian Studies)

Winter 2020: "Food and European Identity" (Eric Dursteler, History)

Past Topics

2013-2015: "Questions of European Identity in Contemporary Fiction" (Nick Mason, English/ES)

2016: "European Cinema Since 1995" (Marc Olivier, French)