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THE EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30 – 13:45 PM
Place: Liberal Arts Building 362
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 14:00 – 16:00 PM
Tel: 280-3223 (CenterAustria)
Fax: 280-6883 (Department of History)
E-mail: andreas.oberprantacher@uibk.ac.at (a UNO-E-mail address will be announced)

SYLLABUS

Course Description
The name of “Europe” is frequently associated with benevolent formulas such as reason, liberty, rights, subjectivity, tolerance, welfare, etc., but also with violent ideologies like nationalism, racism or antisemitism to name but a few. This course examines major trends in the European intellectual tradition while giving special attention to its ambivalences, tensions, and changes in the wider context of postcolonial criticisms. Even though the writings and legacies of important figures that informed modern European thought (e.g. Hobbes, Rousseau, Mill, Tocqueville, Kant, Schlegel, Hegel, Marx, Darwin, and Nietzsche) shall be presented and discussed, this course offers more than just a recollection of historical names (of “great men”) and the ideas they usually stand for. Rather, the emergence of a variety of European intellectual traditions shall be explored in consideration of complex historical situations that involve discrimination, exploitation, domination as well, but also emancipation, insurrection, and subversion. In this sense, the course will address the question to what extent it is reasonable to refer to the idea of a “Europe”, as if it was a singular intellectual unit, and if there are significant differences between a history of ideas and an intellectual history that should be taken into account. The focus of the majority of lectures will be early and late European modernity, but apart from that also current discourses and transformations shall be studied.

Course Readings


**Grading**

1 Midterm 30 % (equals 30 points max.)
1 Final 30 % (equals 30 points max.)
3 Papers 30 % (equals 30 points max.)
Class participation 10 % (equals 10 points max.)

Grade A 88-100 points
Grade B 75-87 points
Grade C 62-74 points
Grade D 49-61 points
Grade F 0-48 points
Grade I incomplete

Particular attention will be given to the soundness of arguments, to the consistency of information, and to the academic quality of reflection.

**Attendance Policy**

Students have to attend ALL class lectures; unexcused absences will result in one grade drop per unexcused absence; a class can only be excused by contacting the instructor in advance or immediately after the absence (e-mail).
Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism (including copying work from the Internet!), tempering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Student Code of Contact for further information. The Code is available online at http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs-enrollment-management/documents/Student_Handbook_14-15_rv_3_5_2015.pdf.

Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services (UC 260) each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to
• differentiate between a history of ideas and an intellectual history;
• reflect the making of a “European intellectual tradition” in the wider context of postcolonial criticisms;
• identify major ideas that constitute the discourse of a European intellectual tradition;
• identify ambivalences, tensions, and changes in the intellectual history of Europe;
• understand the interaction between the intellectual history of Europe and various struggles that informed this very history;
• have a basic understanding of the legacies of important figures in the European intellectual tradition;
• have a basic understanding of past and present disputes in and over Europe;
• understanding how the contemporary discourse of a European crisis reflects historical situations.
Schedule of Classes and Assignments

August

Th Aug 20  General Introduction
Tu Aug 25  History of Ideas or Intellectual History?
            (READ: Gordon, pp. 1-19)
Th Aug 27  Trans-National Intellectual History
            (READ: Armitage, pp. 232-252)

September

Tu Sept 1  Europe and the Non-European
            (READ: Isin, pp. 108-119)
Th Sept 3  Provincializing Europe?
            (READ: Chakrabarty, pp. 3-23)
Tu Sept 8  Beginnings of Modern European Thought
Th Sept 10 Rousseau and the Idea of a Social Contract
            (READ: Turner, pp. 1-20)
Tu Sept 15 In Pursuit of Liberty
Th Sept 17 Tocqueville and the Democracy in America
            (READ: Turner, pp. 21-34)

1ST PAPER due Sept 22 (4 pp.): What might be good reasons for discussing the European intellectual tradition considering the impossible definition of “Europe” as a single unit? To what extent is it all possible to think about Europe? Which major ideas informed early modern European thought?

Tu Sept 22  Principles of Political Economy
Th Sept 24  Mill and the Tradition of Utilitarianism
            (READ: Turner, pp. 35-51)
Tu Sept 29  Turning to Subjectivity (and the Subject)

October

Th Oct 1  Kant and the Copernican Revolution
            (READ: Turner, pp. 52-66)
Tu Oct 6 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Th Oct 8 The Invention of the Renaissance and the Defense of Medievalism
(READ: Turner, pp. 67-83)

Tu Oct 13 Nature Unraveled
(READ: Turner, pp. 84-101)

Th Oct 15 NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Tu Oct 20 Darwin and the Origin of Species
(READ: Turner, pp. 102-120)

Th Oct 22 Marx and the Working Class
(READ: Turner, pp. 121-135)

2ND PAPER due Oct 27 (5 pp; graduate students 8 pp – due on Nov 3): Compare the turn to Subjectivity (and the Subject) with alternative positions such as Medievalism, Evolutionism or Communism. What does this tension tell you about the historical formation of modern Europe? How is this tension reflected in the writings of some of the important figures in the European intellectual tradition?

Tu Oct 27 Sublime Art

Th Oct 29 The Romantic Cult of the Artist
(READ: Turner, pp. 136-154)

November

Tu Nov 3 Defining Nationalism
(READ: Turner, pp. 155-174)

Th Nov 5 The Nation-State as an Imagined Community

Tu Nov 10 Racism as Ideology
(READ: Turner, pp. 175-192)

Th Nov 12 Modern Antisemitism

Tu Nov 17 The Case Wagner
(READ: Turner, pp. 193-207)

Th Nov 19 Struggles for Emancipation
(READ: Turner, pp. 208-225)

3RD PAPER due Nov 24 (3 pp; graduate students 8-10 pp; alternatively, grad students can write a research paper of the same length on a topic of their choosing): What
might be the reason that violent ideologies such as nationalism, racism, and modern antisemitism emerged in the context of modern European thought? How were these ideologies challenged by the various struggles for emancipation?

Tu Nov 24  
*At the Limits of European Modernity*
(READ: Turner, pp. 226-242)

Th Nov 26  
*Nietzsche and the Challenge of European Nihilism*
(READ: Turner, pp. 243-265)

**December**

Tu Dec 1  
*Old Europe versus New Europe?*
(READ: Habermas and Derrida, pp. 291-297)

Th Dec 3  
*Europe in a State of Crisis*
(READ: Agamben, pp. 1-6)

**Tu Dec 8**  
**FINAL EXAMINATION**