

TAU International Liberal Arts Program

Dr. Yoav Fromer

yoavfromer@post.tau.ac.ilOffice Hours: TBA (Webb, Room 531)**Modernity and its Discontents**

This introductory seminar to the liberal arts examines the origins, meanings, legacies and consequences of Modernity starting in the 18th century with the dawn of European Enlightenment and stretching across three centuries to the aftermath of the Second World War. The course will explore the political, philosophical, economic, social, technological and cultural transformations ushered in by Modernity and will, among other things, ask the following questions: what does it mean to be modern? What values, norms and institutions does Modernity entail? What are its benefits and consequences? Is there a “crisis” of modernity? Are we still living in a modern age – and if not – what comes after? Among the themes to be explored are: secularism and religion, individualism, science and rationality, democracy, bureaucracy, capitalism, nationalism, mechanization and industrialization, consciousness and identity, gender and race.

The course will engage a strong interdisciplinary approach and proceed thematically and chronologically through a study of key political-philosophical tracts paired with corresponding works of literary fiction (primarily novellas and short stories). Readings will include works by seminal political thinkers such as Kant, Paine, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Marx, Freud and Foucault, and by authors such as Balzac, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Conrad, Kafka, Woolf and Beckett. The readings will be complemented by corresponding works of art (David, Goya, Friedrich, Munch, Picasso, Dali, and Magritte) and Music (Mozart, Wagner, Beethoven, and Stravinsky) in an effort to demonstrate how powerful impulses of Modernity manifested themselves commensurately across different forms of aesthetic representation.

Course Requirements:Grading and Assignments (mandatory)

- **19%** in-class Midterm Exam with Reading ID's
 - **31%** Final Paper (5-7 pages). Due Date TBA
 - **50%** class Participation and a Short Response Paper (2 pages). Due Dates TBA
- Participation includes either informed in-class participation about the assigned readings/materials **or** written participation sent via email to me prior (or immediately after) the class.

Attendance

- You are allowed **THREE** unexcused absences (without Dr.'s Note or Emergency circumstance). Any additional unexcused absence will incur a penalty in your final grade for the course.

- **PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES IN CLASS!!!**