

Absinthe, Anarchists, and the Avant-Garde: European Urban Life between the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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By the end of the nineteenth century, the population of western Europe was mostly urban, and that of central Europe was well on its way. This transition spawned a new urban culture that changed art, society, politics and the very shape of the cities themselves. This period marked a culmination of nineteenth-century industrialism, imperialism, and socialism. But this was also when modernism was born; art and architecture changed quickly from the sentimental naturalism of Art Nouveau to the austere Jugendstil. Most of all, this is period when mass culture developed to unite, inform, entertain, and distract the urban masses.

Looking back to this period after the Great War, the French began calling it the *Belle Époque*, or "the good old days." We will be looking back from the end of our century to study three of these cities: London, Paris, and Vienna. We will examine these cities as social milieus, spectacles, works of art, centers of empire, political environments, and incubators of modern art, philosophy and politics.

We will discuss one book or set of readings each week. In addition to this reading, students will also pursue their research project and consult with the instructor outside of scheduled weekly meeting.

Readings: All readings are available for 24 hours from the Odegaard Library Reserve desk, and on sale at the University Bookstore.

Barnaby Conrad III, *Absinthe: History in a Bottle*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988).

Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*. (New York: Vintage, 1981).

Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities. Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Debora L. Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

Graded Assignments: — (percentage of term grade)

Class participation — (20%)

Students must arrive punctually at each meeting of the colloquium having done the assigned reading and reflected upon it, developing questions, criticism, and interpretations to share with the group.

Leading a discussion — (20%)

At least once during the quarter, each student must help lead the discussion. This will include preparing questions, interpretations, and additional perspective relating to the week's reading.

The Paper

Along with our weekly readings and discussions, students will also research a topic related to the themes of the course and write an essay of 15-20 pp. The process for this project will consist of two parts:

Proposal — (20%)

Students will choose their topics in consultation with the instructor. This first phase will culminate in a short (2-4 pp.) research proposal with a bibliography. The proposal should present the question, the sources that will be used, and the main historiographic questions related to both. Written proposals will be due 27 April.

Final draft — (40%)

The final draft of the essay will be due in class at the last meeting, 1 June. I will be happy to read rough drafts through 30 May. Students should have first drafts written no later than the penultimate week of May (21-27).

Week I: 30 March Introduction and organization

Introduction of the course
Commitments for leading discussion
First discussion of potential paper topics

Week II: 6 April Our object of study: Belle Époque Cities

For Discussion:

Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

Further reading: Works on the study of cities.

Jacobs, Jane. *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life*. (New York: Random House, 1984).

Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1961).

Week III: 13 April The City as Metropole: London 1900

For Discussion:

Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Further reading: Life in Edwardian London.

Conrad, Joseph. *The Secret Agent: a simple tale*.

Dangerfield, George. *The Strange Death of Liberal England*. (1935).

Marcus, Sharon. *Apartment stories: city and home in nineteenth-century Paris and London*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992).

Week IV: 20 April Paris: The City as Entertainment

For Discussion:

Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities. Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Further reading: Life in Belle-Époque Paris.

Ben-Amos, Avner. "The sacred center of power: Paris and republican state funerals." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 22, no. 1 (Summer 1991).

Christianson, Rupert. *Paris Babylon: The Story of the Paris Commune*. (New York, Penguin, 1994). [Published in Great Britain as *Tales of the New Babylon: Paris 1869-1875* by Sinclair-Stevenson 1994.]

Horne, Alistair. *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune, 1870-71*. (London: 1965).

Kete, Kathleen. *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

Rearick, Charles. *Pleasures of the Belle Époque: Entertainment and Festivity in Turn-of-the-Century France*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Shattuck, Roger. *The Banquet Years. The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I*. (New York, Vintage, 1968).

Weber, Eugen. *France, Fin-de-Siècle*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1986).

Week V: 27 April The Birth of the Modern in Vienna

For Discussion:

Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. (New York: Vintage, 1981).

Further reading: Society, Culture and Politics in Vienna.

Beller, Steven. *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Clare, George. *Last Waltz in Vienna: the Rise and Destruction of a Family, 1842-1942*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982).

Janik, Allan. *Wittgenstein's Vienna*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973).

Johnston, William M. *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938*. (Berkeley: University of California, 1972).

Musil, Robert. *The Man without Qualities*.

Rozenblit, Marsha L. *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

The Vienna Coffeehouse Wits 1890-1938. Translated, edited, and with an introduction by Harold B. Segel (West Lafayette, Ind: Purdue University Press, 1993).

Sked, Alan. *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1914*. (New York: Longman, 1989).

Weitzmann, Walter R. "The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914," in Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak and Gerhard Botz, eds., *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*. (New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1987), 121-151.

Wistrich, Robert. *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Zweig, Stefan. *The World of Yesterday*. (1941).

Week VI: 4 May Comparing Cities: Vienna and Budapest

For Discussion:

Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Further reading: More on urban life late in the Habsburg Empire.

Lukacs, John. *Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture*. (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1988).

Cornwall, Mark, ed. *The Last Years of Austrian Hungary*. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990).

Jászi, Oscar. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Empire*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

May, Arthur. *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951).

Péter, László and Robert Pynsent. *The Intellectuals and the Future in the Habsburg Monarchy 1890-1914*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1988).

Week VII: 11 May Design for Life: Art Nouveau, Jugendstil

For Discussion:

Debora L. Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

Further reading: Hector Guimard, Art Nouveau architect.

Ferré, Felipe. *Hector Guimard*. Translated by Robert Erich Wolf. (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1988).

Week VIII: 18 May Rejecting Modernism: Arts & Crafts

For Discussion:

William Morris, political writings, including: "The Lesser Arts," "Art and Socialism," "How We Live and How We Might Live," "The Society of the Future," and "How I Became A Socialist."

Further reading: More on William Morris.

Macdonald, Bradley J. *William Morris and the Aesthetic Constitution of Politics*. (New York: Lexington Books, 1999.)

Naylor, Gillian. *The Arts and Crafts Movement in England: A Study of its Sources, Ideals, and Influences on Design Theory*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971).

Harvey, Charles, and Jon Press. *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain*. (New York: Manchester University Press, 1991).

----- *Enterprise and Ethics: The Life and Works of William Morris*. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1996).

Week IX: 25 May Fin-de-siècle Drug Culture

For Discussion:

Barnaby Conrad III, *Absinthe: History in a Bottle*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988).

Further reading: The Drugs and the Scene.

Berridge, Virginia. "The Origins of the English Drug 'Scene' 1890-1930," *Medical History* [Great Britain] 32:1 (1988), 51-64.

Lanier, Doris. *Absinthe: The Cocaine of the Nineteenth Century. A History of the Hallucinogenic Drug and Its Effect on Artists and Writers in Europe and the United States*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1995).

Haine, W. Scott. *The World of the Paris Café. Sociability among the French Working Class, 1789-1914.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Prestwich, P. E. "Temperance in France: The Curious Case of Absinth," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, 6:2 (Winter/Hiver 1979), 301-319.

Week X: 1 June Fighting mass culture: Anarchism

For Discussion:

Selections from Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin-de-Siècle France.* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

Further reading: The Anarchist philosophers.

Hoffman Robert L. *Revolutionary Justice. The Social and Political Theory of P.-J. Proudhon.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972).

Kropotkin, Peter. *The Commune of Paris.* (1909).

----- *The Conquest of Bread.* (1907).

----- *Fields, factories and workshops: or, Industry combined with agriculture and brain work with manual work.* (1913).

Morland, David. *Demanding the Impossible: Human Nature and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Social Anarchism.* (Cassell Academic, 1997).

Plekhanof, George. *Anarchism and Socialism.* (1895).

Rocker, Rudolf. *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism.*

Additional Readings

Biely, Andrey. *St. Petersburg*. (1913).

Fritzsche, Peter. *Reading Berlin 1900*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Hobsbawm, Eric, ed. *The Invention of Tradition*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Kieval, Hillel J. *The Making of the Czech Jewry: national conflict and Jewish society in Bohemia, 1870-1918*. (New York: Oxford University, 1988).

Lukacs, John. *Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and its Culture*. (New York: Grove, 1989).

Neuberger, Joan. *Hooliganism: crime, culture, and power in St. Petersburg, 1900-1914*. (Berkeley: University of Calif. Press, 1993).

Siegel, Jerrold. *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930*. (New York: Viking Press, 1986).

Zola, Émile. *Paris*. (1898).