

**HISTORY 571**

**FALL 2003**

**POLITICS AND THE FRENCH INTELLECTUAL**

**Instructor:** Paul Mazgaj

**Office:** 213 McIver

**Office Hrs.:** Tues. & Thurs.: 1:30-2:30

And by Appointment

**REQUIRED BOOKS:**

**To be purchased:**

Johnson, Martin P. *The Dreyfus Affair* (St. Martin's Press, 1999)

Lottman, Herbert *The Left Bank* (University of Chicago, 1998 ed.)

Koestler, Arthur *Darkness at Noon* (Bantam, 1984 ed.)

Kaplan, Alice *The Collaborator* (University of Chicago, 2001 ed.)

Sartre, J.-P. *Dirty Hands in No Exit* (Vintage, 1989)

**On Electronic Reserve (ER):**

Gay, Peter *Voltaire's Politics*, 273-308

Popkin, Jeremy *History of Modern France*, 35-59

Graña, César *Modernity and its Discontents*, 3-28

Marx, Karl *The Portable Marx*, 155-58; 203-17

Nolte, E. *The Three Faces of Fascism*, 54-87

Hanna, Martha *The Mobilization of Intellect*, 78-105

Léon Blum's Speech to the Congress of Tours

Fisher, David *Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement*,  
79-111

Benda, Julien *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*, 29-60

Courtois, Stéphane *The Black Book of Communism*, 53-70; 146-58; 184-202

Crossman, Richard *The God that Failed*, 165-95

Koestler, Arthur *The Yogi and the Commissar*, 3-14

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice *Humanism and Terror*, 1-24

de Beauvoir, Simone *The Second Sex*, xiii-xxix; 716-732

Aron, Raymond *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, 35-65; 203-35

Marwick, Arthur *The Sixties*, 602-18

Foucault, Michel *Discipline and Punish*, 3-16; 195-228

Foucault, Michel "Truth and Power" in *Power/Knowledge*, 109-133

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The great crises that shook European civilization in the twentieth century--the world wars, the economic collapse of the 1930s, the rise of fascist and communist regimes, and the Cold War--brought artists and writers into the public forum, creating what has been more recently labeled the "public intellectual." This development has, in its turn,

stimulated a lively debate on the proper role of the intellectual in the life of Western society. The emergence of the public intellectual and the controversy that accompanied it were particularly acute in France, where intellectuals have played a greater political role than in any other Western society. This course will focus on several stages in this debate. It will begin with an examination of the emergence of the intellectual, especially in the decades just before World War I. Here we will look at contrasting "models" of the intellectual as they were first articulated during and just after the Dreyfus Affair. The focus will then shift to World War One and the Russian Revolution, both of which had a profound impact on intellectuals. Though most French intellectuals tended to distance themselves from political and social concerns in the 1920s, by the early 1930s there was a major sea change of attitude in response to the Great Depression and rise of fascism, particularly to the rise of Hitler's Third Reich. As intellectuals mobilized under the banner of the Popular Front, Paris became the Mecca of the "engaged" intellectual.

The high point of "engagement" was reached with the rise on existentialism in the wake of the defeat of France in 1940 and the German Occupation. Here we will examine the role of existentialist intellectuals like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir in the politics of the Cold War. The last section of the course deals with the most recent period and includes consideration of the student revolt of 1968, the rise of postmodernist gurus like Michel Foucault, and finally the decline of the "classic intellectual" beginning in the 1980s.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. ATTENDANCE OF ALL STUDENT IS *REQUIRED*, NOT OPTIONAL.**

The class depends on your regular attendance and participation. Only officially certified absences will be accepted. All unexcused absences will affect your grade. *Beyond two, they will seriously affect your grade.*

**2. EXAMINATIONS.** A mid-term and a final. Essay format. *The final examination will be given on the last day of class.*

### **3. SEMESTER PAPER**

#### **-REQUIREMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.**

Recommended length: eight pages. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and fully documented. The topic should be an *interpretive* problem, selected from topics covered on the course syllabus, and approved by me. The vehicle for this approval will be a short but thoughtfully-conceived and well-written prospectus describing your interpretive problem. You should also include a short bibliography indicating the sources that you intend to use. These sources must include at least one book and two articles beyond the assigned course reading. All sources must be serious pieces of historical scholarship (if in question, check with me). All "due dates" (see below) are, barring certified medical emergencies, to be taken seriously.

**-REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS.** Recommended length: ten to twelve pages. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and fully documented. The topic should be an *interpretive* problem, selected from material covered in the course, and approved by me. The vehicle for this approval will be a short

but thoughtfully-conceived and well-written prospectus describing your interpretive problem. You should also include a short bibliography indicating the sources that you intend to use. These sources must include at least three books and three articles beyond the assigned course reading. All sources must be serious pieces of historical scholarship (if in question, check with me). All "due dates" (see below) are, barring certified medical emergencies, to be taken seriously.

**4. DISCUSSION.** The readings are keyed to syllabus topics. You should have the readings completed before the day a particular topic is to be discussed in class. Your discussion grade will be determined by the frequency and quality of your contribution to class discussion.

**5. GRADES.** The following elements will determine your final grade:  
mid-term exam--30%  
final exam--30%  
paper--30%  
discussion grade--10%

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS** (all dates are approximate and subject to adjustment)

## **I: THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN INTELLECTUAL**

Aug. 18: Introduction

21: The Enlightenment and the *philosophe*

**Reading:** Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, 273-308, ER

26: The French Revolution and French Political Culture

**Reading:** Popkin, *History of Modern France*, 35-59, ER

28: The Romantic Revolution: Alienated Artists in a Bourgeois World

**Reading:** Graña, *Modernity and its Discontents*, 3-28, ER

Sept. 2: Marxian Socialism and French Political Culture

**Reading:** Marx, *The Portable Karl Marx*, 131-46; 155-58; 203-17, ER

4: The Eye of the Needle: The Intellectual and the Schools

**Reading:** Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 1-65

## **II. FROM ENGAGEMENT TO WITHDRAWAL: ZOLA'S *J'ACCUSE* TO BENDA'S *TREASON OF THE INTELLECTUALS***

9: The Intellectual Comes of Age: The Dreyfus Affair

**Reading:** Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 66-158

11: The Anti-Dreyfusards: Barrès, Maurras and the Action Française

**Reading:** Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, 54-87, ER

- Sept. 16: The Great War: The Mobilization and Disenchantment of Intellect  
**Reading:** Hanna, *Mobilization of Intellect*, 75-105, ER
- 18: Revolutionary Europe, 1917-20: Whither France?  
**Reading:** Fisher, *Romain Rolland*, 79-111, ER  
 Blum's Speech at the Congress of Tours, ER
- 23: The Demobilization of Intellect: Gide, Benda, and *Nouvelle Revue Française*  
**Reading:** Benda, *Betrayal of the Intellectuals*, 29-60

### III. THE 1930s: COMMUNISM, FASCISM, AND THE REMOBILIZATION OF INTELLECTUALS

- Sept. 25: The Context of the 1930s I: The Great Depression and the Faltering of Liberal Democracy  
**Reading:** Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 1-138
- 30: The Context of the 1930s I: The Stalinist Revolution—Dream and Reality  
**Reading:** Courtois, *Black Book of Communism*, 53-70; 146-58; 184-202, ER
- Oct. 2: The Intellectual as Communist: The Case of Arthur Koestler  
**Due Date:** Paper prospectus for both graduates and undergrads
- 7: The Intellectual as Fellow-Traveler: The Case of André Gide  
**Reading:** Crossman, *The God That Failed*, 165-95, ER
- 9: Politics and the Novel  
**Reading:** Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, complete
- 14: FALL BREAK  
 16: MID-TERM EXAM

### IV. THE POSTWAR: COMMITMENT AT HIGH TIDE—THE AGE OF SARTRE

- 21: The Context of the 1940s: Defeat, Collaboration, and Resistance  
**Reading:** Kaplan, *The Collaborator*, 1-121
- 23: The Intellectual as Fascist: The Case of Robert Brasillach  
**Reading:** Kaplan, *The Collaborator*, 122-234
- 28: The Existentialism Craze: From the Early Sartre to the Existential Revolutionary  
**Reading:** Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 141-238
- 30: Film
- Nov. 4: de Beauvoir: Existentialism and Feminism  
**Reading:** de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, xiii-xxix; 716-32, ER
- 6: Sartre: Existentialism, Politics, and Ethics  
**Reading:** Sartre, *Dirty Hands in No Exit*

11: Existentialists as Cold Warriors: Revolutionary Violence and Stalinism

**Reading:** Koestler, *The Yogi and the Commissar*, 3-14  
Merleau-Ponty, *Humanism and Terror*, 1-24

13: The Liberal Opposition: Albert Camus and Raymond Aron

**Reading:** Aron, *Opium of the Intellectuals*, 35-93

## V. THE TWILIGHT OF THE CLASSIC INTELLECTUAL

18: The Context of the 1960s: The Gaullist Revolution and the "Events of 1968"

**Reading:** Marwick, *The Sixties*, 602-618

20: Revolution, Postmodernity and the New Intellectual: From Sartre to Foucault

**Reading:** Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 3-16; 195-228

Foucault, "Truth and Power," from *Power/Knowledge*, 109-133

25: The Fading of the Revolutionary Ideal: From Solzhenitzyn to François Furet

**Due Date:** Semester Paper for both Graduates

27: THANKSGIVING

Dec. 2: Revolution Reconsidered: The Bicentennial of 1789 and France's National Identity

**Reading:** no assignment

4: FINAL EXAM