

The Dreyfus Affair — Dress Rehearsal or Second Act?
KHC RS 102

Fall 2011
Tues/Thurs: 9:30-11:00

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Romance Studies
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Course Description

This seminar—in history and literature, but resonating significantly with the disciplines of law and mass communication--will focus on one of the crucial sequences in European history during the century whose capital was famously said to be Paris.

The Dreyfus Affair, which saw anti-Semitic riots in almost every French city in 1898, marked a turning point in the history of France's Jews and of the European Left. It was also, according to Theodor Herzl, the occasion of the birth of political Zionism. It bequeathed to Europe the word and institution of the "intellectual," and as such constituted a decisive episode in the history of the West.

The seminar will situate the Affair between two historical sequences: on the one hand, the genocide of the Jews (during World War II), for which it constituted, according to Hannah Arendt, a kind of dress rehearsal; on the other, the financial and ethical scandal (fueled by anti-Semitism) that followed the failed French expedition to build a Panama Canal, for which the Affair constituted a second act. (In a word, there were two reactions to the French failure to build the Canal: the American one was to build the Canal; the French one was to give us the Dreyfus Affair...)

Europe, the seminar will endeavor to demonstrate, was never the same thereafter.

Required Texts

(available at the B.U. Barnes & Noble Bookstore, via Blackboard, and on the Web, as specified):

Louis Begley, *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*

Lelie Derfler, *The Dreyfus Affair: Tragedy of Errors*

(<http://www.archive.org/details/dreyfusaffairtra001222mbp>)

Emile Zola, "J'Accuse" (Letter to Félix Faure, President of the Republic, 13 January 1898).

(<http://www.marxists.org/archive/zola/1898/jaccuse.htm>)

Theodor Herzl: The Jewish State (1896)

(<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzl2.html>)

Hannah Arendt: The Origins of Totalitarianism, pp. 3-120.

David McCullough, The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal

Zeev Sternhell, The Revolutionary Right: French Origins of Fascism

Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, Vichy and the Jews (Basic Books)

Régis Debray, Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France

Frederick Brown, For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus

Marcel Proust, selections from Jean Santeuil, Remembrance of Things Past

Attendance

Attendance is required.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to abide by both KHC and BU's Undergraduate Academic Conduct Code. The Academic Conduct Code can be found at

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>.

Grading

§ class participation (33%)

§ midterm exam (33%)

§ final paper (34%).

Course Outline

Week of January 17, The Affair Today:

Louis Begley, Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters, pp. 1-82.

Week of January 24:

Begley, Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters, pp. 83-213.

Week of January 31: Dreyfus in Movie History:

Méliès' Dreyfus Affair (1899); The Life of Emile Zola (with Paul Muni, 1937); I Accuse (screenplay by Gore Vidal, 1958); Prisoner of Honor (Ken Russell, 1991).

Week of February 7, Derfler, The Dreyfus Affair: Tragedy of Errors, pp. 1-86

Student presentations based on debates in Derfler book.

Week of February 14, Documents I (The European Intellectual Tradition): Emile Zola, "J'Accuse" (Letter to Félix Faure, President of the Republic, 13 January 1898).

Week of February 23: Documents II (The Birth of Political Zionism): Theodore Herzl: The Jewish State (1896).

Week of February 28: A Philosophical Perspective on the Affair: Hannah Arendt: The Origins of Totalitarianism, pp. 3-120.

March 6: Midterm Exam

Week of March 20: The Dreyfus Affair as Second Act (The Panama Scandal): David McCullough, *The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal*, pp. 17-241.

Week of March 27: The Dreyfus Affair as Dress Rehearsal:
Zeev Sternhell, *The Revolutionary Right: French Origins of Fascism, "Left-wing Anti-Semitism,"* pp. 177-214.
Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy and the Jews*, pp. 35-77; 313-340.

Week of April 3: History of the Intellectual:
Régis Debray, *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France*, pp. 49-114.
Examination of Materials from the Beitler Collection (on the Dreyfus Affair).

Week of April 10: Culture Wars:
Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus*, pp. 3-154.

Week of April 17: Culture Wars (II): Brown, *Ibid.*, pp. 155-266.

Week of April 24:: Marcel Proust, "First of the Dreyfusards"
Selections from Proust's *Jean Santeuil* and *Remembrance of Things Past*

May 1: Conclusion: The One Hundred Most Beautiful Images of the Dreyfus Affair

Final papers will be due on May 4.