This seminar—in history and literature, but resonating significantly with the disciplines of law and mass communications—will focus on one of the nodal points of 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 crucial 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.

Readings:

Louis Begley, *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*
Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century*
Emile Zola, “J’Accuse” (Letter to Félix Faure, President of the Republic, 13 January 1898).
Theodol Herzl: *The Jewish State* (1896).
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, *Jean Santeuil*

Week I: The Affair Today:
Week II:

Week III: Shifting Perceptions
Ruth Harris, Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century,
“Intellectuals and Anti-Intellectuals,” pp. 135-216.


Week IV, Harris, Ibid., “Movements and Mystiques,” pp. 217-306

Week V, Documents I (The European Intellectual Tradition): Emile Zola, “J’Accuse” (Letter to Félix Faure, President of the Republic, 13 January 1898).


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

Week VIII: 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 IX: The Dreyfus Affair as Dress Rehearsal:

Week X: History of the Intellectual:
Régis Debray, Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France, pp. 49-114.

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

Week XII: Culture Wars (II):
Brown, Ibid., pp. 155-266.

Week XIII: Marcel Proust, “First of the Dreyfusards”
Selections from Proust’s Jean Santeuil and Remembrance of Things Past on the Affair.

Conclusion: The One Hundred Most Beautiful Images of the Dreyfus Affair
Final papers will be due on the last day of class.