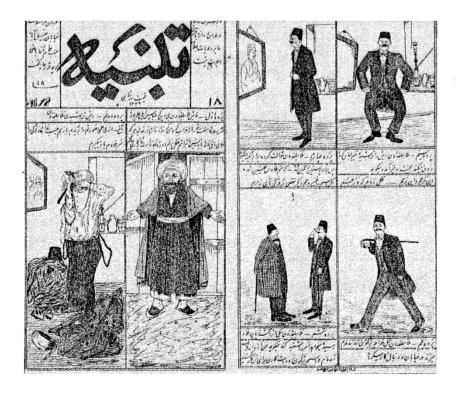
Writing and Walking the Global City (ENGL 4418)

MW 4.00-5.15 pm CST | Fall 2020 | Office Hours: W 5.15-6.30 or by appt.

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What does it mean to be modern? This course poses this question by turning to the eternal protagonist of urban life: the flâneur. Call him a dandy, fop, artist, idler, or observer—this figure, long associated with nineteenth-century Paris, was in fact a universal feature of the global metropolis. But should we consider bicycling through Mexico City or driving through Tehran as forms of flânerie? Is flânerie always the privilege of the upper class, or can it include the deliveries of service workers as well? Does flânerie describe a narrative style, or even a mode of argumentation, in addition to a form of literal walking? Is the flaneur always afflicted by the melancholic spleen of Charles Baudelaire or the nostalgic hüzün of Orhan Pamuk, or can he experience joy? To what extent is flânerie gendered—can we have, in other words, a *flâneuse*? Canvassing the various ways that streetwalkers have historically taken up space in metropolises old and new, East and West, this course explores the potential, and the limitations, of global modernism in fiction and film. Weekly discussion posting to T Learn (by 9pm each Tuesday), one creative assignment, one short essay (3 pp.), and one final essay (8 pp.) are required. Authors include Virginia Woolf, Valeria Luiselli, Sadeq Hedyat, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Sophie Calle, Marilynne Robinson, and Teju Cole.

Required Texts

- 1) Valeria Luiselli, Sidewalks [Coffee House]
- 2) Ahmet Midhat, Felâtun Bey and Râkim Efendi [Syracuse]
- 3) Sadeq Hedayat, The Blind Owl [Grove]
- 4) Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Double [Vintage]
- 5) Teju Cole, Open City [Random House]
- 6) W.G. Sebald, Austerlitz [Modern Library]
- 7) Marilynne Robinson, Housekeeping [Picador]

Assessment

- 1) Attendance, participation, & weekly discussion posts [30%]
- 2) 4-5 page Creative Assignment [20%]
- 3) 3-page essay [20%]
- 4) 7-8-page essay [30%]

Course Schedule

Unit One: What is Flânerie?

8/26: Introduction

8/31: Poe, "The Man of the Crowd"; Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life"

9/2: Virginia Woolf, "Street Haunting"; Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust* (ch. 1); Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"

9/7: Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century." Selected convolutes from *The Arcades Project*.

9/9: Benjamin, continued.

*Guest lecture by Henry Sussman (Prof. Emeritus of German, Yale)

Unit Two: East/West Crossings

9/14: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Double* (pp. 1-87)

9/16: Dostoevsky (finish). Marshall Berman, "The Modernism of Underdevelopment"

9/21: Ahmet Midhat, Felâtun Bey and Râkim Efendi (pp.1-75)

9/23: Midhat (finish, including "Afterword.")

9/28: Sadeq Hedayat, The Blind Owl.

9/30: Hedayat, continued. Raymond Williams, "When Was Modernism?"

10/4: First essay (3 pp.) due at midnight.

Unit Three: Flâneuse

10/5: Jean-Luc Godard, Vivre sa vie. [Trinity]. Poe, "The Oval Portrait."

10/7: Susan Buck-Morss, "The Flâneur, Sandwichman, and the Whore" Elizabeth Wilson, "The Invisible Flâneur?"

10/12: Valeria Luiselli, Sidewalks

10/14: Luiselli (continued).

10/21: Sophie Calle, *The Address Book*Nancy Armstrong, excerpt from *Desire and Domestic Fiction*

Unit Four: Interiority

10/26: Marilynne Robinson, Housekeeping

10/28: Robinson, continued.

11/2: Teju Cole, Open City (pp. 1-146). Excerpt from Watt, Rise of the Novel *With guest Karan Mahajan (novelist, Assistant Prof., Brown)

11/4: Finish Cole.

Unit Five: Socratic Walking

11/9: Plato, Republic, Books II, VI & VII

11/11: Plato, Republic (continued).

Creative assignment/outline due 11/13 at midnight

Unit Six: Historical Memory

11/16: W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz* (pp. 1-100).

11/18: Sebald, continued (pp. 100-200). Listen to radio interview.

11/30: Finish Sebald (200-end).

Unit Six: Exteriority (in film)

12/2: Chantal Akerman, *News from Home*.

Ja'far Panahi, *Taxi*. [Both on <u>Trinitv</u>]

Excerpt from Michel de Certeau ("Walking in the City").

Unit Seven: Walking Outside the City

12/7: Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" Final class! Share thesis statements for final essays with class.

12/13: Final essay (7-8 pp.) due at midnight