Course Description

There have been individuals, throughout history, who have fought in the public sphere for truth, justice, and freedom. In late nineteenth-century France, these figures came to be called *intellectuels* (translated as “public intellectuals” in English). Public intellectuals became important figures in twentieth-century public life, especially in France where their role in society has been continually discussed and debated. They are not exactly political activists or pundits. For Edward Saïd, the ideal public intellectual is a perpetual outsider opposed to the status quo, someone who is fiercely independent, a gadfly who makes us uneasy, yet at the same time a charismatic figure who fights for and embodies universal principles of truth and justice.

In this course, we will look at the debates surrounding public intellectuals and the role they play in society. In addition, we will read texts by French public intellectuals to get a more immediate sense of who these figures were. The readings also will lead us to discuss a range of questions about taking action in the public sphere: What does it take to bring about positive change in society? As individuals, what are our responsibilities with respect to how our society functions? How do different forms of media (newspapers, books, television, internet) shape our ability to take a stand in the public sphere?

Required Texts (hardcopy, no e-books) available at UWM’s virtual bookstore:


N.B.: If you choose to purchase these books somewhere other than the UWM virtual bookstore, use the ISBN I’ve provided when searching for them to ensure that you get the correct edition.

A course pack, including short texts by Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, and Michel Foucault, will be available at Clark Graphics (2915 N Oakland Ave.) by the first week of the semester.
**Grade Breakdown**

Presence, Preparation, and Participation in Class Discussion  
25%

Forum Responses on D2L (4 to 5 throughout semester)  
15%

Two shorter papers (4-5 pages)  
30%

Final Paper (7-10 pages)  
30%

**Grade Distribution**

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<td>A</td>
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**Work Load**

The UW-System credit hour policy stipulates that students must devote a minimum of 144 hours per semester to each 3-credit course. This amounts to approximately 10 hours per week. In this course, on a weekly basis, you can expect to spend 2.5 hours in class participating in lecture/discussion and approximately 6 hours per week preparing for class and completing weekly writing assignments. You can also expect to spend at least 25 hours over the course of the semester working on the two shorter papers and the final paper. In all you will have spent a minimum of 144 hours on this course over the entire semester.

**Attendance and Participation**

A high level of participation is expected of all students in class, and you will be expected to check your email daily and access the course D2L site on a regular basis. Please come prepared to discuss the assigned material for each class session. Regular attendance is required for this course. After the second absence, any unexcused absence will lower the final grade by 1%. To avoid distraction, no use of cellphones or other handheld devices will be permitted during class.

**Forum Responses**

You will post a 200-300 word response to a question on the D2L discussion forum several times during the semester. If other students have posted a response to a question before you, you must read all responses before you write your response to that question. You can then respond to a classmate’s submission or go in a different direction, but in either case you should add something new to the discussion. Your posts should be based on your attentive reading of the text and should engage with the text. The goal of these assignment is to develop critical thinking skills. Your responses should take the form of evidence-based logical arguments.

**Papers**

You will write several thesis-driven papers for this course. The shorter papers (4-5 pages) will be responses to prompts. The final paper (7-10 pages) will focus on a topic related to the course content. You will choose the topic yourself in consultation with the professor. The final paper will include a research component.
GER Statement: Learning Outcomes for this Course

This course meets the UWM General Education Requirements in the division of the Humanities. All Humanities courses have the following learning outcomes: students will be able to “identify the formation, traditions, and ideas essential to major bodies of historical, cultural, literary, or philosophical knowledge” (criteria 1). In addition, this course has the follow learning outcome: student will be able to “respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study; this may be through logical, textual, formal, historical, or aesthetic analysis, argument and/or interpretation” (criteria 2).

GER Assessment: Assignments Used to Measure Learning Outcomes

The final paper (along with others assignments) will be used to measure the learning outcomes for this course. Students will draw on course readings and on their own research to explore a topic concerning the development of the public intellectual in France (criteria 1). In the final paper students will also work on Critical Thinking skills (one of the UW System’s shared learning goals), as they will be developing evidence-based, logical analyses of the literary, historical, philosophical, and political dimensions of primary texts, as well as evaluating and drawing on secondary texts to build a compelling argument. In doing so, students will also be developing the ability to respond coherently and persuasively to the materials of humanities study (criteria 2). The final paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Evaluation and Interpretation of primary and secondary sources (40 points)
2. Development of an original thesis and cogent, evidence-based argument (40 points)
3. Clear and Cohesive writing (20 points)

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply fully with UWM’s policies on academic honesty (for guidelines see http://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/academic-misconduct.cfm).

University Policies

Please see the following link for other UWM course policies:

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf
Schedule

Weeks 1-2 – What is an Intellectual?
  Introduction
  Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*

Weeks 3-4 – The Birth of the Intellectual
  Emile Zola and the Dreyfus Affair

Weeks 5-6 – Precursors: The Enlightenment and the *Philosophes*
  Voltaire, The Callas Affair
  Enlightenment Values and Figures

Weeks 7-8 – The Role of Writing
  Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?*

Weeks 9-11 – Gender and Colonialism
  Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (selections)
  Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
  Franz Fanon, “Racism and Culture”
  Albert Camus, *Algerian Chronicles* (selections)
  Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism* (selections)

Weeks 12-15 – The Role of the Media
  Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television*
  Michel Foucault on the “specific intellectual” (selections)
  Pierre Carles, *Sociology is a Martial Art* (film)
  Pierre-André Boutang, *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z* (film – selections)