FRENCH 212 A: French Masterworks: Modern In English

Proust and his World

Meeting Time: MW 3:30pm - 5:20pm

Location: ART 317

SLN: 14909

Joint Sections: 2019,winter,C%20LIT,250,B

Instructor: Douglas Collins

Additional Details:

"How I admire Proust," said Georges Bataille, "for his strategy of discovering the secret of time, not in the Infinite, but in a cup of tea."

A difficult book? Hardly! Modesty as method. It is the naive, unassuming approach to In Search of Lost Time that alone brings forward the master theme of the masterpiece—a materialism of the insignificant, redemption of the simplest features of everyday experience, necessity of unmediated attention to the most mundane of phenomena, nobility of a democratized access to it. Monument that it is, the theme is the contempt for the monument—the array of its toxic metonymies, sociological, psychological, philosophical.

Reading Proust requires the comparative eye. The enemy was the composer Richard Wagner, virtuoso of mass emotions, the homophobic, anti-Semitic nationalist, to whom Proust opposed models less French than Anglophone--George Eliot, Dickens, Carlyle, William Morris, Emerson, and above all, John Ruskin, whose works he translated into French.

The author will be situated in the historical and sociological context of his day (1871-1922). Issues to be managed—relevance of biography, sexual orientation, the relation of literature to other arts (painting and music), problems posed by translation, etc..

We will read the first two volumes of the novel: Swann's Way and In the Shadow of young Girls.
Catalog Description:
Introduction to major figures of French culture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Readings include Balzac, Flaubert, Proust, Sartre, and Celine. In English.

GE Requirements:
Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts (VLPA)

Credits: 5.0

Status: Active

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