The Twentieth Century and the Tradition II (HONR3302 01&02)
Spring 2015
Professor Constas
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Office hours: MW 9-10, 1:30-2:30, and by appointment

Course Description
The period since the Second World War has been one of significant changes in the domains of intellectual, cultural, vocational and social life. Since the mid-point of the 20th century there have been numerous disruptions and innovations in the ways people think, create, work and cooperate. Liberation movements across the globe continually resist authoritarianism and question authority. As a result, the personal search for meaning and value increasingly takes place in a globalized, digitized, networked world of plurality and difference. It is in this “deconstructed” world that each of us now constructs a life. The purpose of this course is to examine the nature of “postmodern” life, and to consider how some writers and artists formed by the Western cultural tradition have responded to the questions of the present.

Course Requirements
* Class attendance and preparation, reflected in class participation. Two unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your participation grade 1/3 point (e.g. from a B+ to a B). Three or more unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your participation grade one whole grade (from B to C) (25% of course grade).
* One (maybe two) short (5-7 minute) seminar presentations (details TBD).
* One semiotic analysis (“mythology”).
* Two 5-7 page essays. The essays must reflect a close reading of a text (or texts) we have read and must move beyond the content of class discussion. Explicit and numerous references to the text in question are expected. Please consult the course’s Essay Guidelines for proper format and suggested approaches (25% of course grade).
* One final exam on April 8 (25% of course grade)
* A final exam, nature TBD (25% of course grade).

Books to Purchase

Other assigned readings (*)
Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”
Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?”
Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism”
Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
Daniel Maguire, “When History Turned a Corner” (from *Christianity Without God*)
Elaine Pagels, “Gospels in Conflict: John and Thomas” (from *Beyond Belief*)
Katha Pollit, “The Smurfette Principle”
Marilynne Robinson, “Darwinism” (from *The Death of Adam*)