The Danube is all along the river of Europe. The Danube is an experiment that affects the whole world: what goes awry here can fail anywhere and everywhere; that which succeeds here gives us hope for other places.

DESCRIPTION:

The Danube is Europe’s second longest river: it flows through or borders ten countries, while its watershed covers four more. From Ancient Rome to the present, the Danube has served both as a connector and a contested terrain: from its beginnings in the German Black Forest to the Romanian and Ukrainian shores of the Black Sea, the Danube flows through a region that has emerged black and blue from imperial aspirations of domination, hostilities in the wake of the Cold War, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. The southeastern portion of the river constitutes Europe’s Other—the “Barbaropa” within the continent’s geographic boundaries—and faces another super-political entity in the European Union. This seminar charts the physical, historical, and metaphoric uses of the great river. At a time of tenuous unification in Europe, Danube River studies seek to remap the region by focusing on the river’s peoples, their cultural imaginaries and interactions, reading the river as a quintessential site of cross-cultural engagement. We will study the region’s geography and history, and explore transnational cinema, artwork, and literary texts from various Danubian cultural traditions. Through a focus on works of creative and imaginative culture—primarily, on literature and film—our course foregrounds the aesthetic mediation of actual and possible communities, in search of utopian promise in the wake of and even amid historical atrocities.

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and participation (all students) 20%
Regular reading responses (all students) 20%
Two 5-page close-reading papers (undergraduates) 30%
Final term paper (10-12 pages undergraduates) 30%

• All students will be asked to post a short response, question, or intervention (1–2 paragraphs; other media welcome) based on the readings prior to each session. We will experiment with online platforms as part of our ongoing collaborative attempt to enhance and extend discussion beyond the classroom—and to think critically about media and technology even as we seek creative ways to use them in our academic work.

• All undergraduate assignments for this *WR* course are designed to help you grow as a writer. The first two papers will focus on close readings and comparative analyses: you will be asked to dwell on details and interpret words or images in a creative, analytical, and informed fashion. We will meet individually to discuss each paper before you embark on the final paper—with a well-researched and clearly-argued original thesis.

• Graduate students will develop and present a final research paper and conference-style presentation at term’s end.
Syllabus:

Foreword
Thurs. Sep. 1
• Andrew Beattie, The Danube: A Cultural History, from “The King of the Rivers of Europe” and “In the Beginning” [ix-xx; 3-10]
• Claudio Magris, Danube excerpts: “A Question of Gutters” etc. [10-28]

UNIT 1: Introduction
Tues. Sep. 6
• Film: Donau, Dunaj, Duna, Dunav, Dunarea (Rebić, 2003)

Thurs. Sep. 8
a) Economics and Ecology
b) Mapping the River
• Magosci, Historical Atlas of Central Europe [1-56, maps and overview]

Tues. Sep. 13
c) Discourse and Geography
• Milan Kundera, “The Tragedy of Central Europe” [20 pp.]
• Maria Todorova, Imagining the Balkans, “Between Classification and Politics: The Balkans and the Myth of Central Europe” [140-160]
• Magris, “Hinternational or all-German?” [28-54]

Thurs. Sep. 15
d) Myth and Legend
• Song of the Nibelungen (short excerpt)
• Friedrich Hölderlin hymn: “The Ister”
• Hans Christian Anderson, “The Passage of the Danube,” in A Poet’s Bazaar (1846)

Tues. Sep. 20
e) Ruins and Legacies
• Film: The Ister (Barison and Ross, 2004)
• Bozovic and Miller, Introduction to Watersheds: Poetics and Politics of the Danube River [xiii-xxxi] *

UNIT 2: Ottomans and Habsburgs
Thurs. Sep. 22
• Novel: Ivo Andrić, Bridge on the River Drina (first half)
• Tomislav Longinović, “Mourning the Nation in the Post-Oriental Condition” [15 pp.] *

Tues. Sep. 27
• Novel: Ivo Andrić, Bridge on the River Drina (finish)
• Ivan Vazov, “Radetzki” (poem)
• József Attila, “By the Danube” (poem)
• Dubravka Ugrešić, “The Spirit of Kakanian Province” [15 pp.] *

Thurs. Sep. 29
• Bob Lemon, Introduction to Imperial Messages: Orientalism as Self-Critique in the Habsburg Fin-de-siècle [20 pp.]
• A. Sked, The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918 (selections)
• Jeremy King, “The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity and Beyond,” in Staging the Past [30 pp.]

*Fri. Sep. 30
*First paper due via email by 6pm*
Tues. Oct. 4
- Novel: Musil, *Man without Qualities* (selections only)
- Magris, *Danube*, “Café Central” and “Pannonia” [167-215; 241-287]

Thurs. Oct. 6
- Film: *La Ronde* (Ophuls, 1950, adaptation of Schnitzler’s play *Der Reigen*)
- Eric Kandel, “An Inward Turn: Vienna 1900,” from *The Age of Insight* [3-19]
- Freud, “On Anna O”; *Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (selections) *

UNIT 3: The Red Danube: WWII
Tues. Oct. 11
- Film: *Cold Days* (Kovacs, 1966)
- Adorno/Horkheimer, “Elements of Anti-Semitism, Limits of Enlightenment” [30 pp.]

Thurs. Oct. 13
- Film: *The Danube Exodus* (Fogacs, 1998)
- Jennifer Stob, “Private Looking and Collective Memory in *The Danube Exodus,*** Watersheds [120-143]

Tues. Oct. 18
- Film: *Frozen Time, Liquid Memories 1942-2012* (Kujundžić, 2013)
- Film history/theory: Kujundžić, “The Non-Biodegradable” *
- Film clips: *Cinema Komunisto* (Turajlić, 2012)

Tues. Oct. 25
- Novel: Danilo Kiš, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (first half)

Thurs. Oct. 27
- Novel: Danilo Kiš, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (finish)

UNIT 4: The Danube Non-Aligned
Tues. Nov. 1
- Film: *The Third Man* (Reed, 1949)
- Gale Stokes, *From Stalinism to Pluralism: Eastern Europe Since 1945* (selections)

Thurs. Nov. 3
- Novel: Peter Esterházy, *The Glance of Countess Hahn-Hahn (Down the Danube)* (half)

*Fri. Nov. 4
*Second paper due via email by 6pm*

Tues. Nov. 8

Thurs. Nov. 10
- Film: *Underground* (Kusturica, 1995)
- John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (selections) *

UNIT 5: When Powder Kegs Explode
Tues. Nov. 15
- Film: *Oxygen* (Romania)
*Research topic proposals due in class*

Thurs. Nov. 17
no class –

Tues. Nov. 29
- Film: *Powder Keg* (Paskaljević, 1998)
- Frederic Jameson, “Thoughts on Balkan Cinema” [15 pp.]
- Gorup, ed. *After Yugoslavia: Post-Yugoslav Cultural Spaces & Europe* (selections) *

Thurs. Dec. 1
- Film: *Northern Skirts* (Albert, 1999)
Conclusions and Final Presentations

Tues. Dec. 6
- Film: *Notre Musique* (Godard, 2004)
- Presentation: Marina Abramovic [MoMA retrospective]

Thurs. Dec. 8
Concluding discussion
- Presentation: Art and the Refugee Crisis

*Fri. Dec. 16
*All final papers due via email by 6pm*
*Presentations to be arranged, symposium format*