



LT 312 – LITERARY TOPOGRAPHIES: SPACES AND PLACES OF VIENNA IN AUSTRIAN LITERATURE

IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:

Metropolises provide material and inspiration for their poetic production—conversely, literary texts shape our perception of cities. This assumption particularly applies to Vienna. Especially since the “Modern Age,” Vienna has been the subject of a specific literary mythification. It is often thought of as the city of the frivolously morbid, of music, of ‘coffeehouse culture’ (“Kaffeehauskultur”), of psychoanalysis—the town of Peter Altenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Ödön von Horváth, Ilse Aichinger or, Ingeborg Bachmann. Literary topographies include, among numerous others, the Prater (Elfriede Jelinek) as well as the so-called “Ungargassenland” (Ingeborg Bachmann) or the banks of the Danube (Ödön von Horváth). Texts ranging from Arthur Schnitzler’s *Round Dance* and Thomas Bernhard’s *Heldenplatz* to Julia Rabinowich’s *Splithead* have contributed to making Vienna a place of remembrance of a lost multicultural society, of the often-repressed National Socialist past and of a vibrant contemporary migration and multicultural society with all its boundaries, complications, and opportunities.

Through this course, students will actively engage with Viennese literature. They will study and analyze seminal texts from 1900 to the present and discuss the literary construction of Viennese topographies along central themes such as migration, displacement, trauma, and community. This will allow them to understand the ever-changing city of Vienna. Moreover, the course will foster discussions of textual constructions of identity at the intersection of gender, class, ethnicity, and culture, encouraging students to contribute their unique perspectives.

This is a literature course; students are primarily asked to engage with primary texts.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: Students are not expected to be familiar with the assigned readings, however they must be prepared to engage in an intense reading and learning experience.

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures
- Individual exercises
- Close Readings
- Discussions
- Field Trips
- Debates

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation 10%
- Short writing assignments 20%
- Midterm exam 15%
- Presentation 25%
- Final exam 30%



Course Participation

Students must complete the assigned readings, participate in class discussions, engage in the assigned tasks and attend all planned field trips. The IES grading rubric for participation is available on Moodle.

Short writing assignments

Students will be assigned two short in-class-writing assignments throughout the semester, followed by a group discussion on the topic.

Midterm Exam

Students will be required to submit a 700-word essay exploring a question on one of the discussed literary texts. The midterm exam is a take home exam.

Presentation

Students will be required to participate in one group presentation (max. three students) exploring one of the discussed texts. Research questions and presentation forms will be discussed in class.

Final Exam

Students will be required to submit a 2000-word paper exploring the topic presented in the student's presentation. Their research must be well documented (including correct citation and bibliography) and reflect critical engagement with both primary and secondary resources relevant to their topic. The instructor will provide specific questions and guidelines to follow. Papers must be submitted no later than finals week (exact date TBD).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the studied texts and analyze constructions, i.e., styles, strategies of literary topographies (e.g., spaces and places such as interiors, chronotopes, landscapes, literary mappings, etc.).
- Apply these skills in various analysis, writing, and presentation scenarios.
- Distinguish Viennese literary productions and history, from 1900 to the present day, according to different perspectives.
- Recognize textual constructions of identity at the intersection of gender, race, and culture.
- Apply and develop their presentation skills.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions. Attendance will be taken every class. Students must attend at least 60% of their class sessions to qualify for a passing grade, regardless of whether their absences have been excused or not. Your attendance is required in-person unless otherwise noted in the syllabus.

Students are highly encouraged to communicate absences as soon as possible to their professors and for excused absences using the processes described in the absence policy.

Please refer to the IES Abroad Vienna Absence Policy for a more precise overview of all attendance policies at IES Abroad Vienna as well as an overview of possible grade penalties.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

At IES Abroad Vienna, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty undermines the principles of trust and fairness essential to a thriving learning community. As such, plagiarism and cheating are considered serious violations of our code of conduct, and students found engaging in such activities will face swift and severe consequences, ranging from a failing grade on an assignment, to an academic review and possible expulsion from the program.

USE OF AI:

The use of AI is not allowed in this course.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments and Readings
Week 1	Welcome session and introduction to Literary topographies /Literature and Place: Vienna We will introduce ourselves, explore ways of working together, discuss the course content and the assignments. The lecturer will give an introductory presentation on the course topic.	Schnitzler, Arthur. "Round Dance (<i>Reigen</i>)," in Arthur Schnitzler, <i>Round Dance and Other Plays</i>, trans. by J. M. Q. Davies. Oxford and New York, 2004, reissued 2008, pp. 49–107.
Week 2	Arthur Schnitzler: <i>Round Dance (Reigen, 1900)</i>. This play explores social classes, gender, and power politics around 1900 and sparked one of the biggest theater scandals in the history of Austria. We will discuss these topics, examine the play's characters, plot, and setting, and examine the role of various places in Vienna, and the then-rising anti-Semitism in Austria. In addition to the reading, we will watch parts of the first film adaptation, Max Ophüls' <i>La Ronde</i> (1950).	- Schnitzler, Arthur. "Round Dance (<i>Reigen</i>)," in Arthur Schnitzler, <i>Round Dance and Other Plays</i>, trans. by J. M. Q. Davies. Oxford and New York, 2004, reissued 2008, pp. 49–107. - Group presentations
Week 3	Ödön von Horváth: <i>Tales from the Vienna Woods (Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald, 1931)</i> Horváth's play was written at the end of the 1920s, the time of the Great Depression and catastrophic unemployment. It is a central work of modern drama. The reading will be supplemented by excerpts from the film adaptation by Maximilian Schell (1979), in which Vienna and thus various important topographies of the text are impressively realized on film. We will discuss the socio-critical problems reflected in the text and its aesthetic and literary strategies, also regarding the most important locations.	- Horváth, Ödön von. <i>Tales from the Vienna Woods</i>, trans. by David Harrower. London, 2003 (excerpts). - Group presentations
Week 4	Field Trip: Literature Museum Vienna In the Literature Museum of the Austrian National Library, students can gain insight into the history of Austrian literature and view manuscripts and first editions, among other things.	Horváth, Ödön von. <i>Tales from the Vienna Woods</i>, trans. by David Harrower. London, 2003 (excerpts).

Week 5	Ilse Aichinger: <i>The Greater Hope</i> (<i>Die größere Hoffnung</i>, 1948) Aichinger's novel is one of the most important texts of Austrian post-war literature. With a symbolic and, thus, often challenging language, it tells of fear and threat of deportation to concentration camps, of death—and of the resistant hope of Jewish people during the Nazi era. We will discuss Aichinger's literary-aesthetic style and the political background of her novel, always reflecting the text's literary topography.	• Aichinger, Ilse. <i>The Greater Hope</i>, trans. by Geoff Wilkes. Würzburg, 2016. (excerpts) • Group presentations • Short writing assignment
Week 6	Ingeborg Bachmann: <i>Malina</i> (1971) The novel <i>Malina</i> was the prose debut of Bachmann. It is an aesthetic milestone in post-war literature and recounts a woman narrator's coming to terms with the past. We will explore the textual topographies of the text and the versatile plot. We will thereby focus on what appears at first glance to be a love triangle between the nameless narrator and two men, Ivan and Malina.	• Bachmann, Ingeborg. <i>Malina</i>, trans. by Philip Boehm. London, 2019. (excerpts) • Group presentations
Week 7	Midterm Exam	
Week 8	Elfriede Jelinek: <i>The Piano Teacher</i> (<i>Die Klavierspielerin</i>, 1983) This novel tells the story of piano teacher Erika Kohut's toxic relationship with her mother and the consequences of this traumatizing relationship for Erika's sexuality. We will examine Jelinek's literary style and language and discuss power politics, trauma, and abuse. We will follow the main character through the streets of Vienna, thereby visiting the Prater, the famous ice ring in the heart of the city and much more. We will also watch excerpts from the film adaptation by Michael Haneke (2001).	• Jelinek, Elfriede. <i>The Piano Teacher</i>, trans. by Jolly Varghese. Kottayam 2005. (excerpts) • Group presentations
Week 9	Thomas Bernhard: <i>Heldenplatz</i> (1988) This play was a commissioned work by the then-director of the Vienna Burgtheater, Claus Peymann, and sparked one of the biggest theater scandals in the	• Bernhard, Thomas. <i>Heldenplatz</i>, trans. by Meredith Oakes. London 2010. • Group presentations • Short writing assignment

	history of Austria. The play is set in Vienna in 1988, 50 years after the so-called “Anschluss” to the Nazi Germany. We will also watch excerpts from stage productions of the play.	
Week 10	Field Trip: Heldenplatz and Prater Together, we will visit these iconic places in Vienna and talk about the specific addressing of these places in the literary texts we have discussed.	• Bernhard, Thomas. <i>Heldenplatz</i>, trans. by Meredith Oakes. London 2010. • Group presentations
Week 11	Julia Rabinowich: <i>Splithead</i> (2008) When 7-year-old Mischka and her family flee the USSR for the freedom of Vienna, her world seems to divide in two: there’s life as she knew it before and life as she must relearn it now. Mischka is aware that part of her can never escape her homeland. Based on this novel, which is a central contribution to Austrian migration literature, we will discuss experiences of alienation and isolation.	• Rabinowich, Julia. <i>Splithead</i>, trans. by Tess Lewis. London 2011. (excerpts) • Group presentations
Week 12	Final Exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Heldenplatz
- Literature Museum Vienna
- Prater

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Aichinger, Ilse. *The Greater Hope*, trans. by Geoff Wilkes. Würzburg, 2016.
- Bachmann, Ingeborg. *Malina*, trans. by Philip Boehm. London 2019.
- Bernhard, Thomas. *Heldenplatz*, trans. by Meredith Oakes. London 2010.
- Horváth, Ödön von. *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, trans. by David Harrower. London, 2003.
- Jelinek, Elfriede. *The Piano Teacher*, trans. by Jolly Varghese. Kottayam 2005.
- Rabinowich, Julia. *Splithead*, trans. by Tess Lewis. London 2011.
- Schnitzler, Arthur. “Round Dance (*Reigen*),” in Arthur Schnitzler, *Round Dance and Other Plays*, trans. by J. M. Q. Davies. Oxford and New York, 2004, reissued 2008, pp. 49–107.

Filmography:

- Haneke, Michael: *La Pianiste / Die Klavierspielerin*. Austria et al. 2001.
- Ophüls, Max: *La Ronde*. France 1950.
- Schell, Maximilian: *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald*. Austria 1979.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Acharya, Indranil, and Ujjwal Kumar Panda, 'Introduction: Literary Geographies/Geographies of Literature', *Geographical Imaginations: Literature and the 'Spatial Turn'*, p. 1-19 (Oxford, 2022; online edn, Oxford Academic, 20 Oct. 2022), <https://doi-org.uaccess.univie.ac.at/10.1093/oso/9780192869043.003.0001>, accessed 30 June 2024. / <https://academic-oup-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/book/44449> (pdf will be provided)
- Jonathan Culler: *LITERARY THEORY. A Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press 2000 (pdf will be provided)