WL 402 - Stories of Modernity

Spring 2020

INSTRUCTOR: Ken Seigneurie
OFFICE: AQ 5128
EMAIL: kseigneu@sfu.ca
PHONE: 778-782-8846
OFFICE HOURS: TBA
CLASS LOCATION: TBA
CLASS HOURS: Th 1:30–5:20

PREREQUISITES: 60 UNITS INCLUDING TWO 300-LEVEL COURSES IN WORLD LITERATURE, ENGLISH, AND/OR HUMANITIES

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Liberalism is a moral and political ideology based on the conviction that a rational, self-creating individual is the most meaningful unit of social organization and that society should therefore promote freedom, equality and tolerance among individuals. These ideas are at the heart of modernity and look like the fount of all that’s sweet and good, but what if the world doesn’t want to be a better place? This course will trace the development of liberalism and anti-liberalism in European and Arab contexts with the aim of understanding these two stories of modernity via a canonical 19th century English novel of liberalism and three mid-20th century Egyptian novels that implicitly respond to it. Students may connect (or not) their theoretical interests in, e.g., political science, postcolonial studies, gender studies to liberalism for their final paper.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Students successfully completing this course can expect to:
- Articulate connections between the cultural realm (novels, poetry and film) and political ideology
- Understand the historical contexts that led to the rise of liberalism and non-Western anti-liberalism
- Write cogently on the relationship between literature and liberalism
- Acquire experience speaking publicly on the intersections between cultural and political fields

REQUIRED TEXT(S)/READINGS
The instructor will provide a few short articles on liberalism and anti-liberalism. Students are expected to purchase the following:


ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATION
- First essay (5 pages) 20%
- Midterm exam 20%
- Final project proposal, oral report and paper (10 pages) 10%+10%+25%
- Participation and in-class oral critique 10%+5%