**Fall 2017 Uncommon Reading Thurs period 7**

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**La Curée** appeared in 1871 the year of France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian war which brought an end to the Second Empire and the reign of Louis Napoléon. It was the second novel in Emile Zola’s 20 volume saga, “The Natural and Social History of a Family under the Second Empire”.

**The Kill** as the novel is known in English is the story of unscrupulous, rampant speculation, unbridled ambition, and lust for gold and pleasures of the flesh characteristic of a certain segment of the French population in the latter years of the Second Empire.

Zola set his novel in Paris, a city transformed into the jewel of Europe by the broad boulevards and gentrification effected by Baron Haussmann.

Zola was accused of obscenity, as he would be again, with the publication of the novel. Zola’s goal was to portray society as he saw it in a realistic manner.

What is most striking about **The Kill** is how much of what he writes applies to our world today. Zola is not afraid to shock his readers. This novel is as powerful and absorbing as any of his works as he recounts with infinite zest disturbing aspects of man’s nature. The object of this course will be to get to the heart of Zola’s work so that we know and understand his characters as we would real acquaintances.

Students will write four short papers ( 3-4 pages).

Weekly attendance and participation in class discussion will be essential.

Calendar

 August 24 Émile Zola

 31 Introduction

September 7 Chapter 1

 14 Chapter 2

 21 Chapter 3(first paper due)

 28 Chapter 4

October 5 Chapter 5

 12 Chapter 6(second paper due)

 19 Chapter 7

 26 Chapter 8

November 2 Chapter 9(third paper due)

 9 Chapter 10

 16 Chapter 11

 23 Thanksgiving

 30 Chapter 12 (fourth paper due)