

**EUS 3900/IDH 2930 – Death in the EU – The Capital: A Novel**Course description

This is a one-unit directed readings course that will focus

Assignments and Grading

- *Class attendance* (15%)  
This is a class based largely on discussion and engagement – this requires that you actually be in class. Any unexcused absence will result in a loss of points.
- *Discussion leadership* (15%)  
Students are expected to be ready to actively lead class discussion on their assigned days. This includes demonstrating both completion of the assigned reading and a careful consideration of how it links to the themes of the text (as discussed in class).
- *Response papers* (15% each, 30% total)  
Two short papers analyzing a specific chapter of the text. The response paper should briefly review the content of the chapter, but the core focus should be on the role of the chapter in the broader arc of the novel. What do we learn and why is it important? One paper must be from the first 5 chapters of the book and the second from Chapters 6-11.  
- *Papers are due before class on the day we discuss the selected chapter.*
- *Final Paper* (40% total)  
A final paper discussing in depth one of the core themes of the novel connecting it to both the text itself and the broader EU context (7-10 pages).

Required Book

- Robert Menasse (2019) The Capital: A Novel, Liverlight Publishing, NY, New York.

Recommended Book

- John Pinder and Simon Usherwood (2018) The European Union: A Very Short Introduction<sup>1</sup>Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Please Note:

- *University and departmental policy on cheating/plagiarism apply (just do not do it).*
- *Incompletes are provided only in extreme circumstances (per university policy)*
- *Professor reserves the right to change syllabus as necessary with as much advance notice as possible.*

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<sup>1</sup> Any recent European Union text book can be substituted (and in many ways would be better) if you have one. Text should be **recent** however, post 2016.

## PART I - INTRODUCTION

### **Week 1 (August 20): Introduction**

#### Topics

- Who is Robert Menasse
- Why this book?

#### Readings

- None

### **Week 2 (August 27): Context**

#### Topics

- Origins of the European Union
- The European Union in Crisis

#### Readings

- Introduction – Chapter 1 (pp. 1-32)

### **Week 3 (September 3): Themes**

#### Topics

- Themes focused on the past (history, memory, identity)
- Themes focused on the future (solidarity, integration, identity formation)

#### Readings

- Chapter 2 – 3

## PART II – TEXT DISCUSSION

### **Week 4 (September 10): Who is who (and why)**

#### Topics

- Key characters
- What do they represent

#### Readings

- Chapter 4

### **Week 5 (September 17): Who is who continued**

#### Topics

- Key characters
- What do they represent?

#### Readings

- Chapter 5

### **Week 6 (September 24): Symbolism**

#### Topics

- The pig
- The settings (context)

#### Readings

- Chapter 6

### **Week 7 (October 1): Symbolism continued**

#### Topics

- The 'event' (what and why)
- Why is the event important?

#### Readings

- Chapter 7

### **Week 8 (October 8): Truth and trust**

#### Topics

- The murder
- The investigation

#### Readings

- Chapter 8

### **Week 9 (October 15): Ideas and ideology**

#### Topics

- The policy group
- Old and new people and ideas

#### Readings

- Chapter 9

### **Week 10 (October 22): Endings**

#### Topics

- The death of de Vriend
- The end of the investigation

#### Readings

- Chapter 10

### **Week 11 (October 29): Endings continued**

#### Topics

- The end of the event
- The end of the book

#### Readings

- Chapter 11 – Epilogue

## **PART III: THEMES IN CONTEXT**

### **Week 12 (November 5): History**

#### Topics

- What is the role of history throughout the novel?
- How do individual and collective histories combine and/or conflict?

### **Week 13 (November 12): Memory**

#### Topics

- What is the role of memory throughout the novel?
- How do memories conflict or add to history?

### **Week 14 (November 19): Identity**

#### Topics

- How do the characters construct their identities – do they get to choose this construction?
- Does Europe (the EU) have its own identity? Is it just an amalgam?

### **Week 15 (November 26): Integration**

#### Topics

- What is integration? What does it mean (implicitly/explicitly) throughout the novel?
- In the context of the novel is integration positive? Inevitable? Doomed?

### **Week 16 (December 3): Conclusions**

- Final thoughts: What is Menasse's message about Europe?