Welcome & Course

Overview

Welcome to Science, Psychology, and the Holocaust, a Breakaway class to Vienna and Krakow. I hope you are as excited as I am about the course, and that you will be enriched and stimulated by both the academic literature as well as the cities of Vienna and Krakow.

We will start the course with an examination of the term “science”, and the assumptions attendant on how we know about the world and ourselves as “scientists”. We will make the distinction between a natural scientific way of knowing, and a human science way of knowing about the world and ourselves. We will then proceed to focus (in an introductory manner) on the life and theory of Sigmund Freud. After Freud’s psychoanalysis, we will turn to existentialism, and particularly the work of Viktor Frankl.

Both Freud and Frankl lived and
worked in Vienna, and we will, as a consequence, also situate their work and lives socioculturally and spatially, given that we will get to visit the city they called home.

It is also true that both Freud and Frankl were profoundly affected by World Wars I and II, and by the Holocaust, particularly. We will study those linkages, as well as the Holocaust itself, for the challenges it poses to scientific understanding and academic knowledge.

In addition, throughout the course, and in preparation for our breakaway trip, we will familiarize ourselves with some aspects of social and cultural life in Vienna and Krakow, both historically and current.

**Course & Departmental Goals**

- To introduce students to the broad disciplinary assumptions of psychology as a human science
- To introduce students to the broad disciplinary assumptions of psychology as a natural science
- To foster a critical dialogue among students about the implications of respective paradigmatic understandings of psychology
- To introduce students to several examples of human science approaches, specifically the psychoanalytic, existential, humanistic, and social constructionist.
- To apply insights, and learning, from the course to personal experiences and world events

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**In (Viennese) German**

Guten Tag: Hello! Literally, “Good day” (to you).

Auf Wiedersehen: Goodbye

Dank Schön or Vielen Dank: Thank you.

Sprichst du Englisch: “Do you speak English?”

Mein name ist ...: “My name is ...”

Guten Morgen: “Good morning”

Guten Abend: “Good evening”

Was kostet das? or Wie viel?: How much does it cost?

Ich bin ein Amerikaner: “I am an American”

Bitte: “Please”

Zahlen bitte: “check (the bill) please”

(If you’re taking a smartphone, tablet, or laptop with you, an app like Google Translate or any number of other translators may be a good idea.)

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**Course Readings**

Most of the readings will be posted on Blackboard. There are two exceptions, though, and you can purchase these from the bookstore or any other source. These are:

- Frankl, Viktor. *Man’s Search for Meaning*. [There are many, many versions of this book – any one will do]
- Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*. [Again, there are a couple of versions of this book – any will do]

In addition, we will use a number of guidebooks to prepare us for our trip. I’ve purchased a number of these for our library, but you are welcome to check some out of your local library or even purchase some yourself. Examples include editions by Fodor’s, Frommer’s, Lonely Planet, Rough Guides, Rick Steves, etc.
Course Expectations

In order to maximize learning, and to do so respectfully, I expect Regular Class Attendance. Of course, from time to time one has to deal with other unforeseen contingencies, and cannot avoid missing class. If you cannot make it to class, inform me of your absence beforehand. Punctuality. Please arrive to class early, but do not stay away if you are late. If lateness to class is a persistent pattern, I will address it with you.

Preparation for Class. Read the assigned sections beforehand. You will follow the lecture much more easily, take better notes, and be better prepared for class discussions. Class Participation. While I know some of you may feel shy, a little intimidated perhaps, or somewhat reticent, please try to participate in class activities and discussions as best you can. From my part, I’ll try to make the classroom as welcoming and non-threatening as possible.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty is severely frowned upon, and has dire consequences, which may include failing the course and/or academic dismissal. Please silence all cell phones and refrain from texting in class.

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services at room 309 in the Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot be granted retrospectively.

Course & Departmental Goals continued

- To apply insights, and learning, from personal and travel experiences, to the academic material.
- To introduce students to historical and current sociocultural themes, phenomena, and events pertaining to Austrian history and culture generally, and Vienna specifically.
- To introduce students to historical and current sociocultural themes, phenomena, and events pertaining to Polish history and culture generally, and Krakow specifically.
- To introduce students to the Holocaust, and to examine challenges to academic learning posed thereby.

In addition to the specific course goals, we will also keep in mind broad departmental goals, and be oriented by it. These include:

- Understanding the fundamental concepts, issues, and interest areas of psychology, both as a human science and a natural science.
- Thinking critically and creatively about human psychology and life as a whole.
- Communicating effectively.
- Being critically and socially engaged with the contemporary world, including being appreciative of its many forms of diversity.
- Working with, and applying ethical principles, both personally and in service.
- Becoming prepared for careers and/or graduate study in psychology, social work, and counseling, and in related fields such as education, business, law, health care, and human services.
- Cultivating potential as distinctive individuals and participants in society.
# Grading and Assignments

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>I. <em>Country Presentation</em>: Students work together, in groups of three or four, to present on an aspect of Viennese or Krakowian history and/or culture [a list of topics, and additional instructions, will be provided in class]</td>
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<td>II. <em>Class Notes</em>: In lieu of extensive prescribed readings, students are to type and hand in their class notes on Natural Scientific Assumptions, Human Scientific Assumptions, and a comparison of the two</td>
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<td>III. <em>Freud Reflection</em>: Students are to list the core assumptions of Freudian theory, and provide a critical reflection in response.</td>
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<td>III. <em>Journal</em>: You are to keep a weekly journal, in the days after class, and a daily journal, while on breakaway. I will provide some guiding prompts for each of the entries. During the semester, these journal entries will be housed on Blackboard. While on Breakaway, you may not have ready internet access, and will have to use paper and pencil (a journal will be provided in your travel package), and transfer your notes to Blackboard later. These journal entries are evaluated in and of itself, AND serve as source material for the final paper.</td>
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<td>&amp; Final Paper: Instructions for the final paper will be provided in class, but suffice it to note that the more extensive your journal is, throughout the semester, the easier your final will be to complete. The final paper serves as the final exam</td>
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<td>IV. <em>Frankl, Levi, and the challenge of the Witness</em>: This paper will ask of you to draw together the books of Frankl and Levi, and place it alongside your experience in a critical, personal reflection of the challenge of the holocaust to knowledge and learning</td>
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<td>V. <em>Participation</em>: The Videography Project (Students will work in groups, before travelling abroad, during our stay in Europe, and thereafter, to produce a video journal of the class. Instructions will be provided in class) will form the bulk of the participation points.</td>
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<td><em>Attendance</em>: Emergencies happen. You are “allowed” one absence. Thereafter, in the absence of an emergency and documentation to that end, I will subtract two grade stops from your final grade for every absence (e.g. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B-, etc.)</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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Course Schedule

This is just a broad schedule outline. The specifics of what will be covered, additional and supplemental readings, and other pedagogical activities, will be shared in class and on the Blackboard website.

Week I – 12 Jan: Introductions, Expectations, Course Overview and an Introduction to Psychology as a Natural Science
[Jan 19 is MLK day – no class]

Week II – 26 Jan: Psychology as a Natural Science Continued; Introduction to Psychology as a Human Science; Group Country Presentations

Week III – 2 Feb.: Freud: Life, times, theory; Group Country Presentations

Week IV – 9 Feb.: Freud and Psychoanalysis Continued; Group Country Presentations

Week V – 23 Feb.: Freud; Final Prep for travel; Group Country Presentations

Week VI – BREAKAWAY WEEK

Week VII – 9 March: No class

Week VIII – 16 March: Frankl & Existentialism

Week IX – 23 March: Existentialism Continued

Week IX – 30 March: Film – Schindler’s List

Week X – 7 April (a Tuesday, following a Monday Schedule): Primo Levi, the Holocaust revisited

Week XI – 13 April: Guest Speaker

Week XII – 20 April: Integration, Comparison, Conclusions

Week XIIV – 27 April: [Final Class]