



**School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**ANT 501-MUL 1**

**Anthropology: The Artist and the City**

**202526 J-term**

## Course Details

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**Credit Hours:** 3

**Days:**

**Time:**

**Prerequisites:**

## Instructor Information

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## Course Description

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Students explore major cities using literature and the arts as a guide to understanding the rise and establishment of the urban setting. Through readings and media studies, students examine the artistic process from inspiration to creation. Site visits and guided tours then allow students to experience the historical, geographical, and demographic foundations that inform the fictional representations of European cities and their impact on perceptions of those cities today. Students have the opportunity to learn from and exchange their observations with experts from ACM-IAU as well as distinguished on-site scholars and local guides in order to frame their own perception of the cities and these cities' representations through the arts.

This course will explore the rise and the establishment of the urban setting as the nexus of contemporary European culture and civilization. Literature and the arts will serve as our focal point. We will concentrate primarily on the late nineteenth century up to the contemporary setting, more specifically on Aix-en-Provence/Marseille, Paris, Amsterdam, Prague and Rome. We will explore a variety of media: novel, poetry, cinema, music and the fine arts.

Below is a list of the cities we will concentrate on, in the order we will deal with them and the essential works that reveal perspectives on the settings.

#### AIX-EN-PROVENCE – MARSEILLE – Retreats and exiles

- Paul Cézanne & Émile Zola - Letters (1858)
- Alexandre Dumas - The Count of Monte Cristo (1844)
- Claude McKay – Banjo (1929)
- Anna Seghers – Transit (1944)
- Simone de Beauvoir – The Prime of Life (1960)

Films :

Danièle Thompson, Cézanne et moi (2016)

Christian Petzold, Transit (2018)

#### PARIS - Modern Urban Perfection

- Victor Hugo – The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1831)
- Ernest Hemingway – A Moveable Feast (1964)
- James Baldwin – Another Country (1962)
- Simone de Beauvoir, She came to stay (1943)

Films :

Agnès Varda, Cléo de 5 à 7 (1962)

Woody Allen, Midnight in Paris (2011)

#### AMSTERDAM - Europe's Outer Edge

- Jessie Burton – The Miniaturist (2014)

- Vincent Van Gogh - Letters (1877)
- Anne Frank - The Diary of a Young Girl (1942-44)
- Anna Enquist – Counterpoint (2010)

Films :

Robert Altman, Vincent and Theo (1990)

Ben Sombogaart, My best friend Anne Frank (2021)

PRAGUE - No Escape

- Rainer Maria Rilke – Two Stories of Prague (1899)
- Franz Kafka – Letters (1902)
- Milan Kundera – The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1984)
- Sylvie Germain – The weeping woman on the streets of Prague (1993)

Films :

Steven Soderbergh, Kafka (1991)

Jiří Mádl, Waves (2024)

ROME - Remnants of a Founding Civilization

- Virgil – The Aeneid (29-19 B.C.E.)
- Gabriele D'Annunzio –Pleasure (1889)
- Elsa Morante – History : A Novel (1974)
- Pier Paolo Pasolini – Stories from the City of God: Sketches and Chronicles of Rome (trans. 2000)

Films :

Pier Paolo Pasolini, Mamma Roma (1962)

Woody Allen, To Rome with Love (2012)

## Course Objectives

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- 1. Analyze the city as a living catalyst for artistic and literary creation, exploring how urban environments shape imagination, identity, and expression.
- 2. Bridge artistic inspiration and creation through direct site engagement, tracing how observation, atmosphere, and spatial experience translate into art and fiction.
- 3. Interpret European cities through both historical and fictional lenses, revealing the dynamic interplay between lived realities and imagined geographies.
- 4. Develop a critical understanding of Europe's urban landscapes by combining close textual readings with on-site analysis of their social, cultural, and architectural foundations.

## Learning Outcomes

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

1. Analyze the ways European urban settings shape artistic and literary expression, identifying how specific neighborhoods, landmarks, and social contexts inform creative work.
2. Connect site-based observations with close readings of texts and artworks, demonstrating how real spaces influence fictional or artistic representations.
3. Evaluate how writers and artists reinterpret the historical and cultural realities of European cities, distinguishing between documented experience, collective memory, and imaginative reconstruction.

## Instructional Methods and Activities

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- Seminars and Lectures
- Discussions/Reading Assignments for each city on the itinerary
- Site visits
- Experiential learning
- Creative writing
- Sketching and Drawing on-site

# Assessment, Evaluation, and Grading

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## **Participation: 25%**

Students are expected to actively listen and contribute to class sessions and site visits, prepare study questions, and demonstrate engagement with the course content.

Please note: Punctuality, whether for class sessions, departure times, meeting times for visits, etc., will have a substantial effect on your participation grade.

## **Quizzes: 25%**

We will have ten quizzes (one per class session) based on the reading assignments and site visits. These will be multiple choice or short answer, and the material for these will be taken from your readings, film viewings and guided visits. Be sure to take good notes on these visits to prepare yourself.

## **Book Crossing : 25%**

In order to deepen engagement with the course materials, students will select a book from the list below, purchase it from an English-language bookstore during their travel, read it, and then participate in the BookCrossing project by registering the book and leaving it in a public location in Rome.

### **Books to Choose From:**

Gabriele d'Annunzio - *Pleasure* (1889)

James Baldwin - *Another Country* (1962)

Simone de Beauvoir – *She Came to stay* (1943)

Jessie Burton - *The Miniaturist* (2014)

Anne Enquist - *Counterpoint* (2008)

Anne Frank - *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1947)

Ernest Hemingway – *A Moveable Feast* (1964)

The video should be uploaded to the course's Teams group by the end of the J-Term. The book should be registered on the BookCrossing website and left in a public space in Rome, where it can be discovered by others.

As part of this assignment, students will be required to record a brief 5-minute video in which they:

- Provide a short summary of the book.
- Discuss how the book relates to the city where its events take place (Marseille, Paris, Amsterdam, or Prague, depending on the book chosen).
- Reflect on what they particularly enjoyed about the book and explain why they would recommend it to others.

### **City Assignments 25% total**

Total of 5 assignments submitted on TEAMS 5 assignments, one for each city (25%) 5 assignments (approximately 1000 words each) City Assignments should combine creativity and critical thinking. All the assignments must demonstrate how students draw conclusions from the course content and the readings. Each assignment should demonstrate knowledge from the readings and field studies to create connections between the city and literature.

Students will create a portfolio from the following :

- Sketch & sketch creative analysis : Free exercise on a monument or location of your choice. (200 words)
- Museum, monument or precise artwork analysis that connects to the course visits : You will pick a specific painting or a specific monument evoked in class, and write a documented and personal analysis about it. (200 words)
- Creative writing about a specific place evoked by one of the readings : Each of the texts provided in the course evokes a specific location. Your task is to visit this location, experience it firsthand, and then write a reflective text that captures its essence. Your writing should draw from the place itself, your personal engagement with it, and any emotions or insights it inspires. (300 words)
- Photograph and analysis of a photograph taken as an echo of a specific scene from a film shot in the city.

Your work will be evaluated based on the following:

- Visual Accuracy: How closely does your photograph replicate the scene from the film?
- Historical & Cinematic Analysis: Depth and thoughtfulness in your commentary on the location's history and its role in the film.

- Comparative Reflection: Insight into how the film's portrayal differs from or enhances the real-world location, and the significance of these differences.
- Writing Clarity: Clear, concise, and engaging writing that presents your analysis coherently. (300 words)
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#### Locations to Choose From:

1. Aix-en-Provence
  - a. Cézanne et moi - Fontaine d'Albertas, Place de l'Archevêché
2. Marseille
 

Le Comte de Monte Cristo - Château d'If Transit - Fort Saint-Jean, Vieux Port
3. Paris
 

Cézanne et moi - Pont de l'Archevêché  
Midnight in Paris - Église Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, Restaurant Polidor, Musée de l'Orangerie, Parc Jean XXIII, Shakespeare and Company, Pont Alexandre III
4. Amsterdam
 

My Best Friend Anne Frank - Peperstraat, Anne Frank's House  
Vincent & Theo - Princengraacht
5. Prague
 

Kafka – Charles Bridge, Míšeňská Street  
Waves - Nerudova Street, Czech Radio
6. Rome
 

To Rome with Love - Piazza Venezia, Trevi Fountain, Via degli Ibernesi, Roma Termini, Via de Neofiti, The Colosseum, Teatro Argentina  
Mamma Roma - Piazza Tommaso de Cristoforis, Parco Degli Acquadotti, San Giovanni Bosco

## Grading System/Grade Distribution

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Grading System/Grade  
Distribution

| <b>U.S</b> | <b>ACM</b> | <b>French<br/>Equivalent</b> |
|------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 95-100%    | A          | 17-20                        |
| 90-94%     | A -        | 16                           |
| 88-89%     | B+         | 15                           |
| 84-87%     | B          | 14                           |
| 80-83%     | B-         | 13                           |
| 78-79%     | C+         | 12                           |
| 74-77%     | C          | 11                           |
| 70-73%     | C-         | 10                           |
| 68-69%     | D+         | 9                            |
| 64-67%     | D          | 8                            |
| 60-63%     | D-         | 7                            |
| 0-59%      | F          | 0-6                          |

## Attendance

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One of the primary requirements this semester is that you attend class. This is not a lecture class; it's essential that you come to class on time, be prepared for the lesson, and be ready to participate in discussions and activities. Attendance will be part of your final grade. Any absences can harm your final grade. It will be up to the student to manage and communicate with professors about their absences. For every absence, your final grade may be lowered by one half-letter grade (B+ to become a B, B to become B-, and so on). ACM-IAU professors are empowered to impose academic sanctions (including a lowered grade or even failure) upon students for unexcused absences, frequent tardiness, work submitted late, or any other actions or behaviors that violate ACM's academic standards and policies.

## Academic Policies

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All students are responsible for reading, knowing, and understanding the information pertinent to their areas of study available in the ACM Catalog. The catalog contains requirements for all degree programs, course descriptions, academic policies, and regulations that govern ACM. All parts of the catalog are subject to annual changes as university rules, policies, and curricula change. It is your responsibility to keep informed of such changes; failure to do so will not exempt you from whatever penalties you may incur. Catalogs are published from August through July.

Review the latest catalog at: <https://www.acmfrance.org/academics/catalog>

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

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Please note that the schedule is subject to change.

Day 1 – Arrival and On-site Orientation

Class Introduction • Welcome and Orientation • Group dinner in Aix-en-Provence

Day 2 – Aix-en-Provence

Class 1

Introductory class Guided walks in the city Day 3 – Aix and Marseille: Mediterranean City Class 2  
QUIZ 1

Site Visit: Marseille (Vieux Port, Notre Dame de la Garde)

Day 4 – Free day - Aix-en-Provence to Paris

Travel Day, train to Paris

Day 5 – Paris

Class 3

QUIZ 2

Site visit: Exploring Paris on the Seine

Day 6– Paris and the Arts

Class 4

QUIZ 3

Site visit: Carnavalet Museum

Day 7 – An Artist's Vision of the City, Paris is a museum

Musée d'Orsay and Latin quarter • Group dinner Assignment 1 Aix-Marseille and 2 Paris

Day 8 – Paris to Amsterdam - Travel Day

No class, students work on assignments • Group dinner

Day 9 – Amsterdam Under German Occupation

Class 5

QUIZ 4

Site Visit: Anne Frank House, Jewish Quarter German Occupation and Deportation

Day 10 – Site visit: Amsterdam Museum and Van Gogh Museum

Day 11 – Amsterdam to Prague

No classes, students work on readings and preparing assignments • Group dinner

Day 12 – Dreams of Old Prague

Class 6

QUIZ 5

Spanish Synagogue

Site visit: Guided visit of Prague and evening concert

Day 13 – Prague and Soviet Occupation

Class 7

QUIZ 6

Guest Lecture on the Velvet Revolution TBC • Afternoon free, complete assignments • Opera Performance

Day 14 – Prague to Rome

Travel to Rome, no class session

Site visit: Explore Spanish Steps and neighborhood

Assignment 3 & Amsterdam 4 Prague

Day 15 – Founding of Ancient Rome

Class 8

QUIZ 7

Site Visit: Coliseum guided tour

Day 16 – Baroque Rome and Roman Streets

Class 9

QUIZ 8

Site visit: Villa Borghese

Day 17 – Sketches of Rome

Class 10

QUIZ 9

Site visit: independent visits Assignment 5 Rome due by 9pm

Day 18 – Explorations

Group dinner