

Psychoanalysis and Literature in Sigmund Freud's Vienna (Online Course)

[Eveline List](#)/[Johann Lughofer](#)

February 7 – 18, 2022

4 ECTS

Course Description

This course is dedicated to Sigmund Freud and his role in and influence on Vienna's modernist culture, with special emphasis on contemporary literature, which parallels his findings in the artistic field. Therefore, you will read some of the most important texts of the literary *Young Vienna* movement.

The course is divided into two parts:

During the first week, Eveline List shall introduce the socio-cultural environment defining the second half of the 19th century in Vienna. These were the formative years of Sigmund Freud and the political and scientific background fostering his groundbreaking discovery of the unconscious and the development of the new science of Psychoanalysis. Freud's dynamic model of the mind shall be explained as well as some of the basic concepts of Psychoanalysis, as they were developed over the course of the following decades until Sigmund Freud's last minute-escape to London in 1938. Although Psychoanalysis is mostly considered a psychotherapeutic method, it is a social science dealing with all manifestations of human motives and behavior. From very early on it has been met with special interest in artistic and literary circles, but also by politicians of *Red Vienna* (1918-1933), who shaped their policies and institutions of social welfare and education, following psychoanalytic insights into developmental and social psychology. In this part of the course, the emphasis shall be on psychoanalytic theories of creativity, on literary and other artistic interpretation, and on the consumption of and pleasure in literature, drama, music, and art.

During the second week, Johann Lughofer will offer an overview of the most important Viennese literature around 1900, which marked an aesthetic revolution and the beginning of modernism. You will examine its interdependence with other artistic, social and scientific developments. The focus will pertain to references to Freud's insights. You will study texts, which parallel Freud's findings in terms of both form and content. Together you will read key texts by Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, two central authors who also reflect contemporary Austrian society and culture in an exciting way. A short paper is requested for each of these texts and a joint discussion will be based on these papers. Students will develop a deeper understanding not only of Austrian literature, but also of its culture as a whole, which is still partly based on the achievements of this era.

Requirements and grading: Active **participation**, either live during the online course in class discussion or via comments and questions submitted to the instructors, constitute **10%** of the grade, **one written paper** in the form of an essays **about the content of the first week** (minimum 4000-5000 characters) will constitute **45%** of the grade, and **three short written papers** about the content of the second week (minimum 1,500 characters each) will constitute **15% of the grade each**.

Careful reading of the assigned course materials and timely hand in of assignments is expected.

Syllabus

1st week

Monday, February 7, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Eveline List

Vienna after 1848: its social structure, emancipatory movements and Avant-garde circles.
Jewish Vienna, the beginning of the *Age of Psychology* and the biography of Sigmund Freud.
The discovery of the unconscious; Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* and Freud's *Dynamic Model of the Mind* (1900).

Tuesday, February 8, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Basic psychoanalytic concepts: theory of drives, repression, transference. Discussion of Pleasure-seeking and *Reality Principle* in Sigmund Freud's *Formulations on the Two Principles of Psychic Functioning* (1911).

Wednesday, February 9, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Psychoanalytic theories of development and symbolisation. Significance of the *Oedipus Complex*.
The psychoanalytic understanding of phantasy and creativity.
Discussion of Sigmund Freud's *Creative Writers and Daydreaming* (1908).

Thursday, February 10, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Major psychic mechanisms relevant in artistic creativity and appreciation.
The *inner* and the outer audience.
Discussion of Sigmund Freud's *The Moses of Michelangelo* (1913).

Friday, February 11, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Further discussion of the *play of the imagination* and the expression of emotion in creative productions.
Unconscious processes in reading and watching theatre and cinema.

2nd week

Monday, February 14, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Johann G. Lughofer

Literature in Vienna around 1900: the *Young Vienna Group*: authors and exemplary texts in the cultural context.

Tuesday, February 15, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Classroom reading and discussion of Arthur Schnitzler's *None but the Brave/Lieutnant Gustl* (1900).

Wednesday, February 16, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Classroom reading and discussion of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *A Tale of the Cavalry/Reitergeschichte* (1899).

Thursday, February 17, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Classroom reading and discussion of short stories of Peter Altenberg and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Chandos Letter/Ein Brief* (1902) and his most famous poems.

Friday, February 18, 2022
11:00 – 13:00 am (CET)

Classroom reading and discussion of Arthur Schnitzler's *Dream Story/Traumnovelle* (1925) and further discussion.