

THE DECADENT DECADES: 1892-1914

Coordinators: Joan Glick and Lucy Wollin

Verlaine said the word decadence “suggests the most refined thoughts a civilization can produce, a profound literary culture, a soul capable of the most intense enjoyments.” But the period of artistic decadence that we study was also one of great clashes of ideas and classes: the Dreyfus Affair; the dominance of the wealthy bourgeoisie; the growth of socialism; the conflict between church and state and power struggles with Germany. While these social clashes were happening, Baudelaire, Apollinaire, Maupassant and Jarry created a new and often perverse literature. New art changed the look and intellectual commitment of Paris. We experience the culture shock of the turn of the century through readings by these and other writers and discussions of the music, art and historical events that changed Paris and the cultural Western world.

Readings:

J.P.T. Bury, *France 1814-1940*. Any edition is fine.

French Decadent Tales, Stephen Romer (editor); Oxford University Press, 2013, ISBN 978-0-19-956927-4, \$13.95.

Six French Poets of the 19th Century, A.M Blackmore, E.H. Blackmore (translators); Oxford University Press, 2000, ISBN 978-0-19-955478-2, \$14.95.

Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature*, Margaret Mauldon (translator); Oxford University Press, 1998, ISBN 0-19-282-367-1, \$11.95.

Joan and **Lucy** have coordinated several courses together in which they have indulged their interests in both history of events and history of culture. They look forward to continuing their exploration of French civilization.

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Historical Background –France in 1871
Literature: Huysmans

Bkgd: France to 1890; Socialism; Feminism
Lit: Huysmans

Bkgd: political scandals; Dreyfus Affair
Lit: Proust and Dreyfus

Bkgd: Dreyfus Affair(cont'd)
Lit: Leo Bloy

Bkgd: France to 1900; Religion; Republicanism
Lit: De Maupassant

Bkgd: France to 1900 (cont'd)
Lit: Geffroy
Music

Theater; Ballet; Opera; Art
Lit: De Gourmont

Bkgd: Radical Republicanism
Lit: poetry

Bkgd: science; mass culture
Lit: poetry

Bkgd:
D'Auberville

Bkgd: France in 1914
Lit: Schwob

12-Bkgd:
Lit: Louÿs
Wrap-up