

Professor Lloyd Kramer

History 53 Traveling To European Cities: American Writers and Cultural Identities 1830-1930

This seminar examines two key themes in modern cultural and intellectual history: the importance of travel in the lives and cultural identities of American writers and the important role of European cities in the evolution of modern American cultural identities. We shall focus on a historical era in which American writers were especially drawn to Europe as an alternative to the social and cultural life in the United States; and we'll discuss how the encounter with Europe influenced these writers as they defined their national identities as well as their views of politics, social relations, gender identities, literature, art, and Western cultural traditions. The course is based on the assumption that travel has become one of the most influential personal experiences in modern times. In short, we shall explore the connection between travel, writing, and personal identities. This is a class for people who like to read about personal experiences and are intrigued by foreign travel. The assigned texts include works by women and men such as Margaret Fuller, Mark Twain, Henry James, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway; and the cities we'll discuss include Paris, London, Rome, Venice, and Athens