Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* (vol. I)

This section of the core course develops the issues explored in the segment devoted to the concept of time, and draws upon one of the monumental works of modernist literature, Robert Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities*, written between 1930 and 1942, to investigate the key developments in modernist epistemology and their connection to philosophical accounts of temporality. Musil’s novel provides a record of the main intellectual developments in its time (from politics to criminology) and embodying some of the defining features of the modernist novel: a protagonist adjacent to conventional social identity; a narrative logic which follows the associations of the mind; an open-ended structure which negates the frameworks of form; a reflection on the high-bourgeois European culture that was destroyed by the First World War. The novel will be read also in its historical, geographical and aesthetic context.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of one essay (details below), an oral presentation (details below), and performance during class.

Writing Assignments

Students are required to submit ONE essay.

Due date: on 24th April 2015, 23.59 hrs
Length: approx. 1300 words

Essay topics

Students will receive in due time a list of prompts, but essays can also be based on the student’s oral presentation. Students are also encouraged to write their own questions, after consultation with Laura Scuriatti.
Oral presentation
Each student will be in charge of an oral presentation. For the oral presentation, students will bring to class their written notes in the form of a short paper (length: approx. 700 words) intended to introduce the assigned reading and to facilitate the discussion. These notes will be handed to Laura Scuriatti at the end of the class and will be part of the presentation grade.

Attendance
Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than one absence in the seminar will significantly affect the grade for the course.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers
All written work must be submitted electronically and on time.

As specified in the Students’ Handbook, essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grading breakdown
Class performance: 30%
Presentation: 30%
Essay: 40%

Course schedule
Week One: January 26-30
Thurs: MWQ, chapters 1-16

Week Two: February 2-6
Thurs: MWQ, chapters 17-25

Week Three: February 9-13
Thurs: MWQ, chapters 26-37

Week Four: February 16-20
Thurs: MWQ, chapters 38-54

Week Five: February 23-27
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 55-66

**Week Six: March 2-6**
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 67-79

**Week Seven: March 9-13**
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 80-93

**Spring Break**

**Week Eight: March 23-27**
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 94-104

**Week Nine: March 30-April 3**
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 105-110

**Week Ten: April 6-10**
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 111-116

**Week Eleven: April 13-17**
Thurs: *MWQ*, chapters 117-123

**Essay deadline: 24th April 23.59 hrs**