This course offers an introduction to what was arguably the most long-lasting and widespread avant-garde movement of the twentieth century: surrealism. In addition to reading several of the most important figures of Parisian surrealism (Breton, Aragon, Artaud, Bataille), we will explore a variety of affiliated non-European movements in Latin America (particularly Mexico) and Japan, as well the Cairo-based Art and Liberty group and international nègritude (in Martinique, Senegal, and Angola).

Our focus will be on manifestos and literary works, but we will also study their close relationship to the visual arts. Students will have the opportunity to develop a research project relevant to their field and/or national area of interest. In addition to our regular seminars, we will also have small-group meetings with several of the scholars whose work we will be reading.