In this course we’ll read a series of novels based on historic events and/or broader historic situations. We’ll begin with the most famous slave uprising in the American South and end with the Arab Spring of the early 21st century; along the way we will study, among others, the Nazi occupation in Holland, McCarthyism, civil wars in western Africa, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the domestic aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. Our core readings will be novels, but for each, we will supplement with extensive written and oral reports based on historic and journalistic sources. One of our major aims will be to analyze each mode of inquiry (fiction, history, journalism) and discover the ways in which they complement--and, sometimes, conflict--with each other as we attempt to discover the truth (or multiple truths) of these complex and painful events. We’ll also investigate what the novelist owes to historic truth and how the novelist (or historian, or journalist) can imagine “the other”: issues of particular contestation right now.

**Weeks 1-3:**  
and: *Ten Black Writers Respond*;  
plus: Eugene Genovese-Orlando Patterson debate [American slavery]

**Week 4:**  
Harry Mulisch, *The Assault* [Nazi Occupation]

**Week 5:**  
E.L. Doctorow, *The Book of Daniel* [execution of Rosenbergs, and McCarthyism]

**Week 6:**  
Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader* [Auschwitz trials]

**Week 7:**  
Uzodinma Iweala, *Beasts of No Nation* [child soldiers in West African civil wars]

**Week 8:**  
Assaf Gavron, *Almost Dead* [Israeli-Palestinian conflict; second intifada]

**Week 9:**

**Weeks 10&11:**
Amy Waldman, *The Submission* [9/11 terror attacks]

**Week 12:**
Phil Klay, *Redeployment* [American war in Iraq]

**Week 13:**
Yasmine El Rashidi, *Chronicle of A Last Summer* [Arab Spring]

**Week 14:**
Final papers due; final thoughts