In this course we will explore what happens to the novel form when fundamental beliefs in rationality, truth, progress, and the integrity of the self are shaken, when there is a disintegration of values, an overwhelming sense of loss, a tremor of worse things to come, and no viable set of values with which to replace the old. We will be interested in tracing the kinds of innovations and insights that arise in anticipation of and alongside of fascism, and in how the modern experience produces experimental forms.

Readings (in English) will include: Robert Musil’s The Confusions of Young Torless, Robert Walser’s The Assistant, Franz Kafka’s The Trial, and Elias Canetti’s Auto da Fe.