

**History 313: France from Napoleon to Mitterrand or,  
Society and Culture in Modern France, 1789-2009**

**Professor Vanessa Schwartz**

**T, Th: 2-3:20, Taper B9**

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**Office Hours: T, Th 10-11 and any time by appointment**

**Course Description:** As the Eurocentric view of the world begins to recede and gives way to our present interest in developing a more global framework for interpreting the past and shaping the course of the future, France might seem a quaint and old-fashioned subject driven by nostalgia and scented with a strong perfume of faded glory and imagined in a picture of tattered tricolor flags. This class argues, however, that knowing the history of Modern France is a subject of great importance at the dawn of our global era. Fifty years ago, such an introduction would have been a narrative of the nation's dramatic political history. This class integrates that narrative yet foregrounds the dynamism of French society and culture in arguing that, contrary to the deeply nationalistic and chauvinist portrait of France (which also tend to now trumpet France's decline), France's nationalism has always been based in transnationalism. Modern France is both a world stage and a crossroads and thus an essential actor in the development of contemporary global culture. If you do not know French history, you cannot understand the world today. We will study more than 200 years of French history with careful attention to French nationalism and universalism, the idea of the civilizing mission, the role of leadership, the importance of literary and visual culture, the key role played by Paris, the rise of French imperialism, the dedication to technology, the troubled relation to religion, race and immigration, among other topics.

**Course Requirements:**

All scheduled classes are mandatory and will begin on time. Please do not arrive after class begins. Class time will either consist of lecture (which will include powerpoint presentations or films clips and student participation) or discussion focused on a particular week's readings and/or screenings.

**Readings and Screenings:**

Readings and screenings in this course is extensive and all listed are required. It is essential that you keep up with the readings/screenings on a weekly basis in order to understand the lectures and to participate in discussions. Any readings marked with an \* are available on the class blackboard/wiki.

**Texts:**

Books:

\*Popkin, A History of Modern France (on reserve)

\*Censer and Hunt, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

Hunt, The French Revolution and Human Rights

Zola, L'Assommoir

Verne, Around the World in Eighty Days

Schwartz, Spectacular Realities

Schwartz, It's So French!

Burns, France and The Dreyfus Affair

Nemerovsky, Suite Française

Selections here and additional ones with an asterisk will be on the class blackboard.

**Films:**

Parts of the documentary, "The Great War and the Shaping of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" (1998)

"A Nous La Liberté" (Clair)

"Pépé le Moko" (Duvivier)

"The Sorrow and the Pity" (Ophuls)

"Et Dieu Créa la Femme" (Vadim)

"Les Parapluies de Cherbourg" (Demy)

"Les Demoiselles de Rochefort" (Demy)

"L'Univers de Jacques Demy" (Varda)

"Battle of Algiers" (Pontecorvo)

"Les Aventures du Rabbi Jacob" (Oury)

**Writing Assignments:** All written work must be your own and proper citation is essential as you write your papers. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and the academic integrity code strictly enforced.

Essays are due at the start of class on the day they are due. No late papers will be accepted. They are to be posted on the class BB and/or wiki as instructed.

Your mid-term writing assignment is due at 11am on the BB on February 19.

This paper will be a 5-7 page paper based on the readings and will be a response to one of three questions given by the instructor.

The second assignment will be to write about one of the films we have watched and discuss it in connection to a question I will ask you to answer in relation to it. That paper is due April 21.

Final Project: Each student, in consultation with the instructor, will have selected, by week four, a topic for a small research project for a ten-page final paper. Possible topics will be distributed the second week of classes but they are meant to be suggestive and not exhaustive.

Final Projects are due: Friday, May 8.

Each student will be responsible for discussion questions, which need to be posted the night before class by midnight. We will usually have two discussion leaders and they will ask two to three questions each or make a comment to have people respond to if they

prefer. We will have a class wiki in addition to the BB and this site will be used for the discussions. We will determine discussion leaders at the beginning of the semester.

**Grading:**

Paper 1: 25%

Paper 2: 25%

Final Project: 30%

Class Participation: 20%

These distributions are meant to serve as guidelines for evaluation in this course. Grades are not calculated mathematically, but are determined through a process of evaluation.

All grading is done on an A-F basis.

**Schedule of Lectures and Reading**

**Week 1:**

T, Jan. 13: Why Study France?

Th, Jan.15: The French Revolution Sets the Pace for The European Century

Readings: \*Ozoufs, “Le Tour de la France par deux enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic” from Nora, *Realms of Memory*; (skip 139-142 but look at images)\*Weber, “In Search of the Hexagon” from *My France*; \*Perry Anderson on France from the *London Review of Books*, September 2004

\*\*Cinémathèque Opportunity: See “Les 400 Coups” at the Aero in Santa Monica on Saturday Night at 7:30 (Part of a Truffaut Week-End).

**Week 2:**

T., Jan.20: Discussion of the First Set of Readings

Th, Jan.22: The Ideas that Made France New Again

Read <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>; go to “explore” and read through the major text for the chapters from start to finish. Then return to the beginning and click on the following primary sources on the left-hand side and read:

**Social Causes Chapter:**

Compare the Two Maps of France

Defense of Tradition documents written and image

Classes Unite

August 4 decrees

Radicalism Lamponed

**Monarchy Embattled**

Monarchy Defended

Scandal of a Royal Mistress

**Enlightenment and Human Rights**

Tablets of the Revolution  
Rights  
Symbols  
Jewish Pleas  
Sieyes Speaks Out  
Equality and Fraternity  
Rights Expanded

**Week 3:**

T., Jan.27: Revolution and reaction sets the Political Pace for the Politics; Or remember these dates: 1814,1815, 1830, 1848,1851, 1870,1871.

Th., Jan.29: **Discussion** of the French Revolutionary Tradition

Read: Hunt, p. 1-31; 71-77; 93-101; 101-116; 119-129

\*Gopnik. "The Good Soldier" from The New Yorker; \*Popkin, pp. 138--187

**Week 4:**

T. Feb 3: Literacy, Learning and the State: Transforming Peasant Lives

Th: Feb 5: Urbanization/Hausmannization

Read: Zola, L'Assommoir

**Week 5:**

T., Feb. 10: Domesticity and Class: Sex, Love, Marriage and Divorce French Style

Th, Feb. 12: **Discussion** of Zola

Read: Finish Zola

**Week 6:**

T, Feb. 17: Guest Lecture: Catherine Clark, "The Origins of Photography in Paris."

Th: Feb. 19: Mid-Term Paper Due to BB at 11:00am. No class otherwise.

Read: Popkin, 92-156; \*Read Tocqueville on Algeria.

**Week 7:**

T., Feb. 24: Empire and the Civilizing Mission

\*Extra Credit Lecture: Sylvie Lindeperg: On "Night and Fog" 12:30-2:00 SOS 250

Th, Feb. 26: France in the Age of Spectacle: The Movies Begin

Read: Schwartz, Spectacular Realities, ch. 2, 3, 6

Screen: Bonus features of Pépé le Moko; clips will be shown in class.

**Week 8:**

T., Mar 3: The Dreyfus Affair: Whither the Church and the Army?

Th: Mar. 5: **Discussion:** Schwartz and Burns

Read: Burns, France and the Dreyfus Affair

**Week 9:**

T., Mar 10: Guest Lecture: Professor Elinor Accampo: World War I

Th, Mar 12: No Meeting; Complete Great War Screenings.

Begin Independent Mandatory Screenings of World War War Documentary, “The Great War” in Leavey Library as soon as possible in the week and finish not later than Thursday night.

Popkin, p. 219-240.

BEGIN reading Verne, Around the World in Eighty Days

### **SPRING BREAK: MARCH 16-20**

#### **Week 10:**

T. Mar 24: French Technology: Great Heights and Imperial Depths

Th: Mar 26: **Discussion** of Verne and “A Nous...”

Read: Finish Verne, Around the World in Eighty Days

Screen: “A Nous La Liberté”. Please watch bonus feature about Chaplin Bonus feature lawsuit.

#### **Week 11:**

T., Mar. 30: The 30s and the Coming Storm in Europe

Th Apr. 2: A Strange Defeat? Vichy and Collaboration/Liberation: Guest Lecture: Catherine Clark

Read: \*Introduction to book version of “Sorrow and Pity” by Stanley Hoffman, Popkin, p.240-294; Nemerovsky pp. 1-189

Screen: “The Sorrow and the Pity” on your own or at optional pizza party on Sunday, April 5, 4-8, Location, TBA.

#### **Week 12:**

T., April 7: **Discussion of World War II and Vichy**

Th., Apr. 9: De Gaulle and Modernization

Screen, Vadim, "Et Dieu Créa la Femme"

Popkin, p.295-330. Read Schwartz, chapters two and three.

#### **Week 13:**

T, Apr. 14: France, Americanization, Feminism and Youth Culture

Th. Apr.16: **Discussion** of films and idea of “Americanization”

Screen: Demy, “Les Parapluies de Cherbourg” and “Les Demoiselles de Rochefort” and Varda documentary, “L’univers de Jacques Demy”

Popkin, pp.330-347

#### **Week 14:**

T., Apr.21: Dr. Schwartz Out of Town. No Class. Papers Due to BB.

Th., Apr. 23: The French Wars of Decolonization

Screen: “The Battle of Algiers” Please watch all the Disc three Bonus features which are historical documentaries.

#### **Week 15:**

T.Apr. 27: The French Idea of the Melting Pot. Boiling Over?

Th, April 30: The End of the Franc, yes; the end of grandeur and France, never! Wrap-up lecture and **discussion of below.**

Screen: "The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob" (Oury). Read \*Marie Brenner, "Daughters of France, Daughters of Allah" by Marie Brenner, Vanity Fair April 2004 and \*Introduction of Shattering Silence by Helen Chenut. \* Gopnik, "The World Cup and After" from Paris to the Moon pp.215-228