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

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

Films:
“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/](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 Lampooned

  **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/Haussmannization
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:**
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

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