



Summer 2024

Course Title: Paris : City of Literature

Instructor's Name: Emma Vissicchio

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Meeting Times and Days: July 1 – July 12, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will employ an interdisciplinary approach to explore Paris as a literary hub, for both French and foreign writers, throughout history. Students will examine literary depictions of Paris through close readings and in-class discussions of key texts, as well as the relationship between literature and other artistic media, such as film, photography, and fine arts. The course will give a particular focus to the 20th century: the rise of modernism and postmodernism as literary movements; the vibrant interplay between art and literature, including their parallel experimentalism; and the role of Paris as a refuge for writers from all over the world, especially those facing discrimination in their home countries (e.g. African-American, LGBTQ+, and Jewish communities). Students will be immersed in literary Paris beyond the page through visits to key literary sites, including the homes and favorite cafés of famous writers, Père Lachaise cemetery, Musée Carnavalet (museum of the history of Paris), bookstores, and libraries. Students will also have the chance to depict Paris in their own words through creative writing and journaling exercises.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Analyze and interpret literary texts through close reading, theoretical and historical contextualization, and comparison to other literary and artistic references
- Evaluate and discuss the significance of Paris as a literary and, more broadly, cultural center from artistic, political, and social perspectives
- Compare and contrast various literary styles and movements, as well as concurrent artistic movements
- Demonstrate critical thinking and preliminary research skills

ASSESSMENT

Grades for this course will be based on the following components:

- In-class participation 20%
- In-class and home assignments (including assigned reading) 30%
- Final project 50% (research and preparation 25%, final submission 25%)



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assessment for the course will involve a combination of ongoing participation in in-class activities (including reading, discussion, and exercises), as well as an independent final research project to be presented at the end of the session. By the end of week one, students will choose a research topic related to the course (a list of suggested topics will be provided during the course) and present their idea to the class. The final submission may take the form of a research paper, an oral presentation, an original piece of creative writing, or another form proposed by the student and approved by the instructor no later than the end of week one. Regardless of the form, the final submission must include a bibliography. Please note that students auditing the course are still expected to meet the same standards in order to ensure a cohesive learning experience for the full group, though they may submit an illustrated journal or other creative work for the final project. PCA students taking the course for 3 credits must submit a 5-6 page research paper and should contact the instructor as well as their department chair as early as possible to coordinate additional requirements and deadlines.

ATTENDANCE

Substantial unannounced absences or late arrivals are factored into grades (for students taking the course for credit). Please note the following:

- Two late arrivals (more than 15 minutes) or early departures = one full absence
- One late arrival of more than 30 minutes = one full absence
- Two unannounced absences = excessive absence for a course that meets once per week
- *Three absences are grounds for failure in the course*

RESOURCES AND READINGS

Unless otherwise specified prior to the course, all readings will be made available by the instructor.

Indicative bibliography, subject to change:

Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. Penguin Classics, 2007.

Barnes Djuna. *Nightwood*. Faber 1932.

Barney, Natalie Clifford and Chelsea Ray. *Women Lovers or the Third Woman*. University of Wisconsin Press 2016.



Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*, Ed. Rolf Tiedemann. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. New York: Belknap Press, 2002.

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

Elkin, Lauren. *Flâneuse: women walk the city in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London*. Vintage, 2017.

Fabre, Michel. *From Harlem to Paris: African-American Writers in France, 1840-1980*. University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Hemingway, Ernest. *A Moveable Feast*. Scribner, 2010.

Hugo, Victor, and Henri Préfacier Guillemin. *Romans*. Ed. du Seuil, 1970.

Queneau, Raymond. *Zazie in the Metro*. Penguin, 2001.

Sand, George. *Histoire de ma vie*. Edited by Damien Zanone, Flammarion, 2001.

Stein, Gertrude. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Penguin Books, 1966.

White, Edmond. *The Flaneur: A Stroll Through the Paradoxes of Paris*. Bloomsbury 2008.

Zola, Emile. *The Belly of Paris*. Oxford Classics, 2009.

SCHOOL POLICIES

1. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will not be tolerated. All research, text, and image sources must be cited using Chicago (Turabian) style. See your instructor or the Student Handbook if you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism.
2. You are required to attend and participate in class critiques and other presentations. Be respectful of your fellow classmates.
3. No phones, devices for listening to music, or other electronics are allowed in class, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
4. No emailing, web surfing, or instant messaging, etc. is allowed during class time, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
5. Classrooms are community space. Please leave them clean and tidy.
6. All Paris College of Art buildings are NON SMOKING, including balconies and the courtyard. You must go outside in the street to smoke. Students found smoking on PCA premises will be fined.



GRADES

A (4.0) Exceptional achievement. Substantial effort and achievement in the areas of critical thinking, technique, and presentation.

A- (3.7) Very high quality.

B+ (3.3) High quality. Substantially higher than average abilities.

B (3.0) Very good work that satisfies goals of course; clear and convincing structure that is complex and unique.

B- (2.7) Good work.

C+ (2.3) Above average. Average understanding of course material.

C (2.0) Average. Original assignment approached but does not develop further.

C- (1.7) Passing but below good academic standing.

D (1.0) Below average. Does not fully understand assignments. Very little effort, is incomplete or late. Lacks of full understanding and commitment.

WF (0) Failure, no credit.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Tentative: Please note that this outline is subject to modification.)

Unless otherwise specified, most days will be structured with on-campus lectures, readings, and discussions in the morning, and an off-campus outing in the afternoon. There will be mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks, as well as an hour break for lunch.

WEEK 1

Day 1 : Writing the city

Introduction to the course, images of the city and depictions of Paris in literature, basics of literary analysis

Neighborhood walk TBC

Readings: *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino, *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway

Day 2 : Foundations of Paris as a European center of learning

Explorations of the roots of Paris as a literate city, Parisian history from the Middle Ages through the Revolution, the pen as a tool of subversion and revolution, satire and French theatre

Visit: Musée Carnavalet (museum of the history of Paris)

Readings: Voltaire, Molière



Day 3 : Romanticism

Continuation of Parisian history from the Restoration through Haussmannization, Romanticism in literature, case study of George Sand: a woman writer in a man's literary world

Visit: Maison de Victor Hugo

Readings: George Sand *The Story of my Life*, Victor Hugo

Day 4 : La Belle Epoque & Modern Paris

Naturalism and depictions of modern life in literature, la Belle Epoque, the modern woman

Visit: Père Lachaise cemetery

Readings: Zola, Benjamin *Arcade Projects*, Colette, Proust

Day 5 : Beginnings of Modernism and the 20th century Roman

Movement from realism to modernism and experimentalism in the early 20th century, social transformation in the interwar period, elevation of the novel as French art form, anglophone expat writers in Paris

Presentation of final project topic proposals

Readings: Sartre, de Beauvoir, Pound, Hemingway, Joyce

WEEK 2

Day 6 : Golden Age of Expat Writers in Paris

The postwar influx of expatriate writers, Saint-Germain-dès-Près neighborhood and its literary cafés, 'Sapphic modernism' & lesbian literary salons : study of the role of lesbian expats in the rise of modernist literature

Visit: Shakespeare & Company bookstore, walking tour of Left Bank, Les Deux Magots café

Readings: Natalie Clifford Barney *Women Lovers*, Gertrude Stein *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Djuna Barnes *Nightwood*

Day 7 : Golden Age of Expat Writers in Paris (continued)

Black American writers and artists in Paris

Visit : Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (or guest speaker TBD)

Readings: James Baldwin *Giovanni's Room*

Day 8 : Writer as Flâneur.euse

Writer as urban wanderer (flâneur), feminist perspectives of the *flâneuse*, wandering Paris underground; in-class time to work on final project

Visit: Off-campus flânerie and creative writing exercise

Readings: Queneau *Zazie in the Metro*, Edmond White *The Flâneur: A Stroll Through the Paradoxes of Paris*, Lauren Elkin *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City*



Day 9 : Reflections on contemporary literature in Paris

Contemporary literary scene and prominent writers in Paris, rise of the *bande dessinée* (comic/graphic novel)

In-class time to work on final projects

Readings: Annie Ernaux, Virginie Despentes, Marguerite Yourcenar, Patrick Modiano, Gao Xingjian

Day 10 : Wrap-up

Presentation of final projects, final reflections

End of session vernissage