

French 324—Turning the World Upside Down: French Civilization since 1789

Course information:

MWF 2:10-3:00, Pardee Room 401

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Office Hours: M 1-2, W 12-1 & by appointment

Course Description

The Revolution of 1789 dramatically shook up social, political, and cultural life in France. The event's significance was not only national, but also global in scope, its aftershocks felt throughout the world, from Europe (the revolution posing a distinct threat to other absolute monarchies) to the Caribbean (where the Haitian Revolution put the new Republican ideals to the ultimate test) and beyond. Political upheavals—instating empires, republics, and kings—continued throughout the “long 19th century” until 1914. The subsequent century has arguably been no less tumultuous, with two world wars, vast technological innovations, decolonization, and the debates surrounding French identity and universalism.

Over the course of the semester, we will explore several key cultural and political changes through a wide-ranging assortment of documents, including films, graphic novels, and prose works; historical documents and literature (including short stories, poetry and theater); as well as essays by modern historians. The topics discussed will include: the French and Haitian Revolutions—their echoes and dissonances; slavery and abolition; Romanticism; Baudelaire's modernity, and the Haussmannization of Paris; the Third Republic (1870-1940) and the construction of contemporary French identity; the Dreyfus affair and anti-Semitism; World Wars I and II; the modernization of post-war French society; decolonization and the Algerian War; and contemporary postcolonial France and *Charlie Hebdo*. In addition to asking how France's past has shaped its present identity (or identities), we will also take a critical look at the relationship between the texts we study and the various ways they represent historical events—what, and how, do they tell us about the past, and why? By examining events linking France to its colonies, we will also explore the boundaries of “French” history and civilization.

Course Goals

This course will:

- Provide you with an overview of historical, cultural and artistic transformations that took place in France and the Francophone world from 1789 to the present.
- Prompt you to consider the relationship between cultural documents and history
- Develop your ability to articulate analyses of cultural and historical documents in spoken and written French
- Ask you to question the traditional boundaries between “French” and “Francophone” civilizations as we study the colonial and postcolonial French-speaking world

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Discuss and reflect on key elements of French national identity in the target language
- Evaluate the construction and evolution of “France” and “French civilization” over the past two hundred years or so
- Situate cultural texts in historical context (the period to which they refer and in which they were produced)
- Analyze a variety cultural and historical documents in French with regard both to content and form (how do we engage with historical events differently through different media?)

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are allowed three unexcused absences for the semester, which should be reserved for minor illnesses or family obligations. Excused absences include Deans’ excuses and sports-related absences excused by an official letter from your coach provided at the beginning of the semester. Each additional absence will lower a student’s final grade by one third of a letter grade (i.e. an A- will become a B+ after a fourth unexcused absence, a B after a fifth, and so on).

Academic Honesty

Course-specific policy: Online translation tools are strictly prohibited in this course, even to look up a single word. This is not merely a question of violating academic integrity; since one word often has a variety of possible translations, translation software will often suggest a word with a different meaning than the one you intend. Please see the “*Ressources*” section on Moodle for a variety of online dictionaries instead, and pay attention to examples to understand contextual usage. Use of online grammar- and spell-checking software—I recommend BonPatron.com—is permitted (however, use it conscientiously to ensure you make the *correct* corrections!).

This course also adheres to the following college-wide academic honesty policy from the Student Handbook: “To maintain the scholarly standards of the College and, equally important, the personal ethical standards of our students, it is essential that written assignments be a student’s own work, just as is expected in examinations and class participation. A student who commits academic dishonesty is subject to a range of penalties, including suspension or expulsion. Finally, the underlying principle is one of intellectual honesty. If a person is to have self-respect and the respect of others, all work must be his/her own.”

Disability Statement

In compliance with Lafayette College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students must register with the Office of the Dean of the College for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

Discussion Policy

It is very important to maintain an open and considerate classroom atmosphere so that everyone feels comfortable participating in discussion. Please strive to demonstrate your respect for others in the class, even as we engage with challenging and complex questions. If you feel uncomfortable in class for any reason, I encourage you to bring it to my attention.

Late Work Policy

There are no make-up exams except in the case of absences excused by the Deans, or of pre-arranged absences due to religious observance or sports events.

Other late assignments will be penalized by 25 % for each day they are turned in beyond the due date.

Technology and Communication Policy

Cellphones and smartphones are not allowed in the classroom. Please turn them off, or put them on silent mode (not vibrate), and place them away in a closed bag or purse before entering the classroom. It is disrespectful to your instructor and your peers to check your phone or text during class time. Any student found using their phone during class time will receive an F for participation for the day.

Computers should also be left in your room or in a bag in order to reduce distractions and facilitate discussion. Please bring pen and paper to class for taking notes; print out assigned documents *before* reading them; highlight, write comments or questions in the margins, etc.; and bring them to class. (Studies suggest that reading on paper, rather than a screen, has advantages for reading comprehension, and that students who take notes by hand retain and synthesize information better: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>)

Emails: I respond to emails within 24 hours (over breaks, it may take a bit longer), and messages sent before 9pm will normally receive a response the same day. Most of your professors grew up in a time when email and texting were not widely used, and view the former as a formal means of communication. If you have a question regarding course assignments, etc., be sure to check the syllabus before emailing your instructor. Additionally, please use a greeting (such as “Dear Professor,” *not* “Hey”!) and closing (i.e. Sincerely, your name), and check spelling before sending your message. Here are more detailed tips: <http://m.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>

Requests for letters of recommendation should be made at least four weeks ahead of time (6 weeks’ notice if possible). Additional guidelines can be found here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Ask-Your-Professor-for-a-Letter-of-Recommendation-Via-Email>

Privacy Policy

Moodle contains student information that is protected by the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). Disclosure to unauthorized parties violates federal privacy laws. Courses using Moodle will make student information visible to other students in this class. Please remember that this information is protected by these federal privacy laws and must not be shared with anyone outside the class. Questions can be referred to the Registrar's Office.

Federal Credit Hours Compliance

The student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four credit hour course. This means that students may expect an additional 8-10 hours of work outside of class time per week. Please see the Registrar's Office web site (<http://registrar.lafayette.edu/additional-resources/cep-course-proposal/>) for the full policy and practice statement.

Final Grade

- Participation & Preparation (including answers to reading & discussion questions)—20 %
- Three Exams—45 %
- Graphic Novel Mini-Project—5 %
- Annotated Bibliography and Documentary Script—5 % and 10 %
- Short Documentary Film—15 %

Assignments

Participation and Preparation

Active participation is very important in both a language course and a discussion-based class. This includes the following: showing up on time, having completed readings carefully, contributing comments and/or questions frequently in class, speaking exclusively in French during the class period, and listening respectfully to others (even as we seek to engage in lively discussions). Students are allowed three “unexcused” absences (i.e. those that are not excused by an official Dean's Excuse) without penalty per student per semester.

Students will also be asked to complete short reading guides or discussion questions before class many days. This will be announced by the Friday of the preceding week on the weekly or biweekly schedule posted on Moodle. Responses will be submitted on Moodle and will be graded for completeness and thoroughness at the end of the semester. These responses will also serve as study aids when preparing for the three exams, so students should take care to answer questions clearly and carefully.

Students will complete a mid-semester self-evaluation of their participation and preparation and will receive a progress report from the professor addressing their performance.

Three 50-minute exams

Three exams will test your understanding of assigned materials, and ask you to make connections between historical contexts and works studied. The format could include responding to short essay questions, identifying key passages, and visual analysis. Although memorizing dates is not a central part of the course, you may be asked, for instance, to explain the significance of certain key dates (i.e. “What is the significance of mai '68?”).

Documentary Film Project, Annotated Bibliography, and Documentary Script

Students will complete a final research project in the form of a short documentary film on a topic of their choice relating to French Civilization since 1789 (the topic must be approved by the instructor). An annotated bibliography, consisting of biographical information and summaries of 5-8

relevant sources, will help students begin the research process. Students will next submit a script (~2 pages), which they will discuss with the professor in meetings outside of class time. Finally, after addressing suggested revisions and making any necessary corrections to the script, students will create a short documentary film (~3-5 minutes) narrated using their script, including subtitles and a bibliography.

Graphic Novel Mini-Project

This project asks students to engage deeply with the realities of World War II in France as portrayed in the *Lettres de Louise Jacobson*, by adapting an assigned portion of the letters into comic form using the software *ComicLife*.

Required Texts *All course documents are on Moodle or, in the case of films, on reserve at Skillman Library*

Reference texts

Michelle & Aurélien Fayet, *Le Grand livre de l'histoire de France* (Eyrolles, 2014)

Sowerwine, *France since 1870* (Palgrave, 2009)

Films

Kassovitz, *La Haine* (1995)

Leconte, *Ridicule* (1996) (excerpts)

Tati, *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* (1953)

Literary Works

Apollinaire, *Calligrammes : Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre 1913-1916* (1918)

Baudelaire, « Le Cygne », *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857)

Maupassant, « Boule de suif », (1880)

Theory & criticism

Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995)

Rousseau, *Du Contrat social* (1762)

Historical documents & newspaper articles

« La Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen » (1789)

Zola, « J'accuse » (1898)

Graphic novels & paintings

Tardi *Putain de guerre !*

Numerous paintings such as *La Mort de Marat* by David

Octobre noir

Schedule (subject to change) *Note: All work is to be completed before class on the day scheduled**

Semaine 1 – Introductions, avant 1789

- 28 août Introductions ; en classe : extraits du film *Le Roi danse* & mini-conférence sur Louis XVI
- 30 Louis XVI : lire *GLHF* 203-211 ; en classe : regarder des extraits de *Ridicule*
- 1^{er} septembre Contexte philosophique et intellectuel : Extraits de l'*Encyclopédie* & du *Contrat social*

Semaine 2 – La Révolution de 1789

- 4 La révolution : Lire *GLHF* 212-219; « La Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen »
- 6 La Révolution haïtienne: lire *Les Vengeurs du nouveau monde* (Laurent Dubois, extraits)
- 8 Napoléon : un héros romantique ? Lire *GLHF* 232-240

Semaine 3 – L'empire napoléonien ; L'esclavage, la Révolution haïtienne & l'abolitionnisme

- 11 Introduction à l'abolitionnisme en France ; lire *Ourika*, première partie
- 13 *Ourika*, deuxième partie
- 15 *Ourika*, troisième partie

Semaine 4 – L'abolitionnisme & le romantisme

- 18 *Ourika*, préface de Joan de Jean
- 20 **EXAMEN 1**
- 22 Introduction à la révolution de 1830: lire *GLHF* 281-2 & 285-288; la Liberté de la presse & de la caricature : « Les Poires »

Semaine 5 – Les révolutions de 1830 & 1848, & le romantisme

- 25 Introduction au contexte historique de 1848; Lire *GLHF* 292-300; en classe : étude des symboles de la révolution de 1848
- 27 L'Hausmannisation chez Baudelaire, Regarder le clip sur Moodle & lire « Le Cygne »
- 29 La guerre de 1870 : Lire *GLHF* 308-312

Semaine 6 – La Révolution de 1848, Le Second Empire & la Troisième République

- 2 octobre Lire : extrait de Maupassant, « Boule de suif » (1880) & « *Boule de suif* » de *Guy de Maupassant* de Li-An et Laurence Croix (2009), jusqu'à la page 20 de la bande dessinée

- 4 « *Boule de suif* » jusqu'à la fin
- 6 **A RENDRE : Bibliographie annotée ;** en classe : « *Boule de suif* », comparaison de la nouvelle de Maupassant et de la BD
- Semaine 7 – La Troisième république (1870 à 1914)
- 9 ***Vacances d'automne !***
- 11 Contexte de l'affaire Dreyfus (lire *GLHF* 320-22) & « J'accuse », Zola (1898)
- 13 Introduction au contexte de la Première guerre mondiale : Lire *GLHF* 360-372, sautez « L'année terrible » 367-369)
- Semaine 8 – La Première guerre mondiale
- 16 Lire : *Putain de guerre !*, Tardi & répondez aux questions de lecture
- 18 Lire : *Calligrammes*, Apollinaire (extrait)
- 20 **EXAMEN 2**
- Semaine 9 – La Seconde Guerre mondiale
- 23 Paris noir & La négritude
- 25 La Résistance—Introduction au contexte de la Seconde guerre mondiale : Lire *GLHF* 383-386 & 392-396, pp. & « L'appel du 18 juin » de Charles de Gaulle
- 27 La collaboration : lire *GLHF* 387-392; regarder *Le Chagrin & la pitié* (1971)
- Semaine 10 – La Seconde Guerre mondiale
- 30 Lire : *Lettres de Louise Jacobson* (extraits) ; en classe : Commencer le travail sur l'adaptation en bande dessinée de la lettre de Louise Jacobson
- 1^{er} novembre Pas de cours—Séance de travail sur le projet BD au FLLRC
- 3 1. Pas de cours—Séance de travail sur le projet BD au FLLRC
2. **A RENDRE** avant 9h du soir : version finale du projet BD
- Semaine 11 – Les Trente glorieuses
- 6 Introduction aux Trente glorieuses : lire Kristen Ross *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (extraits)
- 8 Regarder *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* (1953)
- 10 Introduction au contexte de la guerre d'Algérie : lire TBD
- Semaine 12 – la Guerre d'Algérie
- 13 Lire : *Octobre noir* (lisez l'introduction de Benjamin Stora & première partie)

- 15 Lire : *Octobre noir* (deuxième partie)
- 17 mai '68 : lire *GLHF*
- Semaine 13 –mai '68
- 20 **A RENDRE : SCENARIO du film documentaire** ; Réunions individuelles avec la professeure lundi et mardi (mais pas de cours)
- 22 & 24 Pas de cours—Vacances de Thanksgiving !
- Semaine 14 & « Black, blanc, beur » (?)
- 27 *La Haine* (en classe)
- 29 *La Haine* (en classe)
- 1^{er} décembre Discussion sur *La Haine*
- Semaine 15
- 4 Lire : Articles sur le Coupe du monde de 1998, les émeutes de 2005 ou *Charlie-Hebdo* ; évaluations du cours
- 6 **A RENDRE : Films documentaires**
- 8 **A RENDRE : Films documentaires & conclusions**
- 12-18 Période des examens finaux ; date du **EXAMEN 3** à être annoncée