



IFE course syllabus

Course title

Paris France Paris: Discovering a nation via its capital

Course taught by

Thierry Bonzon

Holding a doctorate in history, Thierry Bonzon is an associate professor at the University of Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée, where he specializes in contemporary history, teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. His research focuses on European social policy from the early 20th century through World War I. He is currently conducting research in both political history and the history of photography at the Institute for Comparative Politics at his university. He is also the director of the Masters program in Web Professions and Culture at the University of Paris-Est-Marne-la-vallée – INA.

Purpose of the course

Paris France Paris is intended to provide students in the Gateway program a basic understanding of Paris and France, and of the differences between the two. Drawing on multiple aspects of the city to illustrate a number of key themes, the course is designed for non-specialists interested in going beyond superficial impressions of the city and society in which they are living and studying.

Description of the course

Making sense of the kaleidoscope of Paris both past and present requires a method. Paris France Paris leads students on an investigation of Paris along three avenues of inquiry: “transformations”, “places” and “cultures”.

Transformation, mutation, and incremental change affecting not only the capital but also the French nation can be discovered in patterns of urbanization over time, the sociology of Paris and its neighborhoods, economic activity, and the life of city-dwellers. This approach based in history and observation is fundamental to understanding the current issues at play.

Secondly, the course examines places in Paris and its outskirts for what they reveal about public policies and social practice – past and present; from Les Halles and City Hall to Montparnasse, Belleville, the Cité-Jardin de Suresnes, the Ile Seguin, and La Courneuve. The course also looks at certain sites that the French call “places of memory”, such as the Pantheon, the Champs Elysées or the “mur des fédérés”. The course makes use of its Paris location to conduct on-site visits whenever possible.

Finally, making sense of Paris and the French social landscape means looking at the various “cultures” which have grown up in these spaces: democracy, the role of the State, centralization and centrifugal reactions, forms of identity, the role of rurality, the importance of food and gastronomy, and various forms of protest, among others.

The course uses these three dimensions as methodological frameworks for examining the different themes addressed each week.

Course outline

Introduction: The origins of a capital city

I Paris, a political capital

Constructing the Nation in Paris – republican statuary (visit); the clash of local and State leadership – strong City Hall and State construction projects in the city (visit to City Hall); a look back to revolutionary and rebellious Paris (visit to Père Lachaise).

II Paris and its surrounding towns

From 19th century annexation of villages on Paris’ outskirts to current plans for “Grand Paris” – the policy of “villes

nouvelles” – urban projects for Paris and the banlieue – the republican pact as seen in urban social spaces in Paris (visit to the “cité-jardin” of Suresnes) – housing in Paris, idealism and crisis in the history of social housing – unrest and violence in the banlieue.

III Paris and province

The provinces in Paris (visit to The Paris Agriculture Show) – Paris in the eyes of the provinces, attraction and disaffection.

IV Parisians

“Boboization” of working class neighborhoods, the disappearance of working Paris. – Social ties and identity in the newly recomposed city (visit to Belleville). – Immigrant Paris, recent tendencies, the long-lasting impact of the culture of colonialism (visit to the Museum of the History of Immigration).

IV Paris attracts

Paris as a capital of artistic creation in the 20th century, the avant-garde in Montparnasse in the 1930's. Paris no longer on the cutting edge. – Paris for film-makers and photographers. – Paris in the context of international tourism to France, Paris as a subject and context for photographers and film-makers. – The place of Paris in French tourism, Paris as a city-sized museum.

Readings

- *Qu'elle était belle ma banlieue*, dossier du magazine L'Histoire, décembre 2006.
- *Penser la crise des banlieues*, Annales, Histoire, Sciences sociales, juillet-août 2006.
- *Emeutes en banlieue : lectures d'un événement*, Espaces et sociétés, n°128-129, 2007.
- *Ghettos américains, banlieues françaises*, Hérodote, n°122, 2006.

- *Le Grand Pari(s). Consultation internationale sur l'avenir de la métropole parisienne*, Paris, Le Moniteur, 2009.
- *Paris 21^e siècle*, Paris, Atelier parisien d'Urbanisme, Le Passage, 2008.

- N. T. BINH, *Paris au cinéma. La vie rêvée de la capitale de Méliès à Amélie Poulain*, Paris, Parigramme, 2005.
- Pascal BLANCHARD et Nicolas BANCEL, *De l'indigène à l'immigré*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998.
- Antoine BRES, Thierry SANJUAN, *Atlas Paris*, Paris, éditions Autrement, 2011.
- Philippe DEWITTE, *Deux siècles d'immigration en France*, Paris, La Documentation française, 2003.
- Jean-Marie DROT, *Les heures chaudes de Montparnasse*, Paris, Hazan, 2007
- Michel PINCON et Monique PINCON-CHARLOT, *Sociologie de Paris*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.
- Jean-Luc PINOL, *Atlas des Parisiens. De la Révolution à nos jours*, Paris, Parigramme, 2009.
- Julian STALLABRASS, *Paris photographié, 1900-1968*, Paris, Hazan, 2002.

Films

- *Paris, je t'aime* (France, 2006)
- Woody ALLEN, *Midnight in Paris* (Etats-Unis, 2011)

- Stanley DONEN, *Funny Face* (Etats-Unis, 1956)
- Jean-Pierre JEUNET, *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (France, 2001)
- Cédric KLAPISH, *Chacun cherche son chat* (France, 1996)
- Cédric KLAPISH, *Paris* (France, 2008)
- Vincente MINELLI, *Un Américain à Paris* (Etats-Unis, 1951)

Grading

Student work is evaluated on the basis of class participation, two oral presentations, and weekly writing assignments for the class blog