**FRENCH 329**

**PROBLEMS IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION/FRENCH LITERATURE**

**NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARIS**

**Spring 2011**

**Wednesdays 4:30 - 7:10**

**Robinson A, Room 247**

**Dr. Paula Ruth Gilbert** Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30- 4:00

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Come and enjoy learning about the "city of lights," capital of the nineteenth century, capital of modernity, capital of Europe, and capital of the world. We shall study this amazing city through the virtual city itself as a laboratory, as well as through history, architecture, urban planning, novels, poetry, the visual arts, music, and film. We shall embark upon a literal and virtual tour of this city through consideration of such areas as: "le flâneur/la flâneuse," the sewers, revolution, the dandy, food, department stores, prostitution, "le demimonde," anti-Semitism, the status of women, money, spectacle, leisure time, cemeteries, railway stations, the working class, bars and cafés, clothing, caricature, photography, among others. Starting and continuing with a social and cultural historical view (using chapters from Alistair Horne's *Seven Ages of Paris*), we shall move on to the short novel, *Ferragus*, by Balzac. Excerpts from Hugo's *Les Misérables* will come next, as will selections from the film and the musical, *Les Miz*. Excerpts from Flaubert's novel of the years leading up to the Second Empire, *Sentimental Education*, will bring us, as well, to the satirical comic operas of Offenbach. We shall learn about the urban planning and massive transformation of the city by Baron Haussmann during the reign of Napoléon III. Charles Baudelaire's somber, poetic views of Paris in a selection from his "Parisian Pictures" from *Flowers of Evil* and from his prose poems, *The Spleen of Paris*, will give us the view of the poets, while a study of some of the paintings by Impressionists will offer a visual perspective of the city. The world of the courtesan will be studied through Zola's novel, *Nana*, transported to the screen as a feature-length film, linked to operas such as *La Traviata*, and again to the art of the Impressionists. In addition, each student will research throughout the semester an individual topic not able to be covered in depth in the course and based either on an additional novel, film, opera, comic opera, the arts, or historical material. These topics will form the basis of brief individual student presentations and the submission of a research paper at the end of the semester. Students are expected to participate fully in class discussions and in individual class presentations. This course will be an interactive, interdisciplinary seminar, with few lectures and involvement by all students.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To explore (through texts) the city of Paris as a laboratory in order to understand better its nineteenth-century nature; to become a virtual "flâneur/flâneuse."

To develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills.

To better one's ability in understanding, reading, and speaking in English.

To strengthen one's research skills and to use those skills to produce both written work and an oral presentation.

To broaden one's interdisciplinary understanding of Paris and the nineteenth century.

To appreciate the connections among history, urban planning, social trends, political movements, and economic change and further links to fiction, poetry, the visual arts, and music.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Horne, Alistair. *Seven Ages of Paris.* New York: Vintage Books, 2004. (in part)

Balzac, Honoré de. *Ferragus.* New York: Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables.* New York: Signet Books, 1987. (excerpts)

Baudelaire, Charles. *Flowers of Evil and Paris Spleen*. New York: Boa Editions, 1991.

(selections)

Flaubert, Gustave. *Sentimental Education.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

(excerpts)

Zola, Emile. *Nana.* New York: Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Films, Documentaries, and Music:

Some of these films will be shown in part in class. Others are supplemental and can be used as part of individual research projects. Please see the class schedule and assignments.

*Les Misérables*. Dir. Bille August. Perfs. Liam Neeson, Geoffey Rush, Uma Thurman, Claire

Danes. Columbia Pictures, 1998.

*Les Misérables*: *The Musical Sensation*. Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg. 1985.

Jacques Offenbach. *La Vie parisienne*. Libretto: Henro Meilhac et Ludovic Halévy. Opéra

National de Lyon/Radio France, 1991.

Jacques Offenbach. *La Belle Hélène*. Zurich Opera House, Image Entertainment, 1997.

*Nana*. Perfs. Charles Boyer, Martin Carol. 1957.

Guiseppe Verdi. *La Traviata*--the opera or the film by Franco Zeffirelli--based on *La Dame aux*

*camélias* (*Camille*) by Alexandre Dumas fils.

*Balzac: A Life of Passion*. Dir. Josée Dayan Perfs. Gérard Dépardieu, Jeanne Moreau, Fanny

Ardant. Beta Film, 1999; Bravo Company, 2000.

*Les Enfants de paradis (Children of Paradise).* Dir. Marcel Carné. Scénario. Jacques

Prévert. Perfs. Arletty, Jean Louis Barrault, Pierre Brasseur. Criterion Collection,

2002. (Life in a poor, theatrical area of Paris at the beginning of the century).

*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Dir. Wallace Worsley II. Perfs. Lon Chaney, Patsy Ruth

Miller. Delta, 2004.

*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Dir. William Dieterle. Perfs. Charles Laughton, Sir Cedric

Hardwicke, Maureen O'Hara. RKO Radio Pictures, 1939; Warner Home Video, 1997.

*The Hunchback of Notre Dame.*  Dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. Perfs. (voices of) Jason

Alexander, Tom Hulce, Demi Moore. Disney DVD, 2000.

*Offenbach in Paris*. Théâtre Musical de Paris-Châtelet. Kultur, 2002.

*The Life of Émile Zola*. Dir. William Dieterle. Perf. Paul Muni. Warner Brothers/MGM/UA

Home Video, 1989.

Giacomo Puccini. *La Bohème*--the opera of the film by Franco Zeffirelli (MCL)--based on

*Scènes de la vie de bohème* by Henri Murger.

Georges Bizet. *Carmen*--the opera or the film by Franco Zeffirelli--based on *Carmen* by

Prosper Mérimée.

*Camille Claudel*. Dir. Bruno Nuytten. Perfs. Isabelle Adjani, Gérard Dépardieu. Orion Home

Video, 1989.

**COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

Class Dynamics: Perhaps the most important guideline for the classroom is respect for all class members, their ideas, their experiences, and their comments. The differences among us will add to the richness of this course. Please communicate your thoughts and opinions honestly but also in ways that acknowledge difference.

Attendance and Participation: Much of the value that you will receive from this course will come from both your course readings and viewings and from your interactions with others. Your attendance and participation, therefore, are extremely important to the class and your learning process. Do not miss class!

Assignments: You are expected to complete all assignments on the assigned due date. No late assignments will be accepted. If you are having difficulties completing an assignment, contact me in advance.

Honor Code: George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See [honorcode.gmu.edu](http://honorcode.gmu.edu/) for more detailed information.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

E-Mail Accounts: It is important to have and use an e-mail account. According to guidelines established by the University, each student is to access and use her/his GMU e-mail account when corresponding with me and with other students in a given course. You can have your mail forwarded from gmu.edu to your current, active account. Although written assignments are to be handed in both digital form and as a hard copy, e-mail accounts will allow each of you to be in touch with me and with the others regarding assignments, questions, and discussions.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DATES

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.   
Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website registrar.gmu.edu.)

Tuesday 8 February: Last day to drop with no tuition liability

Tuesday 8 February: Last day to add classes

Friday 25 February: Last day to drop classes

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.  
Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

**RELEVANT CAMPUS AND ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

Disability Support Services: If you are a student with a disability, and you need academic accommodations, please see me, and contact the Office of Disability resources at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Student Technology Assistance and Resources (STAR) Center: Johnson Center 229 / 993-8990

Writing Center: Robinson A116; 993-1200

Counseling Center: Student Union 1 (SUB 1), Rm. 364; 993-2380; www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc

Sexual Assault Services: SUB I, Rms. 219L & 219M; 993-4364; [www.gmu.edu/facstaff/sexual](http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/sexual)

Women’s Studies Research and Resource Center: Johnson Center 240K; 993-2896; jcweb.gmu.edu/communities/wrc

**DETAILS OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

1. **Class preparation and participation (**25% of the final grade**)**

It is important that students in this class find their own voice. As you will soon learn, I see this class as collaborative and participatory; we shall all benefit not only from our readings, but also from our class discussions to which each of us will bring an individual perspective. Through class discussions and individual assignments, you will have the opportunity to discover new perspectives and examine ideas that were previously unchallenged. Open discussion depends on the development of trust and safety among participants, as well as risk-taking and effective facilitation. It is, therefore, essential that class members attend all scheduled classes and participate in class discussions. In addition, I encourage you to aid your oral participation by bringing to class relevant materials from newspapers and other media forms. I shall be giving each student a class participation grade approximately 3-4 times during the semester, and these grades--as all grades--are available for each of you to see. Progress in class participation throughout the semester will be taken into consideration for your final participation grade.

2. **Quizzes on Readings and Viewings** (10% of the final grade):

The purpose of these announced quizzes is to make sure that you are keeping up with the reading and viewing assignments and understand the theoretical texts, the novels, the short stories, and the films. The format will vary from short-answer questions to brief in-class writing.

3. **Oral presentations/exposés/analyses of texts (**20% of the final grade**)**

When we study literary texts, each of you will be assigned a given topic, theme, or passage that you will analyze and present to the class. Although there are many critical works devoted to these texts, you are expected to interpret the texts on your own, with your own ideas, "emotions," and justifications. Remember that literary texts have multiple interpretations, but that you must justify yours with “proof” from the text itself. Each student will present one such exposés during the semester.

4. **Research Project/Paper (35%) and Presentation of Material (10%):**

Given the overwhelming amount of possibilities for a study of Paris in the 19th century, it will clearly not be feasible to treat everything in this course in the amount of time that we have. Accordingly and as already indicated in the course description, each student will choose near the beginning of the semester and will research throughout the rest of the semester an individual topic not able to be covered in depth in the course and based either on an additional novel, film, opera, comic opera, the arts, or historical material. Each topic will form the basis of an individual student presentation and the submission of a research paper on the same subject--both at the end of the semester. I have scheduled the last two classes of the semester for these presentations, with the time for each presentation to be determined.

I am providing below a list of possible topics for these presentations/research papers, but feel free to suggest other potential subjects--which you need to discuss with me. I expect each student to have chosen a topic as soon as possible in the semester so that you can have sufficient time to complete the research and writing. The research paper is to be a minimum of 8 pages in length. This research paper will require a minimum of five outside sources. All topics must be approved in advance. You will be required to submit an outline of your paper in advance, along with a list of your outside sources. The outline and list of research sources will be due on 13 April, and the your paper is due on 4 May. Most importantly you need to choose a topic that really interests you and with which you can remain engaged throughout the semester.

You can use either MLA or APA format, although MLA format is preferable for this class. Do not forget to indicate (in parentheses) all page numbers from which you cite directly or paraphrase. All papers must be typed and corrected for errors in grammar and typing. Each paper must be double-spaced, using an 11-12 point font, with page numbers, and one-inch margins. You do not need a cover sheet. Simply start on page 1 (although the first page is not numbered), and place your name at the top right-hand corner of each page. No folder is necessary; just staple the pages together. It is absolutely necessary to be consistent in your citations and documentation. You must follow MLA or APA format for quotations, references, and Works Cited (MLA)/Bibliography (APA), starting on a separate page. Please use endnotes for explanatory purposes only, and do not use footnotes with notations such as "Ibid."

Remember that Wikipedia is not considered a critical source, although you can consult that source for basic information. Similarly any encyclopedia of any sort is not to be considered as one of your 5/10 outside sources. You are expected to locate and use critical sources: scholarly monographs; scholarly essays in recognized journals. You may, of course, use the Internet for critical sources but not exclusively and--be careful--it is often difficult to confirm what is accurate and what isn't accurate on the Internet. Check with me if you are not sure!

[Grading Scale: A+ = 97-100; A = 94-96; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = below 60.]

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

26 January Introduction to the course

Introduction to Paris

Historical Paris of the 19th century (a brief visual tour)

2 February Horne. *Seven Ages of Paris*. Chapters 10, 11, 12 (pp. 158-208)

9 February The Paris of Honoré de Balzac and "le flâneur":

Honoré de Balzac. *Ferragus* (in its entirety)

16 February Paris in 1832 as seen by Victor Hugo in 1862--Revolution and

Sewers

Horne. *Seven Ages of Paris*. Chapter 13 (pp. 210-29)

Victor Hugo. *Les Misérables* (excerpts--to be assigned))

23 February Paris as seen by Victor Hugo (continued):

Victor Hugo. *Les Misérables* (excerpts--to be assigned)

The film, *Les Misérables* (sections to be seen in class)

The Musical Comedy/Opera, *Les Miz* (specific songs in class)

2 March The Paris of 1840-1848, as seen by Gustave Flaubert:

Gustave Flaubert. Sentimental Education (excerpts--assigned)

16 March Paris of the Second Empire; Baron Haussmann

Horne. *Seven Ages of Paris*. Chapter 14 (pp. 230-50)

Photographs and maps of the old and the new city (Power Point)

Making Fun of the Second Empire and Napoléon III: the comic

Operas of Jacques Offenbach (selections in class)

23 March The Paris of Charles Baudelaire: "le flâneur," "le dandy" and

Daily life:

"Parisian Pictures" from *Flowers of Evil*. (selections--assigned)

*Paris Spleen* (selections--assigned)

30 March The Paris of the Painters: "le flâneur," "le dandy" and modernity:

Other painters and their views of Paris from Le Musée d'Orsay

6 April The Paris of Pleasure and the "courtisane"--Émile Zola's view:

Émile Zola. *Nana* (first half)

13 April The Paris of Pleasure and the "courtisane"--Émile Zola's view:

Émile Zola. *Nana* (second half)

The "demi-monde" in "reality," art, and music (Verdi's opera, *La*

*Traviata*, based on *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas *fils--*Power Point)

[**Outline of research paper due and list of outside sources]**

20 April An Overview of the Third Republique: The Franco-Prussian

War; the Commune

Horne. *Seven Ages of Paris*. Chapters 15, 16 (pp. 251-276)

27 April "La Belle Epoque" and The Dreyfus Affair

Horne. *Seven Ages of Paris.* Chapter 16 (pp. 279-302)

4 May Student Presentations

**Research Papers Due**

11 May Student Presentations

Overview: What have we learned?" (in lieu of a final exam)

**List of Possible Topics for Presentations and Research Paper:**

Honoré de Balzac's *The Girl with the Golden Eyes*: Mysterious and hellish Paris.

Honoré de Balzac's *Colonel Chabert:* High Parisian society under the Restoration.

*Balzac: A Life of Passion*: A filmic biography of the great writer. (DVD)

Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris:* Medieval Paris as seen in the 19th century.

Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*: A comparison of two films--1957 and 1998. (DVD's)

Daumier: Paris and the Parisians in caricature.

Jacques Offenbach's *La Vie parisienne, La Belle Hélène, and Offenbach in Paris*: Satires

of the Second Empire. (DVD's)

Nadar and the photography of Paris (especially in the sewers).

Émile Zola's *The Markets of Paris/The Belly of Paris/Le Ventre de Paris*: "les halles"/food.

The Railroads and the Railway Stations of Paris.

Émile Zola's *The Ladies Paradise/The Ladies Delight/Au bonheur des dames*: Department

stores.

Émile Zola's *The Kill/The Curée* or Money/*L'Argent*: Paris and money, capitalism, the

Stock Exchange, Finance, and Credit.

Émile Zola's *L'Assommoir*: The Workers and the poor of Paris.

Verdi's *La Traviata,* Puccini's *La Bohème*, or Berlioz' *Carmen*: An operatic portrait of Parisian

Life and the "demi-monde."

The Universal Expositions (World's Fairs) in Paris: 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900.

Impressionism and Modern Life in Paris: Manet, Tissot, Seurat, Renoir, Degas, Caillebotte.

The paintings of Berthe Morissot and Mary Cassat: Interior Paris.

The "Café-concert" (as seen by Manet, Degas and especially Toulouse Lautrec).

*Toulouse-Lautrec and Montmarbre*: A National Gallery of Art Presentation Film. (DVD)

The film, *Camille Claudel*: The Situation of women artists at the end of the 19th century. (DVD)

The Third Republic (and the role played by painters and writers).

The Franco-Prussian War and the Commune.

The Dreyfus Affair and Parisian and French antisémitism (and the role played by Zola).

*The Life of Émile Zola*: The filmic version of the great writer's life. (DVD)

Absinthe: The History of this "demon" in a bottle in Parisian life.