

FRANCE AND ITS OTHERS: RACE, ETHNICITY, AND DIFFERENCE IN FRENCH CINEMA

French 41/a GE course
Fall 2020

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Fulfills general education requirements in "Literary and Cultural Analysis" and "Visual Analysis and Practice". Also fulfills Diversity Requirement. UCLA's quarters are 10 weeks long. In "normal times", we meet 2x/week for lecture, 1x/week for small group discussion sections (led by TAs). Some years I screen on Tues, lecture on Thurs; other years students watch the films outside of class and I lecture both Tu/Th. In 2020, the course ran asynchronously, with only discussion sections held "live".

Course description

By all benchmarks (critical, financial, popular), the 2011 movie *The Intouchables* (*Intouchables*) was a success. A "feel-good" film about the friendship between Philippe, a wealthy white man of French extraction and Driss, a poor black man of Senegalese origin, *The Intouchables* generated no small number of superlatives: it currently stands as France's second biggest box-office success (after *Welcome to the Sticks*, 2008); in 2012 it was the highest grossing non-English language film of the year and it has been called the most successful non-English language film ever; in 2011, 52 % of French people declared the film to be THE cultural event of the year; and finally, when Omar Sy earned a César award for his portrayal of Driss, he became the first black actor to win the coveted prize (the French equivalent of an Oscar).

However, to take *The Intouchables* and its massive popular success at face value is to elide the very serious questions about race and representation that the film--notwithstanding its qualification as a "contemporary fairy tale"--begs us to ask: how might we scratch the surface of *The Intouchables* to explore the representation of race in French cultural productions? How does the film interact with its socio-political context? And, finally: if *The Intouchables* indeed suggests that racial harmony is the status quo in French film and in French life, has it always been this way? How has the cinematic representation of race, ethnicity, and difference evolved over the course of the 20th century? In other words: how did we get here?

To begin answering this question and articulating others, the course places a selection of films by mainstream French directors in their respective historical contexts. The films chosen reflect a variegated understanding of race and ethnicity, moving from relatively narrow definitions to a broader, more capacious construal of difference. For each of the films we screen this quarter, we will explore how ideas about (and critiques of) race and racism are represented and produced, both narratively (ie, through plot) and formally (ie, through film form).

In addition to the cinematic content, this course proposes a selection of classic readings on racism, colonialism, and politics (Said, Fanon, Memmi). In order to develop an analytical vocabulary for discussing the films, the course includes readings in formal film analysis. The *Yale Film Studies "Film Analysis Guide"* (available online) is our primary resource. Occasional essays in film theory may be included.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Gain general knowledge about contemporary France and French cinema
- Develop familiarity with key concepts in Critical Race Studies and Postcolonial Theory
- Acquire basic “fluency” in formal film terminology
- Develop the capacity to move from observation to interpretation (from identification of formal elements to analysis of those elements)
- Practice and perform contextualized film analysis
- Express sophisticated interpretations of cultural productions in clear language

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Grades for French 41 are based on the following methods of evaluation, each of which is described in detail below:

3 QUIZZES (15, 15, and 10 points each, respectively): 40 points total.

Quizzes are administered via the Moodle site and graded automatically. Each quiz is designed to be taken during a 48-hour window, within which you have 1 hour to complete the quiz. (Accommodations for students registered with CAE will be automatically applied.) Questions may be multiple-choice, true-false, matching, fill-in-the blank, etc. Quizzes cover material from films, readings and lectures. See QUIZZES tab for more information and links.

FINAL PROJECT: 40 points (see project description for point breakdown)

The project is a multi-stage, multi-modal group project. For a detailed explanation and calendar, see FINAL PROJECT tab.

See Addendum 1 for assignment details.

FILM ANALYSIS: 10 points (presented in section). You will sign up to present a film analysis to your section. The analysis consists of selecting a meaningful image or clip from a given film and providing a brief set of analytical comments on that image. Detailed instructions can be found in the FILM ANALYSIS ACTIVITY tab.

See Addendum2 for assignment details.

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION: 10 points. This category is not just about attending class, but about how cogently you engage with the material while in class. This includes demonstrating that you have read and understood the essays, have engaged with the material presented in lecture, and that you are an active participant in your own learning. It is very important that you come to section ready to discuss that day’s film and readings. Be sure to take notes while viewing and reading; make note of specific scenes/passages you’d like to discuss in class. Sharing ideas is an important part of what we will be doing in this course so if you have trouble speaking up, please speak with your TA or Professor Brozgal. We will be happy to work with you to find ways that will make contributing to our class intellectual life more manageable. Your grade will be based on the quality, not only the quantity, of your contributions.

Grading scheme used for French 41, as well as late and missed-assignment policies, can be found under the POLICIES tab.

GRADES ISSUED TO THE REGISTRAR AT THE END OF THE QUARTER HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY REVIEWED BY YOUR SECTION LEADER AND PROFESSOR BROZGAL; THESE GRADES ARE FINAL.

WEEK 0/THURSDAY

WHY CAN'T THEY BE BOTH? French Universalism v. American Multiculturalism

Prior to our first class meeting, please watch the 10-minute segment from "The Trevor Noah Show" (July 2018).

For context: the French national soccer team had just won the World Cup. As Noah explains, he heralded the French victory as **also** a victory for Africa. The French Ambassador wrote a formal letter to Noah, criticizing his comments about the ethno-racial make-up of the French national team and schooling Noah in French universalism. Noah, in his response, outlines a countervailing worldview that we might label multiculturalism. Payoffs and pitfalls of each?

In class, we will explore the deeper roots of the problem sketched out in the "Noah vs. The Ambassador" quarrel. Main points include:

- What is "colorblindness" in the context of race, policy, attitudes?
- The complexities of thinking about race in the French context
- Cinema as a tool for "seeing through" race
- Review of syllabus and logistics
- Presentation of requirements and policies

The Trevor Noah clip allows students to access unfamiliar ideas through a familiar face, and through humor. Noah does a decent job of outlining universalism; students are nonetheless able, with a bit of direction, to see the limits of Noah's own "argument".

WEEK 1/ A COLORBLIND BROMANCE? *INTOUCHABLES*.

View *The Intouchables* (2011). Feature film.

Original title: *Intouchables*

Dirs. Olivier Nakache and Eric Tolédano. Runtime: 1h53

Read documents from the French Revolution (1789), excerpts. Collected in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (Edited, translated and with an introduction by Lynne Hunt, Bedford Series in History and Cultures, 1996).

- Preface
- "Religious Minorities and Questionable Professions"
- Statement by Count de Clermont Tonnerre on Jews
- "Decree of the National Assembly of September 27, 1791"
- "The Abolition of Negro Slavery or Means for Ameliorating their Lot" (1789)
- Abbé Grégoire's "Memoir in Favor of the People of Color or Mixed-Race of St. Domingue" (1799)

READING QUESTIONS: The texts above are contemporaneous with the drafting of "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen"--essentially a civil rights document. Imagine, then, that a category like "man" and "citizen" would need to be defined.

- Who are the minorities in question in the texts above? (Make a short list.)
- Knowing that France, prior to the revolution, was predominantly Catholic, white, and a monarchy, what might it have been about each of these minority groups that caused them to provoke discussion about their status as citizens in the fledgling French republic?

In going back to the revolution, my goal is to drive home the notion that negotiations about minorities have been part of French discourse since the founding of the First Republic. These texts also help to further underscore the practical manifestations of universalism. Starting off with *Intouchables* is clearly a gambit designed to "please and instruct" at the same time; I use the casting choice (the original Driss was Algerian, not of Senegalese origin), to get at a discourse about race that is hidden by virtue of the film's recourse to the charming Omar Sy.

Read Erich Bleich, "Anti-Racism Without Races: Politics and Policy in a 'Color-blind' State," in *Race in France: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference*, edited by Herrick Champan and Laura Fader (Berghahn Books, 2004).

READING QUESTIONS: Bleich, in essence, offers two versions of the history of colorblind (or race neutral) attitudes and policies in France. One might be called the "grand narrative" of colorblindness in France (an official version of things, if you will).

- Can you identify the storyline of this narrative?
- The second might be called "the messier truth": in this version, Bleich *complicates* the "grand narrative," showing us how and when that original, smooth story might be over-simplifying history and trying to get rid of its rough spots... Can you identify the storyline of the second, more analytical, complicating narrative?

View "Tom Cruise on Love, Life and Fatherhood," *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, May 2005.

The Cruise episode is admittedly cheesy, but it has the benefit of showing "American colorblindness" and getting students to interrogate its payoffs and pitfalls....

QUESTIONS:

- What vision of race emerges from Cruise's diatribe? Would we call his stance colorblind or race-conscious? What are the implications of his position?
- Is the US (or the country/culture you know best) colorblind or "race-conscious"? Give examples. In your assessment, what might be the societal and ethical implications for French colorblindness?

FILM FORM and TERMS

Familiarize yourself with the ["basic terms"](#) of film studies. Read definitions provided by The Film Analysis Website by clicking on link.)

Also, under "Cinematography," read ["Section 4: Movement"](#). Pay special attention to TRACKING, PAN, and TILT.

Film terms are defined and illustrated on the Yale Film Studies Film Guide Site (with other resources deployed as needed).

WEEK 2/ MARKETING THE COLONIES TO THE MAINLAND. *FRANCE IS AN EMPIRE*

View *France is an Empire* (1939). Documentary.

Original title: *La France est un empire*

Dirs. Jean d'Agraives, Emmanuel Bourcier, et al. Runtime: 1h30

Read Jules Ferry, "On colonial expansion" (1884). (Speech given before the National Assembly.)

Read Albert Memmi, excerpts from the book-length essay *Racism* (1982)

QUESTIONS:

- Although Memmi's definitions of racism date to a century after Ferry's speech, how can we understand these two texts together? How does racism underwrite the civilizing mission?
- How does *France is an Empire* go about telling its story/fulfilling its goals? What narrative and filmic techniques

The documentary strikes a sharp contrast with Week 1's "feel-good" film. It is a difficult watch, but I prime the students by making sure they understand that they are viewing a rare document, one with a particular story of creation and distribution. And it is such an astounding piece of propaganda... During lecture, we look at other forms of visual colonial propaganda in order to contextualize and point to a trend (colonial expos and their marketing materials, postage stamps, postcards, footage from the 1931 expo...)

does it use to tell its story? Is it successful in doing so? Why or why not?

- Why is genre important here? What does documentary purport to do (that fiction, ostensibly, cannot)? Why documentary for this particular subject at this point in time?
- How does the film represent race visually and narratively? Does the film imply a "color-blind" or "race conscious" philosophy?
- How does the use of sound support the film's project?

FILM FORM and TERMS

While documentary film uses some of the same basic elements of feature film, it does require additional, specific vocabulary. Please familiarize yourself with the following terms (using the readings provided in the links):

- DOCUMENTARY: Read Henrick Juel's essay "[Defining Documentary Film](#)"
- MODES OF DOCUMENTARY: deepen your understanding of the "[modes](#)" of [documentary](#) (discussed briefly in Juel's essay).
- SOUND: read about the basics of sound, with special attention to [Section II on "Source"](#)
- Read about "Voice of God" narration [here](#).
- Familiarize yourself with the term EVIDENTIARY EDITING, whose definition I provide here: "the organization of cuts within a scene to present the impression of a single, convincing argument supported by a logic" and "a practice in which expositional images...illustrate, illuminate, evoke, or act in counterpoint to what is said". (Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p30).

WEEK 3/ORIENTALIZING CINEMA; MAPPING THE CASBAH

View *Pépé le moko* (1937). Feature film.
Dir. Jean Duvivier. Runtime: 1h34mins.

In preparation for today's discussion of the concept of orientalism, and to prepare for thinking about "space" in the context of our feature film *Pépé le moko*, please read the following 2 texts and consider the questions, which are designed to help you make connections between the film and the texts.

Edward Said, "Introduction," *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978).

QUESTIONS: Said writes: "To speak of Orientalism is to speak of... a long tradition of colonial administrators... a complex array of 'Oriental' ideas (Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality)" (4).

- How does the film leverage ideas about the Orient, and to what end?
- How is racial difference, or simply "alterity," represented in the film
- How do formal elements of mise-en-scène, cinematography, and editing contribute to creating an "idea of the Orient"?

Frantz Fanon, excerpt from "On Violence," *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 1963; first published in French in 1961.)

Both Said and Fanon (despite the fact that I only assign a few pages) require quite a bit of "boiling down" in lecture. The reading questions help to link the ideas to the film. But students respond very positively to the film and, over the years I've teaching it, I've noticed that they have become spontaneously more critical of the representation of the native Algerians in the film.

QUESTIONS: Fanon writes: "the colonial world is a compartmentalized world... divided in two" (3); "The 'native' sector is not complementary to the European sector. The two confront each other, but not in the service of a higher unity." (4)

- How is the Casbah described and represented visually in the film?
- Do all the characters feel the same way about this neighborhood?
- How is the European sector represented? What does this tell us about relationships of power?
- How do filmic techniques reinforce certain ideas about the Casbah?

FILM FORM and TERMS

- Under the category of [EDITING](#), pay special attention to techniques of : the dissolve (compare to superimposition); the iris; the wipe; the establishing shot (re-establishing shot); and shot/reverse shot.
- Under the category of [CINEMATOGRAPHY](#), read about: contrast; point-of-view shot; scale (all types); crane shot; handheld/steadycam; tilt
- Look at "[rear projection](#)" (an element of "Mise-en-scene")

WEEK 4/TUESDAY

RACE IN THE COLONIES (I). ADAPTING TO AFRICA

View *Clean Slate* (1981). Feature film.
Original title: *Coup de torchon*.
Dir. Bertrand Tavernier Runtime: 128 minutes.

Coup de torchon is not a universal crowd pleaser. Some years I leave it off the syllabus and do Denis' *Chocolat* in tandem with her later *White Material*, instead. But the Conklin text helps a lot, as does walking the students through the various shot constructions and making a link to the Jim Thompson story; Pop. 1280, on which the film is based.

Read Alice Conklin, "[Coup de Torchon](#)," H-France. This is a scholarly review of the film, offering interesting background information. If you have trouble understanding the film, this text should help you sort things out.

FILM FORM and TERMS

- [Auteur](#)
- Under [Cinematography/Movement](#): tracking shot, handheld camera/steadicam
- Intertextuality: read the following [explanation of intertextuality in Film and TV](#); this short YouTube video also provides simple explanations and examples from contemporary American cinema. QUESTION: can you imagine at least two forms of intertextuality in *Clean Slate*?
- Mise-en-abyme: read basic [Oxford Reference definition here](#). QUESTION: thinking specifically about the 2nd definition, can you pick out a moment in *Clean Slate* that represents a mise-en-abyme?

WEEK 4/THURSDAY

RACE IN THE COLONIES (II). FROM ORIENTALISM TO OPACITY

View *Chocolat* (1988). Feature film.
Dir. Claire Denis. Runtime 105 mins.

CONSIDERATIONS/QUESTIONS:

- Temporal structure

When I teach this film alongside *White Material*, I assign Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* with this film. This exposes students to an additional anti-colonial voice from the 1950s, and the notion of a society that colonizes as a "sick society" works particularly as a lens for thinking about the Vial family in the film as an allegory.

- Narrative frame and the relevance of William Park's backstory
- Function of secondary characters (Dalens, Luc, Boothbey)
- Allegorical/symbolic properties of proper names
- *Chocolat* represents both colonizer and colonized; how does the film visually establish these dual perspectives?
- How is space used to underscore relationships and power dynamics?
- Significance of the ending

Read Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness", from *Black Skin, White Masks* (original title *Peau noire, masques blancs*, 1952)

Another tough text for students; I break it down into small "take-aways".

FILM FORM and TERMS

- average shot length (ASL) and its implications for how we view and interpret film; read this brief "[mission statement](#)" from a group dedicated to "metrics" in film studies.
- [continuity editing](#)
- review these terms: [close up](#); [pan](#); [POV](#)
- the "[long take](#)" (aka "plan-séquence"). And if you feel like "geeking out" on the long take, you won't be alone. Check out the "12 best long takes" in the history of cinema, ... and this epic long take from *True Detectives*.

In this iteration of the course, I pivot at the half-way mark in the quarter, leaving behind some of the headier reading in favor of 2 films per week and slightly more "mainstream" film critique (for variety and to expose students to different registers of film analysis).

WEEK 5/TUESDAY

A POSTCOLONIAL TURN: (IN)VISIBLE MINORITIES

This week marks a pivot in our film watching: with the exception of *Intouchables*, the action of the films from Weeks 0-4 took place in the colonial era. From Week 5 forward, the films we will be screening are set in the postcolonial moment, and many of the films can properly be considered contemporary. This shift in viewing requires a re-framing of our context and questions.

The following readings have been selected to help you understand the historical, political, demographic, and cinematic changes taking place in France following the period known as the "Glorious 30" (roughly 1945-1971). There is some overlap between the following texts, please note that this repetition is intended to reinforce certain key terms, such as *beur* and *banlieue*.

Read Angélil and Siress, "The Paris Banlieue: Peripheries of Inequity" (2012)

Read Patrick Simon, "Discrimination, a question of visible minorities" (2010)

Read definitions of [beur cinéma](#) and [banlieue cinéma](#).

WEEK 5/THURSDAY

SOS RACISM: MARCHING TOWARD EQUALITY

View *The Marchers* (2013). Feature film. Original title: *La Marche*.

Dir. Nabil Ben Yadir. Runtime: 2 hours

Initially skeptical about the value of this film, I nonetheless find that it does a good job of explaining and contextualizing the beur movement. The ending is surprisingly rich, in terms of formal film elements, in producing a reading of the fate of the marchers and their "papering over" by SOS Racisme....

Read "[An Historical Film that Speaks in the Present](#)" in *Cineuropa*

Read ["French Road-Movie Re-Creates Historic March"](#) in *Variety*

WEEK 6/TUESDAY

THE FIRST BEUR FILM: *TEA IN THE HAREM*

View *Tea in the Harem* (1985). Feature film.
Original title: *Un thé au harem*.
Dir. Mehdi Charef. Runtime 1h50 mins.

Not an easy watch, in part because it looks dated, but a must, not just because of its status as the "first" beur film, but because it problematizes the notion of the banlieue as an ethnic ghetto.

Read Carrie Tarr, "Introduction," *Reframing Difference: Beur and Banlieue Filmmaking in France* (2005)

WEEK 6/THURSDAY

SO FAR, SO GOOD? FROM THE MARGINS TO THE CENTER

View *Hate* (1995). Feature film.
Original title: *La Haine*.
Dir. Mathieu Kassovitz Runtime 1h38 mins.

Kassovitz's magnum opus is such a visual encyclopedia of film form that it can be difficult to pack in all of the commentary one would like to make and still tie the film to questions about race. The element of police violence has, of course, in recent years, made the film even more of a gut-punch.. More recently, I have also introduced the possibility of a Jewish-studies analysis of the film..

Read: Amy Siciliano, "*La Haine: Framing the Urban Outcasts*" (2007)

FILM FORM and TERMS

- under category of Cinematography, see [racking focus](#)
- under category of Mise-en-scène, see [deep space](#)
- read about the [sound bridge](#) (scroll down for definition and example from *Moulin rouge*)
- read about the [dollyzoom](#) (many great examples in the embedded clip)

WEEK 7/TUESDAY

GIRLS IN THE 'HOOD. SHINING BRIGHT IN THE *BANLIEUE*

View *Girlhood* (2014). Feature film.
Original title: *Bande de filles*.
Dir. Céline Sciamma Runtime: 1h53 minutes.

I usually wait until lecture to show the interview with Sciamma. Students are often very surprised to learn that she is white. Big questions here around "who has the right" to tell a particular story. Works well in comparison with both *La Haine* and *Divines*.

Read Emma Wilson, "Scenes of Hurt and Rapture in Céline Sciamma's *Girlhood*" (2017)

Watch interview with Céline Sciamma at British Film Institute's London Film Festival (October 2014)

WEEK 7/THURSDAY

DIVINE GIRLHOOD (S) , COMPARED

View *Divines* (2016). Feature film.
Dir. Houda Benyamina. Runtime 1h45mins

Benyamina's excess in her acceptance speech at Cannes is useful to share, even if needs to be translated for this class; the image and attitude come across. Again, in comparison to *Girlhood*, the question of authorial legitimacy is to the fore. Formally the film doesn't offer a huge amount, but there are payoffs for analyzing the sound track, the title, and an insistence on "upward" camera angles...

Read Naomi Vogt, "Divine Girlhoods: Filming Young Women in France's *Banlieues*" (2017)

Read interview with Benyamina, ["It's better to make a film than a bomb,"](#) (with Steve Rose of *The Guardian*, Nov 2016).

Watch brief Netflix interview with Benyamina (2016)

WEEK 8/TUESDAY
SCHOOLING THE "OTHERS"/TEACHING THE TEACHER

View *The Class* (2008). Feature film.
Original title: *Entre les murs*
Dir. Laurent Cantet. Runtime 2h10mins

Read Abdoulaye Gueye, "The Color of Unworthiness: Understanding Blacks in France and the French Visual Media Through Laurent Cantet's 'The Class,'" (2009).

Watch (for fun!) the cast of *The Class* at the Cannes Film Festival

FILM TERMINOLOGY (for review)

- camera angles
- camera levels
- sound (diegetic)
- Panavision/cinemascope

WEEK 8/THURSDAY
HOW TO BE FRENCH. LESSONS FROM THE FRONTLINES

View *Strangers at Home* (2016). Documentary.
Original title: *Les français, c'est les autres*.
Dirs. Isabelle Wekstein-Steg and Mohamad Ulad. Runtime: 63 minutes.

Read Louis-George Tin, "Who's Afraid of Blacks in France? The Black Question, the Name Taboo, the Number Taboo" (2008)

WEEK 9/TUESDAY
IS RACE A LAUGHING MATTER? (I): REGIONAL ALLEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE

View *Welcome to the Sticks* (2008). Feature film.
Original title : *Bienvenue chez les ch'tis*.
Dir. Danny Boon. Runtime 1h46mins.

Read Rokyaha Diallo, "France's dangerous move to remove 'race' from its constitution," in *The Washington Post*, July 13, 2018.

WEEK 9/THURSDAY
IS RACE A LAUGHING MATTER? (II): THE COMEDY OF ETHNIC INTEGRATION

View *Serial Bad Weddings* (2014). Feature film
Original title: *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon dieu?*
Dir. Philippe de Chauveron. Runtime: 1h37mins.

Read ["The French Comedy Too Controversial for America"](#) (The Schmooze, March 2015)

This one is a lot of fun to teach, both in terms of formal construction and in terms of questions of universalism and colorblindness. Also, of course, it lends itself to a meta-reflection on the classroom, teaching, learning, etc... The Gueye essay works well in terms of setting up a particular interpretation of the film, and then deconstructing that analysis.

A recent documentary, not often shown in US classrooms, to my knowledge. Well-intentioned yet problematic, also very recent (the post-Charlie hebdo scenes are especially poignant and troubling--as is the directors' dogged universalism). Little going on, formally, but the presence of the directors and their parti pris are worth analyzing.

I endeavor to pitch this film as being about racial and ethnic difference in France, while being--of course!--fully aware that it is an all white film. (Then again, Kad Merad...) My suggestion is that the film might be read as an allegory for tolerance...

Three or four years ago, students started suggesting *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au bon dieu?* for this class. I don't teach it every year... it brings up some interesting ideas about the cultural specificity of humor, but in the end, my sense is that the students don't really like it... they find it too heavy handed...

Read ["Why a movie can be hilarious in France but rejected in the US"](#) (Lost in Frenchlation, April 2019)

WEEK 10 presentation (in section) of videocast projects

In Week 10, students present their final projects in their discussion sections.
See Addendum 1 for a detailed explanation of the final project.

[Final Project instructions and calendar](#)

Videocast - final project for French 41 (Fall 2020)

Your final project for French 41 is a multi-stage group project that involves working in a small group (with classmates in your section) to create a videocast in which you review, analytically, a film of your group's choosing.

The project is worth 40 points total, and points are assessed both individually and on elements of group work.

What is involved with the project?

To create your videocast you will work with a small group of peers to select a French film (not included on the French 41 syllabus). Your choice of film will be guided by the themes, questions, problems, and ideas of this class--in other words, the film you choose should have something to do with race, ethnicity, class, or difference.

Once you've selected your film, you will 1) view the film; 2) engage with your group in an analytical discussion of the film's narrative, formal, and political dimensions; 3) develop an approach to your videocast (ie, a "script"); 4) film your videocast; 5) and share it with your section. You will also have an opportunity to view and discuss your classmates' videocasts.

What is the point of this project?

- It gives you an opportunity to put all the knowledge and skills you've developed this quarter to work
- It offers you the chance to explore contemporary French cinema, above and beyond what's been presented to you on the syllabus
- It allows you to show off your originality and creativity
- It takes the material of French 41 beyond the classroom
- It offers you flexibility in terms of setting your work schedule
- It gives you training in group work, an essential "life-skill"

This project is composed of multiple, smaller activities, all of which build toward the final videocast. All due dates, methods of submission, instructions, and points are laid out carefully in the table below. Please note that ALL aspects of this project are important and following instructions is part of your grade. Make careful notes of due dates and be sure to communicate clearly with the members of your group.

For the final project, students work in groups to select a French film (not viewed in class) that fits within our themes of race, ethnicity and difference. They proceed through a scaffolded assignment that guides them to watch and analyze the film, and to produce a "videocast" (essentially a filmed group analysis) that can take any creative form they desire: a round-table of film critics; an interview with the director, a few of the actors, and a film scholar; etc... they are encouraged to be as inventive as possible.

We debuted this assignment in 2020, when we were fully online and the class was taught asynchronous (with the exception of discussion sections). Part of the rationale was to move away from the traditional essay format, part of the rationale was to see if we could create a robust method of evaluation that would also provide the students opportunities for interaction during these isolating times.

CALENDAR AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ACTIVITIES

Group assignments should be saved to the group's Drive folder.
Individual assignments should be submitted via TurnItIn link
(See "Final Project instructions and calendar" tab on CCLE site)

Points (I/G)*

I - assignments to be completed (and graded) on an individual basis

G - assignments to be completed by the group; grades for these activities are for entire group

Date due	Method of submission	Activity	Points (I/G)*
Monday of Week 4	Email TA with G-Folder link	FORM GROUP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitute a group of 4 and pick a name Create G-Drive Folder (folder name should be group name) Within folder, create Google doc with names and contact info of group members All subsequent assignments should be a new document in the group folder 	2/G
Monday of Week 6	Post to section Google Doc. Section doc will be created and posted (Monday of Week 5) by your TA; TA will email class when doc is "open".	PICK FILM Indicate film title, director, date and platform. No duplicate films within a section! To be sure to get the film you want, post early! For inspiration, see FILM LIST (below) for possible titles.	2/G
Weds of Week 6	Receive confirmation of film choice from TA		
Monday of Week 7	Post to Group Google doc	Write up rationale for film choice (why this film?) Rationale includes: full title of film, date, director, synopsis of plot, motivation for selecting this film--how do you suspect it engages with the themes, questions and problems raised in this class? 500 words	6pts/G
Mon of Week 8	G-Doc saved to your group's Drive folder	DRAFT VIDEOCAST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish format: roundtable of experts, group interview with moderator, director, actors, film reviewers? Each person should have a clear role to play on the videocast, but regardless of role ALL must participate in the creation of content. Script out your videocast: consider what your "goal" is in terms of your analysis of the film, what you want to get across to viewers? 	10/G

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do consider that you'll need to introduce the film (provide basics), and do make sure you have a conclusion. <p>CONSULT CHECKLIST BELOW TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK FOR THIS PART OF THE ASSIGNMENT</p> <p>Feedback by Mon of Week 9</p>	
Monday of Week 10	Upload video to your group's Drive folder	<p>RECORD VIDEOCAST</p> <p>Using something as simple as the "record meeting" function in Zoom, "perform" your video cast. You may want to do a rehearsal before actually recording, or you may want to record several times. Your final videocast should be between 12 and 15 minutes long.</p> <p>CONSULT CHECKLIST BELOW TO SEE THE CRITERIA WE ARE USING TO EVALUATE THESE VIDEOCASTS.</p>	12/G
Thursday of Week 10	<p>View all Videocasts for your section and prepare to discuss in meetings, Week 10. Consider the following for discussion as you watch the videocasts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which videocasts were most effective at highlighting the themes and problems of the course? How did they go about this? Did any videocast prompt you to ask questions that the group itself did not raise? In what ways did viewing these videocasts reinforce/recall ideas discussed in French 41? Do you see connections with films we viewed together? What new questions emerged for you... questions that might not have come up over the course of our class discussions? 		
In sections, Week 10	Discussion of your section's "Videocast" (see questions in item above).		
Fri of Exam Week	TurnItIn	<p>SELF-REPORT AND REPORT ON GROUP WORK</p> <p>This short analysis is an opportunity for you to reflect on your own contributions to your group project, and also to discuss the payoffs and pitfalls of group work, particularly when it comes to dealing with "loaded" issues such as race and representation. A successful report will be analytical in nature, and will take into account the ideas, concepts and questions we have wrestled with this quarter. The self-report is NOT simply a re-hashing of the videocast, it is not even necessarily <i>about</i> the film you worked on; rather, it is a meta-reflection on the WAY the group worked, the challenges of interpretation and of coalescing around a set of ideas, and the lessons extracted from this exercise. Grading of this piece of writing is holistic: we are looking for high-quality prose (these is not an</p>	8/I

		extended Tweet) and evidence of mature, thoughtful analysis. 750 words.	
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Checklist for DRAFT videocast

As you are completing the script of your videocast, consider the following elements (which we will be using in our evaluation of the project at this stage) :

- is the **format** of the videocast clearly articulated (ie roundtable, group interview, etc)?
- does each group member have **a clearly defined role to play** and is this made clear in the script?
- does the script provide the necessary **basic information** about the film?
- does the script appear to offer **analytical and critical commentary** on the film, or does it remain superficial (ie, plot-level description only)?
- is there evidence of **research on the film and its reception**?
- is there evidence of **formal film analysis**?
- have the themes, ideas, questions, and problems of the course been integrated into the analysis of the film?
- does the **script appear robust enough** to fulfill the requirements for the final videocast, which aims to be 12-15 minutes in length? (A timed, practice round will be very useful here!)

Criteria for the evaluation of the FINAL videocast

The most successful projects will:

- produce a videocast with a clear format, with each group member playing a defined role
- account for and integrate any feedback given at the draft stage
- demonstrate an ability to move from observations about formal film elements to interpretation and analysis
- demonstrate an awareness of the context of the film and its reception
- rigorously deploy formal film analysis
- problematize the film in a robust way (this is not an exercise in marketing but in criticism)
- integrate the ideas, themes and questions that have been our touchstones throughout the class

French 41 - Film Analysis Activity

FILM ANALYSIS ACTIVITY (10 POINTS)

The film analysis is an individual activity, prepared ahead of section, and presented, orally, in section. This is an opportunity for you to engage with both the primary materials of this course (the films), as well as with the ideas and concepts presented in the readings.

Early in the quarter, you will have a chance to sign up to present on the film/during the week of your choice. Make a note of when you are scheduled to present; missing your presentation will result in 0 points for this activity.

Instructions:

- Select an image from the film that you think engages with and/or complicates the themes in question (in this course, and in the particular unit)
- Your image will be shared as a “screen shot” (or screen grab)*--in other words, you’ll take a picture of the moment of the film you want to discuss, save that image, and then share with your classmates (via the “screen share” function in Zoom).
- You can comment on the still image itself (paying attention to formal composition, and other elements), but you may also use a still image to represent a shot, brief sequence or scene

In section, during your presentation of your pitch/analysis you will:

-briefly contextualize the image

-observe relevant formal aspects of the shot/sequence

-make your case for WHY and HOW this image represents the themes of the class

-connect the representation in question to the ideas and concepts laid out in the readings for the week

Your analysis should take 3 to 5 minutes, to allow ample time for discussion.

In reacting to and discussing your peers’ presentations, consider asking yourself (and them) the following questions:

- How do your classmates’ analyses relate to your understanding of the film?
- In what ways do they reflect or challenge your reading of the film?
- How has your understanding of the film changed after listening to your classmates’ screen-grab analyses?

* If you don’t know how to take a screenshot, please Google “screen shot” and your particular device/operating system. Request help from your TA at least several days in advance of your presentation if you don’t know how to do this.