

FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

Fall, 2011

HIST 3930 - SPECIAL TOPICS: MODERN FRANCE
CRN: 80565

T/TH 3:30-4:45 PM
WGCU Building, Room 111

Dr. Paul R. Rivera Phone: 489-9456
Office Hours [By Appointment]: T/TH 2:00-3:00 PM

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DESCRIPTION

This course explores historical controversies surrounding issues of continuity and change in Modern France since 1789. Six themes will be investigated: the Contentious French Revolution; Paris, Capital of Modern World; *La France Profonde*; the Fall of France; *La Plus Grande France*; and, "Blancs, Blacks, Beurs" in Contemporary French Society. Marxist, Revisionist, Modernist, Colonial and Post-Colonial, and Post-Modernist interpretations will be analyzed. A range of materials including monographs, documents, fiction, and film will be utilized. Discussion will be the preferred mode of instruction.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

You will demonstrate an understanding of significant political, economic, social, cultural, and intellectual trends and developments in modern French history.

You will demonstrate an understanding of continuity and change as historical phenomenon; of the role of ideas, institutions, and individuals in promoting continuity and effecting change; and of the impact of change upon individuals, institutions, and societies.

You will demonstrate the ability to analyze cause and effect relationships, evaluate historical evidence, analyze and hypothesize about date, analyze point of view, draw inferences and conclusions, and synthesize complex materials.

You will demonstrate the ability to organize expositions of complex questions and compose and orderly presentations of thought.

GRADING POLICIES

Final grades will be determined by dividing points earned by total course points. Total points are 175: 100 points from the mid-term and final exams [50 points each]; 50 points from the essay; and 25 points for class participation. The grade range is: A [100-90%]; B [89-80%]; C [79-70%]; D [69-60%]; and, F [below 59%]. Plus and minus delineations will be used in the A, B, and C+ grade range.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*, Princeton University Press.

Patrice Higonnet, *Paris: Capital of the World*, Harvard University Press.

Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, Stanford University Press.

Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940*, Oxford University Press.

Anouar Benmalek, *The Lovers of Algeria: A Novel*, Graywolf Press.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

You are expected to **attend class** and **complete all assigned readings before the class** for which they are scheduled. You are expected to **participate actively** in class discussions and activities, and to **ask questions** and **seek clarification** of important ideas or information.

Two tests will be administered during the semester, one mid-term and one final exam. Dates for these tests will be announced in class several weeks before their administration. No make-up tests will be given unless arrangements have been made prior to the test, or in case of medical or family emergency, you have contacted the instructor. A grade of "incomplete" will be given only for extraordinary circumstances.

Please inform the instructor, via email or phone message, as soon as possible if you know that you will miss more than two consecutive classes due to illness or family emergency. See the *Student Guidebook* for details.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

This is an advanced level History course. Thus, there is a required essay of 3000 words in which you investigate and evaluate a motion picture representation of a personality, event, or theme from the history of Modern France. Specific instructions will be distributed.

ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All students are expected to demonstrate honesty in their academic pursuits. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this class. Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the course. Plagiarism is the attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own. If you have any questions, please ask the instructor. The university policies regarding issues of honesty can be found in the FGCU Student Guidebook in the ***Student Code of Conduct*** and the ***Policies and Procedures*** sections.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS SERVICES

Florida Gulf Coast University, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the university's guiding principles, will provide classroom and academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities. If you need to request an accommodation in this class due to a disability, or you suspect that your academic performance is affected by a disability, please contact the Office of Adaptive Services in Howard Hall 137. The phone number is 239-590-7956 or TTY 239-590-7930.

STUDENT OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

All students at Florida Gulf Coast University have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observations, practices, and beliefs. Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observations. When practicable, major examinations and University ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major holy day. A student who is excused for a religious observance is not required to provide a second party certification of the reason for the absence.

Guide to Assignments – Part One

The Contentious French Revolution

1. “The Social Interpretation” - Read Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*, pp. vii-xv [Introduction by Timothy Tackett], and pp. 1-150 [Prologue and Parts 1-4]. Use these questions to clarify your understanding of this analysis of the onset of the French Revolution:

How influential was Georges Lefebvre in the historiography of the French Revolution?

In what ways was he a Marxist historian?

According to Lefebvre, what was the role of social classes [aristocracy, bourgeois, working class, peasants] in the revolution?

How important were economic & social conditions in Lefebvre’s analysis? Politics & political ideas?

2. “The Politics of Revolution” - Read the excerpts from Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, University of California Press, 1984; and Tackett, “Introduction,” in Lefebvre, pp. xv-xxx. Use these questions to clarify your understanding of the two historians analyses of the French Revolution:

What specific arguments have “revisionist” historians used to reject the Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution?

In what ways have historians re-emphasized the political legacy of the French Revolution?

In what ways did the Revolution create a new “political culture,” [new rhetoric, practices and symbols] for the modern world?

3. The Legacy of Revolution - Read excerpts from Simon Schama, *Citizens*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1989, and Lefebvre, pp. 207-218. Use these questions to analyze their assessment of the legacy of the French Revolution:

According to Schama, how important was the French Revolution?

What arguments and evidence does he offer to support his assessment?

What does Schama consider to be its most important legacy?

For Lefebvre, how important is the legacy of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen?

Paris, Capital of the Modern World

4. “Capital of Revolution” - Read Patrice Higonnet, *Paris Capital of the World*, pp. 1-17 and 46-74. Use these questions to analyze the thesis presented by Higonnet:

In what ways does Higonnet intend his history of Paris to differ from those written by earlier historians?

How does he define and make use of the concepts of *myth* and *phantasmagoria* in his history of Paris?

How did nineteenth century Paris become the “world capital of revolution”?

What roles were played by the Revolution of 1830 and the Paris Commune of 1871?

5. Hausmannization and Alienation - Read Higonnet, pp. 170-229. Use these questions to analyze Higonnet’s thesis:

In what ways did Georges Haussmann transform Paris into the Enlightenment’s “perfect modern city.”?

In what ways did Haussmann’s Paris reflect the new bourgeois society?

How did the construction of “passages”, “arcades”, and “department stores” symbolize economic and social change in Paris?

How did Haussmann’s city become the “capital of alienation and self-doubt”?

6. “Capital of Bourgeois Pleasures” - Read Higonnet, pp. 288-316, and 398-433. Use these questions to structure your processing of these chapters:

What does Higonnet mean when he calls Paris the “capital of bourgeois pleasures”?

How did developments in entertainment, gastronomy, and sexuality reflect this assessment?

How did Paris become the capital of painting and sculpture?

La France Profonde

7. “Deep France” - Read Richard Bernstein, *Fragile Glory*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1990, pp. 21-54. Use these questions to examine Bernstein’s analysis of the relationship of urban Paris to rural France:

What meanings do the French associate with the concept, “*La France Profonde*”? What are its defining characteristics?

What explanations have been offered to account for unity and diversity in contemporary France?

How accurate and useful is this concept for understanding modern France?

Then read the resource sheet, “What is Modernization?” Take notes to answer the three guide questions.

8. “The Way They Were” - Read Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. ix-xiii, 3-22, 41-49, and 67-114. Use these questions to examine Weber’s analysis of the modernization of France:

What evidence does Weber offer to support his assertion that early nineteenth-century France was “a country of savages”?

In what ways did pre-1850 France suffer from “local and domestic autarchy”?

How did linguistic diversity obstruct national unity?

In what ways did the idea of “France” begin to emerge in the nineteenth century?

9. “The Agencies of Change” - Read Weber, pp. 195-220, 278-338. Use these questions to examine Weber’s analysis of the modernization of rural France from 1870-1914:

In what ways did roads and railroads function as “agencies of change”?

How was military service a modernizing experience for French peasants?

What challenges did schools overcome to create a unified nation?

FRENCH HISTORY FILMS AS MOVING IMAGE DOCUMENTS

You have heard the expressions, “seeing is believing” and “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Indeed, it may seem to you that the most enjoyable way to study history is through films. Historical themes, moreover, have been popular as long as motion pictures have been produced. It should be recognized, however, that films provide us with interpretations of historical personalities and events. Just as you are learning to be skeptical of print documents, you must bring that same critical eye to motion pictures.

In an essay of approximately three thousand words, analyze and evaluate a motion picture representation of a personality, period, event, or theme from the history of modern France. Use the attached list of motion pictures to guide you in your choice of subjects. Select one motion picture to view, analyze, and evaluate. Be sure that the motion picture is one in which you are interested. Communicate your **choice of motion picture** to me by Wednesday, **September 8**, with the **essay due** on Wednesday, **November 3**. Use the following procedures for the essay.

Step One: Prior to viewing the film, familiarize yourself with the historical context in which the film is situated. Read the appropriate sections in a general history of modern France such as: Jeremy Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, or Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times*. Both titles are on course reserve in the FGCU Library.

Step Two: View the film several times. Concentrate on major organizing segments or scenes and significant visual and sound messages. Select one major segment or scene [about ten minutes] for careful analysis. Complete a detailed sight-sound skim [i.e., a “T” chart summarizing the visual and sound elements] for this segment. Use information from this analysis to compose paragraphs which answer each of these questions:

What are the messages of the film?

How do the visual and sound components communicate these messages?

Step Three: Carefully examine the content, production, and reception of the film. Find and use evidence from at least two scholarly assessments of the treatment of the subject matter, and at least five articles and reviews that deal with the production and reception of the film. Useful sources available from the FGCU Library include:

“Film Reviews.” *American Historical Review*. October issue until recent years.

“Movie Reviews.” *The Journal of American History*. December Issue.

Magill’s Cinema Annual. Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Salem Press, 1982-Present.

The New York Times Film Reviews. 1913-1996.

Articles and Databases, FGCU Library Website. [See JESTOR, Academic Search Complete and ProQuest Newspapers]

Use information gathered from these sources to compose paragraphs which discuss each of the following questions.

What influences [background of the film-makers, agencies of government, film industry, political and social climate] helped shape the messages of this film?

How did various audiences [historians, film critics, the public] react to and evaluate the film?

Step Four: Reexamine your analysis of the messages of the film together with your findings about its content, production, and reception. Use the following questions to think about and evaluate the film as a representation of historical personalities, eras, events, and themes. Then compose paragraphs which discuss each question.

To what extent does the film present a thoughtful, coherent, and historically sound interpretation of the individuals, issues, and events portrayed?

To what extent are the characterizations and relationships depicted in tune with the historical period, or have they been modernized to appeal to contemporary audiences?

How would you evaluate the film as an interpretative representation of the past?

Step Five: Assemble your analysis and evaluation of the film. Include an initial paragraph which introduces the film, indicates your reasons for selecting it, and communicates your overall assessment. Present in paragraph form the analysis you prepared in Steps Two and Three and the evaluation completed in Step Four. The essay should be prepared on a word processor. Double space the body of the essay. Use foot or end notes to credit all sources of words, information, and ideas. Attach the sight-sound skim and a Bibliography or Works Cited identifying sources used.

Films: The following is the list of films you should consider evaluating. Be sure to communicate your choice to me **before** you begin your research.

Au Revoir Les Enfants, [1988] - Nazi Occupation and the Holocaust
Battle of Algiers, [1965] - French Colonialism in Algeria
Chocolat, [1988] – French Colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa
Danton, [1983] - French Revolution
Entre Les Murs, [2008] - Life in a Racially Diverse High School
Indochine, [1992] - French Colonialism in Indochina
J'Accuse, [1939] - Pacifism in 1930s France
Jean de Florette, [1986] - 1900s Rural French Society
La Haine, [1995] - Race Relations in Contemporary France
La Nuit de Varennes, [1983] - Flight of the Royal Family in 1792
Les Miserables, [1998] - Post-Napoleonic Paris
Manon of the Spring, [1986] - 1900s Rural French Society
Midnight in Paris, [2011] - Paris, City of Myths
Moulin Rouge, [1952] - Paris as Capital of Art and Pleasure
The Sorrow and the Pity, [1970] – France during World War II
To Be and To Have “Être et Avoir”, [2002], Contemporary Rural Society

Guide to Assignments - Part 2

The Fall of France

10. "Strange Defeat" - Read Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940*, pp. 1-62 and 88-100. Use the following questions to analyze the military and political events surrounding the defeat of France in the opening stages of World War II:

In what ways did the French military appear to be "ready for war" in 1939?

How did Belgium play a crucial role in Allied and German plans for and conduct of war?

In what ways did French assumptions about the Ardennes region contribute to defeat?

How did the French concept of "methodical battle" prove an inadequate response to German *blitzkrieg*?

11. "The Hollow Years" - Read Jackson, pp. 1-5, 62-88, and 100-182. Use the following questions to analyze France's pre-war search for allies and the morale of the French people and military during the inter-war years:

How did long-standing differences between Britain and France contribute to defeat in 1940?

How did persistent political conflicts and deep social divisions contribute to the fall of France?

In what ways did the French people in the 1920s and 1930s live in the shadow of the Great War?

How did the "Phony War" and "*Blitzkrieg*" impact the morale and performance of French civilians and military?

12. "Fulcrum of the Twentieth Century" - Read Jackson, pp. 228-249; and, David Reynolds, "1940: Fulcrum of the Twentieth Century?", *International Affairs*, Volume 22, Number 2, 1990, pp. 325 and 346-350. Use these questions to analyze the arguments developed:

What were the immediate and long-term consequences of defeat in 1940 for France?

What were the immediate and long-term consequences of defeat in 1940 for international politics after World War Two?

To what extent can France's defeat in 1940 be seen as a "fulcrum" or major turning point in post-war international politics?

"La Plus Grande France"

13. Mission Civilisatrice - Read Robert Aldrich, *Greater France*, Palgrave, 1996, pp. 1-9, 24-28, 73-82, and 86-93. Use these questions to analyze Aldrich's examination of the establishment of the French overseas empire:

In what ways is the phrase, "Greater France" an accurate description of the French overseas empire?

How did France acquire its empire in Algeria and Indochina?

What ideas and assumptions about empire undergirded French colonialism?

To compare the experiences of the "colonized" and the colonizers, begin reading Anouar Benmalek, *The Lovers of Algeria*, pp. 3-92.

14. Imperialism and Culture - Read: Aldrich, *Greater France*, pp. 199-205, 212-228, 234-236, and 250-256; and, Benmalek, *The Lovers of Algeria*, pp. 95-213. Use these questions to analyze the impact of colonialism on native peoples and on French culture:

What attitudes and assumptions shaped French colonial police toward native peoples

How were these attitudes and assumptions reflected in French colonial policies regarding civil law, land, taxes, labour, military service, health and education?

How do the paintings of Eugene Delacroix, Paul Gauguin, and Henri Matisse reflect the impact of African and Asian cultures on French civilization?

15. The War Without a Name - Read: John Talbott, *The War Without a Name*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1980, pp. 5-36; Aldrich, *Greater France*, pp. 272-280, 285-288, and 292-298; and, Benmalek, *The Lovers of Algeria*, pp. 217-276. Use these questions to analyze the course and consequences of France's struggle with Algerian nationalism:

In what ways did Ferhat Abbas, Abdelhamid Ben Badis, and Messali Hadj hold conflicting visions for a post-colonial Algeria?

What impact did the defeat of France in 1940 and the loss of Indo-China in 1954 have on the Algerian independence movement?

In what sense was the Battle of Algiers a “pyrrhic” victory for France?

In what ways was the experience of the Algerian War destructive for both France and Algeria?

“Blancs, Blacks, Beurs” in Contemporary French Society

16. Why Study Football in France? - Read: “Football, Sport and Social History,” James Walvin, *The People’s Game*, Allen Lane, 1975, pp. 1-7; “France and France 98,” in Hugh Dauncey and Geoff Hare, editors, *France and the 1998 World Cup*, Frank Cass, 1999, pp. 1-14; and, Geoff Hare, *Football in France*, Berg, 2003, pp. 1-14.

Use these questions to analyze rationale for examining football in France:

According to James Walvin, what problems confront the historian of football?

Why did France want to host the World Cup in 1998?

What political and social significance does Hare find in recent French victories in world and European football?

How has the history of sport developed recently as a serious field of study?

In what ways does football reflect important social, cultural, and economic developments in contemporary society?

17. French Football in Social and Economic Context - Read one of the following selections from Hare, *Football in France*; “Towns and Cities: A Socio-economic Geography of French Football Clubs,” pp. 37-60; “Fans: A Sociology of French Club Football,” pp. 61-90; or, “Television: Football as Spectacle and Commodity,” pp. 141-154.

Make use of the following questions to analyze the author’s arguments.

How was the growth of football in France influenced by industrialization?

In what ways has the urban geography of French football changed recently?

What generalizations does Hare draw from his analysis of the fans of Racing Club de Lens, Olympique de Marseille, and Paris Saint-Germain?

In what ways are football and television symbiotically linked in France?

How has football as a commodity become crucial to television?

18. "Les Bleus" and Issues of French National Identity - Read Hare, "Players as Heroes: 'Les Bleus' and French National Identity," in *Football in France*, pp. 132-140; John Marks, "The French National Team and National Identity: 'Cette d'un 'bleu métis'," in Dauncey and Hare, *France and the 1998 World Cup*, pp. 41-58; and, Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France*, University of California Press, 2010, pp. 214-240.

Use these questions to analyze the readings:

How can football contribute to the formation of collective national identity?

How have the careers of Raymond Kopá, Zinedine Zidane, and Lilian Thuram contributed to the redefinition of French national identity?

In what ways did the 1998 French national team become the symbol of "the new France"?

What appear to have been the "causes" of the November 2005 riots?

How does football in France continue to reflect social, cultural, and political tensions within contemporary French society?

Mid-Term Examination – Date to be Announced

To what extent is Paris's reputation the product of fact, myth, or phantasmagoria?