
Spring 2018

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Seminar
Mondays.................................. 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.................................Location T.B.D.

Course Description

The Dutch humanist Erasmus stated, “Man is not born but fashioned.” According to him, identity is not inherent and fixed but is instead cultivated and transmitted. Since the Third Republic, France has actively sought to transmit a singular national identity, resulting in the investment of a particular developmental period: childhood. Children, after all, become future citizens. However, many recent coming of age narratives question the notion of a unique French identity. Instead, they emphasize diversity, fractures, and contestation. In this freshman seminar, we will begin by situating the concept of French republicanism in its socio-historical context through questions such as: What are the foundations of French identity? How has this identity historically been shaped, and is it open to all groups? In contemporary French society, how does one reconcile republicanism with increasing pluralism? As language and its artistic expression are fundamental components of French identity, we will analyze contemporary literary and cinematic representations of youth in France and the broader French-speaking world. These sources interrogate French republicanism and present a less unified image of French identity through their representations of friendship, love, school, rebellion, injustice and shame.
Overview

As a seminar designed for first-year students in the College of Arts and Science, this course has a number of complementary goals.

First, it is designed to be a formative social and intellectual introduction to your life as an undergraduate student in the liberal arts. Together with your classmates and cohort members you will learn what it means to join the community of scholarship that is the university.

Second, we will pursue our studies in a liberal spirit, examining historical events and different representations of French and francophone identity as more than information to absorb or memorize. We will be interrogating the works under discussion to ask what they reveal about the human condition and identity formation.

Finally, the seminar is intended to introduce you to methods of research in the humanities, and your major goal for the course will be to complete a substantial piece of independent research. Together with the other reading and writing skills we will practice, the seminar should help hone the critical and analytic abilities you will need for success in your later studies and for your future lives as thoughtful individuals and engaged citizens.

Learning Outcomes

This course will teach you to:

- Explain the French model of integration and identity formation and reflect on how this model affects different groups in France today.
- Analyze fictional and non-fictional texts and films and develop a critical stance as to how French identity has been represented and interrogated at various times.
- Cultivate knowledge of and appreciation for contemporary French and Francophone literature, film, and cultures.

Course Materials to Purchase


The above texts can be purchased at the NYU Bookstore or on Amazon. Please buy paper copies, not Kindle editions.

All other texts will be provided in PDF format on NYU Classes. Films can be viewed at the Avery Fisher Center for Music and Media at Bobst Library.
Course Assessment

1. **Attendance and Participation (15%)**
   You are expected to read the assigned texts closely and carefully, attend all classes, arrive at class promptly, and contribute actively and in an informed manner to seminar discussions.

2. **Weekly Homework Assignments and Commentaries (15%)**
   These assignments will take the form of critical discussion questions and brief (1 page) commentaries.

3. **Critical analysis of a Passage or Film Clip (10%)**
   Your first paper will be 3-4 pages, typed and double-spaced. You will be expected to analyze one or more of the assigned texts/films in response to a prompt that I will give you.

4. **Oral Presentation (10%)**
   The oral presentation (10-15 minutes in length) is an opportunity to perform a close reading of a passage or clip from one of the assigned texts or films. The passage will be chosen by the instructor, and three or four questions will be provided to give you an idea of what to focus on in your analysis. After your presentation, you will be expected to answer questions from your fellow classmates.

5. **Report on Representation of French Identity (15%)**
   You will attend one French/francophone cultural or educational event focusing on the concept French identity and write a 5-page report on your experience. We will discuss possible events in class, such as film screenings, book readings, academic talks, and museum exhibitions.

6. **Tentative Bibliography and Final Paper Outline (5%)**
   In preparation for your final paper, you will present a tentative bibliography and an outline to workshop in class.

7. **Final Paper (30%)**
   This will be a substantial work of independent research (10-12 pages) on modern-day representations of French/francophone identity in fictional or non-fictional texts or films. The topic will be developed in consultation with me during class and in office hours.

Classroom Policies

- The success of this course depends on your close reading and viewing of the texts and films prior to class as well as your questions, reflections, and classroom participation.

- Please arrive at class on time and be prepared with all readings, notes and assignments.

- Absences will adversely affect your participation grade. If you cannot make it to class for any reason, you are expected to contact me by email to explain your absence.
• Be prepared to remain in the classroom for the duration of the session (there will be a break halfway through class).

• The use of electronic devices, such as cellphones, laptops, and tablets is not permitted.

• Please refrain from eating in class.

Additional Information

• Please take the time to read the NYU Honor Code and information on Academic Integrity: http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity. We will discuss how best to integrate critical sources into papers, so there is no excuse for plagiarism. In accordance with university policies, all work must be your own. If you use a source, you must cite it. Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and the dean will be notified.

• Students with a disability or learning difficulty must be registered at the Moses Center and show their letter of registration to the instructor. More information on the Moses Center is available here: http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/students-with-disabilities.html

• You may find the NYU Writing Center to be a valuable resource. Information about hours and how to set up an appointment is available here: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

• The College Learning Center provides tutoring, academic skills workshops, and help with specific classes, paper writing, study skills, as well as review for exams. All sessions are offered on a walk-in basis and feature tutoring by experienced upper-level students: www.nyu.edu/cas/clc

• The Wellness Exchange: Support for personal and health-related issues. (212) 443-9999 (24/7 confidential calls): www.nyu.edu/999
### Class Schedule

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<th>Week</th>
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| Week 1 | 1/23  | **Introduction: The French Model of Integration**  
**Readings:**  
“The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen” (1789)  
Olympe de Gouges, “The Declaration of the Rights of Women” (1791)  
**Image:** Jacques-Louis David, “The Tennis Court Oath” (1790-91) |
| Week 2 | 1/30  | **Republican Models**  
**Readings:**  
Alphonse Daudet, “The Last Class” from *Contes du Lundi* (1873)  
Mme Fouillé, *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, excerpts and images (1877)  
**Viewing (in class):** Godard, *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants* (1977)  
**Assignment:** One page commentary on the representation of republican identity in either Daudet’s “The Last Class” or *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* |
| Week 3 | 2/6   | **Decolonization and Post-Colonial Childhoods**  
**Viewing**  
Christophe Ruggia *Le gone du Chaâba* (film, 1997)  
Available at the Library: DVD 42127 P  
**Reading:**  
| Week 4 | 2/13  | **Caribbean Context**  
**Reading:**  
Patrick Chamoiseau’s *School Days*, first half (1997)  
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, excerpts (1967)  
**Assignment:** One page commentary on the resonances of Fanon in Chamoiseau’s *School Days* |
| Week 5 | 2/20  | **Caribbean Context, Cont’d**  
**Reading:**  
Patrick Chamoiseau’s *School Days*, second half (1997)  
Renee Larrier, “Migrant ImagiNations: Can[n]ions, Creole[s], and Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Chemin-d’école*”, 17-30 |
**Week 6**  
2/27: **Youthful Rebellion: French New Wave**  
*Viewing*
François Truffaut, *The 400 Blows (Les 400 coups)*, 1959  
Available at the library: DVD 17704 BLU or DVD 17705 BLU  

**Reading**

**Assignment:** Critical Analysis of a passage or clip (3-4 pages)  

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**Week 7**  
3/6: **Class Conflicts, Sexual Revolution**  
**Readings:**
Pierre Bourdieu, “Physical Space, Social Space, and Habitus”, 11-22  
Lorraine Day, “Class, Sexuality and Subjectivity in Annie Ernaux’s *Les armoires vides*”, 41-55  

**Week 8**  
3/13: **No Class – Spring Break**  

**Week 9**  
3/20: **Class Conflicts, Sexual Revolution, Cont’d**  
**Readings:**

**Assignment:** One page commentary on Ernaux’s social and sexual critique.  

**Week 10**  
3/27: **Identity Formation in Today’s Classrooms**  
*Viewing:*
Nicolas Philibert, *To Be and to Have (Etre et avoir)*, 2002  
Available at the library: DVD 5052  

**Readings:**

**Week 11**  
4/3: **Identity Formation in Today’s Classrooms, Cont’d**  
*Viewing:*
Laurent Cantet, *The Class (Entre les murs)*, 2008  
Available at the library: DVD 13451 or 21769
Assignment: One page commentary comparing and contrasting the representation of youth in *Etre et avoir* and *Entre les murs*. |
|---|---|
| Contemporary Youth Beyond the Périphérique Viewing: | Céline Sciamma, *Girlhood (Bande de Filles)*, 2014  
Available at the Library: DVD 37834  
Claire Moullard, “Il y a des règles': Gender, Surveillance, and Circulation in Céline Sciamma's *Bande de Filles*", 113-126  
| Week 12 4/10: | Contemporary Youth Beyond the Périphérique Viewing:  
Oliver Babinet, *Swagger*, 2016  
Isabelle Boni Claverie, *Too Black to be French? (Trop noire pour être française?)*, 2015, available at the Library: DVD 43049  
Reading: | Angelique Chrisafis, “‘Nothing's changed': 10 years after French riots, banlieues remain in crisis”, *The Guardian*.  
Assignment: One page commentary on the representation of suburban youth in either *Girlhood* or *Swagger*. |
| Week 13 4/17: | Gender Identities  
Reading: | Julie Maroh, *Blue is the warmest color (Le bleu est une couleur chaude)*, 2010  
Assignment: Deadline to submit report on the representation of French/francophone identity. |
| Week 14 4/24: | Gender Identities, cont’d  
| Week 15 | 5/1: | **Conclusions**  
**Reading:**  

**Final Paper Presentations/Workshop** |
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