France and the U.S. have a habit of looking at one another as anti-models when it comes to discussions of assimilation and difference, “race,” identity, community and diversity. In this course, we explore this comparison as a productive means for re-considering these terms. Why is the notion of “ethnic community” so problematic in France? And why do Americans insist on the “homogeneity” of the French nation, even as, at various points throughout modern French history, France has received more immigrants to its shores than the United States? Through readings, film screenings, and site visits we explore the movements and encounters that have made Paris a rich, and sometimes controversial, site of cultural exchange. Topics include contemporary polemics on questions such as headscarves, the banlieue, the new Paris museums of immigration and “primitive” art, affirmative action and discrimination positive, historic expressions of exoticism, négritude, and anti-colonialism. Conducted in English.

Assignments
The course is organized as a seminar. Students are expected to have done the reading and assignments for each class and to participate in class discussion. Assigned texts are available on reserve and for sale at Shakespeare & Co. (see below); readings marked “course reader” are available in a Reader for sale at CopyTop Trocadero, 42 rue Longchamp, Paris 16\(^{\text{e}}\); films and recommended readings are available on reserve.

Formal requirements:
\begin{itemize}
  \item Class participation (class participation & directed reading questions); 15\%
  \item Directed reading questions. Students are to prepare responses to questions on designated readings. **Directed reading questions are due in class the day the reading is due.**
  \item Review essay on visit to the CNHI (5-7 pages), due March 8\(^{\text{th}}\), 20\%
  \item Mid-term exam, March 15\(^{\text{th}}\), 20\%
  \item Independent project, written up in 5-7 page paper, and presented in class week of April 5\(^{\text{th}}\); papers due April 8\(^{\text{th}}\), 20\%
  \item Final exam May 12\(^{\text{th}}\), 25\%
\end{itemize}

Additional 2 credit option for Gallatin students: Students may participate in an on-going field study project with a group of 9\(^{\text{th}}\) grade students at the Collège Martin Luther King in Villiers-le-Bel, a suburb to the north of Paris, in the realization of a work of ‘performance art’ based on Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye. The Collège Martin Luther King is a socially and ethnically diverse junior high school located on the border between the old village of Villiers-le-Bel and some newer suburban projects. Students will be required to keep a journal of their experiences and to provide a final report (5-7 pages) at the end of the semester.

Required books, for sale at Shakespeare & Co., 37 rue de la Bûcherie, Paris 5\(^{\text{e}}\)

**Recommended texts, on reserve at NYU in France library:**
Pontecorvo, Gillo *La Bataille d’Alger* (1966) (film)

**Course schedule**

**Week 1 – What’s in a word? Culture, diversity, and other terms of our multicultural times**

2/1: Introduction

**Week 2 – Peoples & cultures: what makes the nation?**

2/11: Villiers-le-Bel

**Week 3 – France & its others: building the republic**

2/18: Villiers-le-Bel

**Week 4 – Representing “difference”: expos and avant-gardes**

2/25: Visit *Cité Nationale de l’Histoire d’Immigration* (note special class time)
Week 5 – In a new voice: expanding French universalism
3/3: Césaire, cont.
3/4: Villiers-le-Bel

Week 6
3/7: Guest lecture (strongly recommended): Tyler Stovall, 17h Comparative views on race in France and the United States
First review essay due
Review
3/11: Villiers-le-Bel

Week 7 – La banlieue: the republic and its discontents
3/15: Mid-term exam
3/18: Villiers-le-Bel

Week 8 – Identity politics: the National Front and the foulard
3/22: Reading: Gaspard, chs. 3 & conclusion, pp. 101-177.

Week 9 – Memory, community, class: what is difference?
3/29: Film (to be screened outside of class): Entre les Murs
4/1: Visit: La Goutte d’Or (note special class time)

Week 10 – Student projects
4/5: Student presentations
4/7: Student presentations
Independent project papers due 4/8, in my box (or emailed) by 17h.
4/8: Villiers-le-Bel

SPRING BREAK

Week 11 – Back to the Future: the Musée de Quai Branly
Visit to Musée Quai Branly: students are to visit MQB on their own, in time for sessions on 4/26 & 4/28; compte-rendu of visit to be handed in on 4/26.

4/28: The MQB debate continued; joint session with French Art World in the 20th century

4/29: Villiers-le-Bel

**Week 12 – Ethnic statistics: the Franco-American debate revisited**


5/6: Villiers-le-Bel

**Week 13 – Conclusions**

5/10: Review

5/12: Final exam