

History 4750/6750: The History of Paris on Film (Spring 2008)
TR 5:00-6:15

Professor Laura Mason
318 Leconte Hall
542-2484

lmason@arches.uga.edu
office hours by appt

Required Texts (available at Off-Campus Books)

Colin Jones, Paris: the Biography of a City

Tyler Stovall, France since the Second World War

Timothy Corrigan, A Short Guide to Writing about Film

Individual texts available on-line from Main Library Reserves (password: 4750)

Description

This course introduces students to the use of films for studying history by focusing on contemporary Paris. We will investigate how film-makers and others interpreted the social, political, and technological changes that reshaped Paris in the years after World War II. We will treat movies not simply as representations of historical change, but as cultural means by which film-makers commented on that change.

Requirements

Students are expected to develop reading, writing and critical skills. Accordingly, grades are based on your ability to engage thoughtful and informed discussion, and to write persuasive essays.

Reading. After the first two weeks of class (which have a heavier reading load) expect about 60 pages of reading per week. As of week 3, readings and films will always be discussed on Thursday. But I urge you to at least skim reading assignments before Tuesday, to give yourself a sense of key issues to look for in the films.

Read carefully and critically with the following questions in mind. What argument does the author make? What kind of evidence does s/he use to support that argument? How does her/his argument relate to other issues discussed in class? What do you think about this particular argument? How can you justify your opinion? Don't be afraid to mark your text-- underscoring important points, writing questions in the margins, etc-- and make notes about questions or issues you'd like to raise in class. Take careful notes and print out key pages of texts you read on-line.

Watching. Films will be screened on Tuesdays at 5 pm. All films run longer than class time so please take note of running times; if you can't stay to see an entire film on Tuesday, watch the rest in the Main Library media room before Thursday.

Take notes as you watch the films. What issues does each raise beyond the story it tells? How do plot, editing, cinematography, and acting shape your opinions about Paris? How do space, lighting, and camera angles shape perceptions? Is the city of Paris a character integral to the plot or simply a backdrop? What relationship do you see between the film and readings assigned with it? What relationships do you see between the film you're watching and other films we have discussed?

Discussion (30% of final grade). This course is run as a seminar: students will lead discussions and everyone should come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and films analytically. This is a collaborative effort: remember that, when you lead discussion, you can only expect as much from your fellow students as you have put in when others lead discussion. As of week 3, discussion will always fall on Thursdays.

Participation is vital because it allows students to share critical ideas about the issues raised by texts and films. Know your materials in advance, be prepared to listen to and engage what other class members have to say. The group that leads the most successful discussions will earn extra points for participation at the semester's end.

Writing. Students will write three papers: two medium-length papers based on classroom assignments and a final research paper. *Papers should not simply summarize a film's plot; they must offer critical analysis of specific visual, performative, aural or thematic dimensions of a film, and relate them to assigned readings.* For tips on writing, see Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. Papers include:

+ Two papers (4-5 pages) about how a film and its accompanying texts address a particular theme. Be explicit about how the film's formal aspects (i.e, cinematography, editing, directing, acting, music) advance its "argument." Depth matters more than breadth, so focus on a single issue and develop it as fully as possible using specific examples. **Papers due by 5 pm on Monday following screening and discussion. (First paper 20% of final grade; 2nd paper= 20%)**

+ A research paper (8-10 pp) that explores a single dimension of postwar Paris using films and secondary source materials. If you do not choose a theme from the course, you must develop it in consultation with me. While you may use some films viewed in class, you may not use only films from class or films you've already written about. Similarly, your research must take you beyond assigned course readings. **Due by 5 pm Monday April 28, (30%of final grade)**

****Note:** I will not accept any late paper w/out a doctor's excuse or prior arrangement.

Statement on Plagiarism

Plagiarism means taking credit for research, writing, or ideas not your own. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the class and be reported to university authorities. See http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/sect05.htm. Keep research notes until you receive a final grade.

Class Schedule

1/10 Introduction to the course

Studying History through Film

1/15 John O'Conner, "History in Images/Images in History: Reflections on the importance of Film and Television Study for an Understanding of the Past," *American Historical Review* vol. 93 #5 (Dec 1988) pp. 1200-1209. [Available on-line through E-Journals]

Pierre Sorlin, "How to look at an 'Historical' Film," Marcia Landry (ed) The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media pp. 25-49 [on-line reserves]

- 1/17 Pierre Sorlin, "Film: A Counteranalysis of Society?" and "Analysis of Societies and Different Types of Films," in Pierre Sorlin Cinema and History, pp.23-46, 81-85 [on-line reserves]

Paris: The Eternal City?

- 1/22 Paris: The Biography of a City, Introduction & "Haussmannism" pp. xii-xxv, 299-343. Skim "The Anxious Spectacle" pp. 344-384
- 1/24 Colin Jones, Paris: The Biography of a City, "Faded Dreams" pp. 385-425
- 1/29 Screening: "Paris vu par..." / "Six in Paris" (1965) 95 minutes
- 1/31 Paris: The Biography of a City, "Remaking of Paris" pp. 426-463
- 2/5 Screening: "Paris je t'aime" (2006) 120 minutes
- 2/7 Paris: The Biography of a City, "Big Projects" pp. 465-474
Frances Gendlin, Cultureshock... Paris "Paris Now" pp. 21-54 [on-line reserves]

Modernization

- 2/12 Screening: Jacques Tati, "Mon Oncle" (1958) 119 minutes
- 2/14 France since WWII "Trente Glorieuses" pp. 27-45
Kristin Ross, Fast Cars, Clean Bodies. Intro & "Housekeeping" pp. 1-13, 71-105
- 2/19 Screening: Cedric Klapisch, "Chacun cherche son chat" (1996) 91 minutes
- 2/21 Norma Evenson, Paris: A Century of Change pp. 255-264, 301-321 [on-line reserves]
Richard Cobb, Paris and Elsewhere, "Paris Xe" & "The Assassination of Paris" pp. 55-73, 173-185 [on-line reserves]

France in Revolution

- 2/26 Screening: Chris Marker, "Le Joli Mai" (1962) 165 minutes
- 2/28 France since WWII "French culture & the Intelligentsia" pp. 63-79
Kristin Ross, Fast Cars, Clean Bodies. "Couples" pp. 123-156
- 3/4 Screening: Jean-Luc Godard, "Tout va bien" (1972) 95 minutes
- 3/6 Keith Reader & Kursheed Wadia, The May 1968 Events in France pp 1-47 [on-line reserves]

10-14 March

Spring break

Decolonization and Immigration

- 3/18 Screening: Agnès Varda, "Cleo de 5 à 7/Cleo from 5 to 7" (1962) 90 minutes
- 3/20 France since WWII "Decolonisation to Neo-colonialism" pp. 46-62
Benjamin Stora, "Algeria: the War without a Name" Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History 21:3 (1993) 208-216 [on-line reserves]
- 3/25 Screening: Philip Brooks & Alan Hayling, "Drowning by Bullets" (1992) 52 minutes
- 3/27 Joshua Cole, "Remembering the Battle of Paris: 17 October 1961 in French and Algerian Memory," French Politics, Culture, and Society 21:3 (Fall 2003) pp. 21-50 [on-line reserves]
- 4/1 Screening: Michael Haneke, "Caché" (2005) 117 minutes
- 4/3 Anne Donadey, "'Une certaine Idée de la France': The Algeria Syndrome and Struggles over 'French' Identity," Steven Ungar & Tom Conley (eds) Identity Papers pp. 215-232 [on-line reserves]

Race & the Suburbs

- 4/8 Screening: Mathieu Kassowitz, "La haine"/"Hatred" (1995) 96 minutes
- 4/10 France since WWII "Mitterand Era" pp. 80-99
Tyler Stovall, "From Red Belt to Black Belt: Race, Class, and Urban Marginality in Twentieth-Century Paris," Sue Peabody & Tyler Stovall (eds) The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France pp. 351-370 [on-line reserves]
Graham Murray, "France: the riots and the republic," Race & Class 47:4 (Apr-Jun 2006) pp. 26-45 [on-line reserves]
- 4/15 Screening: Abdel Kechiche, "L'esquive"/ "Games of Love and Chance" (2003) 123 minutes
- 4/17 Naomi Schor, "The Crisis of French Universalism," Yale French Studies 100 (2001) pp. 43-64. [on-line reserves]
Michel de Certeau, "Reading as Poaching," The Practice of Everyday Life pp. 165-176 [on-line reserves]
- 4/22 Research
- 4/24 Research
- 4/28 **Final papers due in my mailbox at 5 pm**