

PCC 123. Paris in Literature

Prof. Will Bishop

This course looks at representations of Paris in French literature of the modern period. Readings have been chosen to introduce students to Paris's multiple and changing identities. The course will place a particular emphasis on the borders, sometimes extremely stable and others somewhat porous, between the different social worlds that make Paris such an interesting, diverse, and culturally important city. Beginning with Balzac's powerful representation of the city as the locus of power, corruption and social inequality, we will trace key developments in the way French novelists, poets and filmmakers have conceptualized their capital city. We will in the course of the semester become familiar with some of the important literary movements of the modern period: realism (Balzac), naturalism (Zola), surrealism (Breton) etc. [Literature, Comp Lit, Urban Studies, History, French] **5.0 credits.**

COURSE MATERIALS

- Honoré de Balzac, *Old Goriot*
- Emile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*
- Colette, *The Vagabond*
- Romain Gary, *The Life Before Us*
- Course Reader ([CR] hereafter)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at lectures, section, and site visits is mandatory. It is essential that students attend all classes and participate actively. One unexcused absence is tolerated, but additional ones will result in a lowered final grade.

Reading assignments are critical. Students are expected to read the material as it is assigned and come to class prepared.

Grading

- **Participation in class discussion 25%**
- **Two short papers (3-4 pages) 25 %**
- **Mid-term exam 25 %**
- **Final Exam 25%**

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1. September 15-16

Balzac's Paris

Session 1: Introduction

Session 2: Balzac, *Old Goriot*

WEEK 2. September 22-23

Balzac's Paris

Session 1: Balzac, *Old Goriot*

Session 2: Balzac, *Old Goriot*

WEEK 3. September 29-30

Paris, Poetry, and Politics: Baudelaire and Benjamin

Session 1: Charles Baudelaire, selections from *Les Fleurs du Mal* and *Paris Spleen* [CR]

Session 2: Walter Benjamin, "Paris Capital of the Nineteenth Century." [CR]

WEEK 4. October 6-7 (**October 6: First short paper due**)

Department Store Shopping and Social Repercussions

Session 1: Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, Chapters 1-4

Session 2: Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, Chapters 5-9

Selections from Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* [CR]

WEEK 5. October 13-14

Shopping (continued) and the Birth of the Modern Intellectual

Session 1: Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, Chapters 10-14

Session 2: Zola, "J'accuse" [CR]

WEEK 6. October 20-21

Colette: One woman's liberation into the *Belle Epoque*

Session 1: Colette, *The Vagabond*

Session 2: Colette, *The Vagabond*

WEEK 7. October 27-28

Midterm Review and Exam

WEEK 8. November 10

Lyricism and Painting from Montmartre: Apollinaire, Jacob

Poems by Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Robert Desnos, André Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism.” [CR]

WEEK 9. November 17-18

Session 1: Poems by Desnos and Eluard.

Session 2: Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a return to the Native Land* [CR]

WEEK 10. November 24-25 (**November 24 – Second Paper Due**)
Americans (and others) in Paris

Session 1: Readings from Hemingway, Gertrude Stein. [CR]

Session 2: Readings from James Baldwin, Gail Scott [CR]

Second Short Paper Due

WEEK 11. December 1-2

French Multiculturalism *avant la lettre*?: Romain Gary’s *The Life Before Us*

Session 1: Romain Gary, *The Life Before Us*

Session 2: Romain Gary, *The Life Before Us*

WEEK 12. December 8-9

***The Game of Love and Chance in the Banlieue*: Marivaux and Kéchiche**

Session 1: Marivaux, *The Game of Love and Chance* [CR]

Session 2: Film: *L’esquive*

WEEK 13. December 15-16

Final exam