

UC PAR-LON Global Cities Urban Realities Program – Spring 2015
PCC178. **Nation and Identity in Modern France: Historical Sources and Contemporary Challenges**

Prof. Justin E. H. Smith

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Office Hours
by appointment

Lecture (course times include a 15 min break)

M 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

W 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

See complete schedule for special sessions

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is France? And who is French? These questions might seem too obvious to even need to be asked, yet in fact their answers have long been the source of much debate and controversy among historians, sociologists, political theorists, and many specialists in the humanities. This is the case in any modern country, but perhaps most of all in France, since it is France that has served since 1789 as the very model of what it is to be a nation-state, that is, a political unit purportedly built around a single, unified national culture. How such a culture comes to be unified is a complicated matter, and one rendered even more complicated by the history of colonialism in which France, like many other European powers, has been deeply implicated for centuries.

In this course we will consider some attempts by authors in a variety of fields, including political science, philosophy, and literature, ranging from the 18th century to the present day, to make sense out of the question of what it means to be French. To broach this topic, students will read from a variety of influential texts, and during class we will discuss the ideas developed in these texts, attempting to relate them to the broader questions that are guiding us, and also to relate them to our own experience in contemporary Paris. **4.0 credits.** Suggested subject areas for this course: *Philosophy/Political Science/History*

COURSE MATERIALS

Course Reader [CR]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at lectures and site visits is mandatory. It is essential that you attend all classes and participate actively. As per the UC Attendance Policy, absences and tardies will result in a lowered final grade. Please refer to the UC Global Cities Urban Realities Program Academic Handbook for the policy on absences and tardies.

Participation and reading assignments are critical. For the purposes of this class, participation means reading the materials in advance, coming to class on time, staying for the entire class period, and actively taking part in discussions and other in-class exercises and activities. A large part of this portion of your grade is simply **paying attention**; in order to pay attention, you must be present! Lateness and absences will have a strong negative effect on your participation grade.

Assignments: Deadlines for assignments are to be respected. There will be NO extensions on assignments, nor will there be any additional or make up assignments.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation in class discussion:	15%
Oral Presentation:	15%
Weekly Quizzes:	20%
Paper (6-8 pages):	20%
Final Exam (In-class or Take-home):	30%

A Note on Academic Dishonesty: Regardless of the quality of work, plagiarism is punishable with a failing grade in the class and possible dismissal from the program. Plagiarism may be broadly defined as copying of materials from sources without duly citing them, claiming other's ideas as one's own without proper reference to them, and buying materials such as essays/exams. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask your instructor.

A Note on Electronic Devices: As a courtesy to your instructor and fellow students, please do not use cell phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, or other electronic devices during class, even to check the time. Make sure phones are turned off. Use of these devices will lower your participation grade. No recording (audio or visual) of class sessions will be permitted.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change at the instructor's discretion)

Week 1

Monday, March 30th: Introduction

- Justin E. H. Smith, "Does Immigration Mean 'France Is Over'?", in the *New York Times*, January 5, 2014

Wednesday, April 1st: The Current 'Malaise'

- Alain Finkielkraut, "The Unhappy Identity" (2013) (excerpts)
- Richard Millet, *Elogy for Anders Breivik* (2012) (excerpts)
- Justin E. H. Smith, "Ragnarök on the Seine," in *The American Reader*, October, 2013

Week 2

Monday, April 6th : Holiday – No class

Wednesday, April 8th: What's so special about France?

- Roland Barthes, "The New Citroën," in *Mythologies* (1957); *System of Fashion* (1967) (excerpts); *S/Z* (1970)

(Make-up session for April 6th)

Friday, April 10th: Frenchness and philosophy

- Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism" (1946); "Situations V: Colonialism and Neocolonialism" (1964) (excerpts); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1979) (excerpts)

Week 3

Monday, April 13th: Colonialism and its consequences (part 1)

Paper Due

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) (excerpts); *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) (excerpts)
- Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965) (excerpts)

Wednesday, April 15th: Colonialism and its consequences (part 2)

- Sally Price, *Paris Primitive* (excerpts)

Excursion to the Musée Quai Branly: How does the idea of the 'foreign' and the 'exotic' help to constitute French identity?

Week 4

Monday, April 20th: Liberté, égalité, fraternité... and their limits

- Marquis de Lafayette et al., “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” (1789)
- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen” (1791)

Wednesday, April 22nd: Outside France, looking in (part 1)

- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) (excerpts)

Excursion to the Musée Carnavalet: How does the historical memory of the Revolution help to constitute French identity?

Week 5

Monday, April 27th: Outside France, looking in (part 2)

- J. G. Herder, *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1791)

Wednesday, April 29th: Inside France, looking out, looking in; Concluding reflections

- Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters* (1721) (excerpts)

Final Exam