

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History  
Semester II, 2014-2015

HISTORY 600: Americans in Paris  
Tuesday 1:20-3:20

Prof. Desan  
5120 Humanities

Paris has long held allure for adventurous Americans. The "City of Light" could embody many things: liberty, modernity, cultural sophistication, sexual freedom, bohemian escape, business opportunity, or literary and artistic creativity. Focusing on the era of roughly 1889 to 1930, this course will explore the experience of various Americans in Paris, including tourists and adventurers, writers, and musicians. How does the myth of Paris as mecca of modernity and artistic creativity emerge in the American imagination? How does Paris become the go-to land of social and sexual adventure for American tourists and travelers in the early twentieth century? Why is Paris especially popular among women travelers? And why did France develop a reputation of racial freedom for African-Americans, and what were the limits of this myth? Conversely, we will ask how the French viewed Americans. Finally, we will also investigate Paris as a literary capital -- the destination of dozens of expatriate novelists, poets, and journalists during the emergence of the modernist movement of the early twentieth century. As examples of that movement, we will look at writings of the iconic figures Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway, among others. In a nutshell, the course asks: How do Americans interact with the French and other Europeans as they struggle to define what it means to be modern, and sometimes also what it means to be American?

The major purpose of the seminar is to offer students the opportunity to do a primary-source research paper on any issue to do with Americans in Paris. Students can write on diverse topics, including issues not raised in our collective reading. Possible sources include diaries or memoirs; personal letters; guidebooks; English-language press in Paris or the U.S.; novels or other literary sources; travelogues, etc. During the first half of the course, we will do some background reading and sample a variety of primary sources. The second half of the course will be devoted to researching and writing your papers, and also discussing each other's research projects.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Two most important requirements: 1/ lively participation in seminar discussion; and 2/ producing an original research paper (c. 20-25 pp.) on some historical aspect of American experience in Paris. Short assignments earlier in the semester will be oriented toward preparing you for this final paper. These short assignments include: a short 5-page paper analyzing primary material; a two-page proposal; a bibliography; an outline; an oral presentation of topics. Rough drafts of the final paper are due on April 21 and will be shared & discussed by groups of your fellow students. Final paper is due May 5.

**READING:** We will use a course packet of excerpts from primary and secondary sources. This course packet is available at the Copy Center at 6120 Sewell Hall (the Social Sciences Building). We will also use Harvey Levenstein, Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz

Age. This material will also be on reserve at HC White library.

Week 1: (Jan. 20) INTRODUCTION

Week 2: (Jan. 27) MYTHS OF PARIS: CIVILIZATION, SEX, AND THE MODERN

Charles Rearick, Paris Dreams, Paris Memories (Stanford, Cal., 2011), 6-43

Harvey Levenstein, Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age (Chicago, 1998), ix-xiii, 125-155

James McCabe, Paris by Sunlight and Gaslight: A Work Descriptive of the Mysteries and Miseries, the Virtues, the Vices, the Splendors, and the Crimes of the City of Paris (Philadelphia, 1869), 15-18, 661-666, 696-702, 714-30

Susanne Berthier-Foglar, "The 1889 World Exhibition in Paris: The French, the Age of Machines, and the Wild West," The Nineteenth-Century Context 31 (2009): 129-142

Two documents on the 1889 Exhibition: "Loitering through the Paris Exposition," The Atlantic Monthly 65 (March 1890): 360-61, 373-74; Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer, "Impressions of the International Exposition of 1889," The Century (Dec. 1889): 316-318 (on Learn@UW)

Week 3: (Feb. 3) AMERICAN TOURISM AND GENDER

Patrice Higonnet, Paris: Capital of the World (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), 317-345

Harvey Levenstein, Seductive Journey, 157-283

"Edith & I in Paris: The Experiences of Two Bright American Girls at the French Capital," Ladies Home Journal XVII (1900) (two short letters from Jan. & Feb.)

Mary Cadwalader Jones, European Travel for Women (N.Y., 1900), 1-9, 155-68

A. J. Liebling, "Passable," in Paris in Mind, ed. Jennifer Lee (N.Y., 2003), 16-31

Week 4: (Feb. 10) AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN PARIS

Tyler Stovall, Paris Noir: African-Americans in the City of Light (Boston, 1996), xi-xvi, 25-81

James Weldon Johnson, from Along this Way, in Americans in Paris: A Literary Anthology, ed. Adam Gopnik (N.Y., 2004), 199-201

Langston Hughes, "from The Big Sea," in Americans in Paris: A Literary Anthology, ed. Adam Gopnik (N.Y., 2004), 284-293

Gwendolyn Bennett, "Wedding Day," in Women, Men and the Great War: An Anthology of Stories, ed. Trudi Tate (Manchester, U.K., 1995), 141-147

James Baldwin, "No Name in the Street." in Paris in Mind, ed. Jennifer Lee (N.Y., 2003), 247-261

Week 5: (Feb. 17) EXPATRIATE LITERARY WORLDS & MODERNISM I

Robin Walz, "Modernism," in A Companion to Europe, 1900-1945 (Oxford, Eng., 2006), 50-65

Geoff Gilbert, "The Location of Experiment: 'Modernist Paris'" in The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of Paris, ed. Anna-Louise Milne (Cambridge, U.K., 2015), 189-200.

Gertrude Stein, Paris France (London, 1970, orig. ed. 1940), 1-25, 46-64, 116-120

Samuel Putnam, Paris was our Mistress: Memoirs of a Lost and Found Generation (NY, 1947), vii-19; 32-35; 47-59; 127-139

Week 6: (Feb. 24) EXPATRIATE LITERARY WORLDS & MODERNISM II

George Wickes, "The Right Place at the Right Time," in French Connections: Ernest Hemingway and Fitzgerald Abroad, ed. J. Gerald Kennedy and Jackson R. Bryer (N.Y., 1998), 3-14

Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast (N.Y., 2010, orig. ed. 1964), 15-49, 57-72, 169-175; 227-35

Anaïs Nin, from The Early Diary of Anaïs Nin, in Paris in Mind, ed. Jennifer Lee (N.Y., 2003), 111-114

\*\* This week, we will hold a shorter seminar, followed by extended office hours for you to come and discuss research paper ideas.

\*\*\* SHORT PAPER DUE, Friday, Feb. 27: 5-page document analysis

Week 7: (March 3) THE FOCUS ON RESEARCH

We will meet in Room 23 Memorial Library this week.

Extended Office Hours for Individual Meetings.

Week 8: (March 10) MUSIC, RACE, AND SEXUALITY

Jeffrey H. Jackson, Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar France (Durham., N. C., 2003), 13-30, 52-115

Wendy Martin, "Remembering the Jungle: Josephine Baker and Modernist Parody," in Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism, ed. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Stanford, Cal., 1995), 310-315

E.E. Cummings, from "Vive la Folie!" in Americans in Paris: A Literary Anthology, ed. Adam Gopnik (N.Y., 2004), 306-310

Bricktop, "Cole Porter and Josephine Baker," in Paris in Mind, ed. Jennifer Lee (N.Y., 2003), 236 & 243-246 (you can skim the Cole Porter part)

Josephine Baker and Jo Bouillon, Josephine (N. Y., 1977), vii-xiii, 47-69

Week 9: (March 17) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

\*\*\* 2 PAGE PROPOSAL = description of topic, key primary sources, and central questions, due at your meeting with me.

Week 10: (March 24) WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

Sample Student Paper

We will have a discussion with a Writing Lab Instructor.

\*\*\* BIBLIOGRAPHY of primary and secondary sources due Tuesday, March 24.

Week 11: (April 7) INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

\*\*\* OUTLINE due at your meeting with me.

Week 12: (April 14) ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Sample Student introductions

Week 13: (April 21) EXCHANGE OF DRAFTS

\*\*\* Rough drafts due at class.

Week 14: (April 29) DISCUSSION OF ROUGH DRAFTS & CONCLUSIONS

Sample Student conclusions

Week 15: (May 5) FINAL PRESENTATIONS

\*\*\* Final Paper due on May 5.