

**Department:** FREN

**Course No.:** 1169 [169]

**Credits:** 3

**Title:** Modernity in Crisis: France and the Francophone World From 1850 to Today.

**Contact:** Roger Travis (Anne Berthelot)

**Content Area:** CA1-Arts and Humanities CA 4 Diversity and Multiculturalism- International

**Catalog Copy:** FREN 1169

Studies in the French Speaking World. Either semester. 3 credits. Recent Trends in French life. Selected materials to acquaint students with French contributions to the changing face of modernity. Weekly topics include: popular culture, women in France, cultural myths, the Francophone world, regionalism, decolonization and racism, etc.

**Course Information:**

- a. Students are exposed to the development of French and Francophone culture from the French Empire to the multicultural present through readings from selected literary and cultural critics, with an essential film and documentary component.
- b. Bi-weekly quizzes, short papers, mid-term and final exam.
- c. List the major themes, issues, topics, etc., to be covered. The birth, growth, and dissolution of the French Empire, the impact of industrialization, the turn toward democracy, the evolution of women's roles, immigration and racism, the accommodation with the church, the recognition and development of an intellectual class.

**Meets Goals of Gen Ed.:** Students are required to write very short essays, as well as two longer essays for the mid-term and the final. The best answers are read aloud in class and, by the end of the class, the students are responding enthusiastically to the best essays. They learn to recognize good writing, and start to produce it on their own. Students are constantly asked to compare their own culture to the one[s] they are studying, in order to understand the urgency of the questions facing the French. In the process of doing so, they inevitably become more conscious of the contingent nature of their own. These comparisons aid them recognize the breadth of the divisions between them and the French, as well as between both and those the French subjugated throughout the world. This helps them acquire consciousness of diversity, and sharpen their critical judgment of their own assumptions.

**CA1 Criteria:** Students are required to engage in both critical and historical analysis of French culture. Documentary and film excerpts, plus feature films, are an intrinsic part of the curriculum ; particularly four films (Paths of Glory, The Moderns, Au revoir, les enfants, & The Battle of Algiers) are screened for the views of the culture they present. Students's knowledge of this material is evaluated in discussions

and quizzes, helping the students to articulate their reflexion. they are especially encouraged to explore the ways the cinematic apparatus offers a special view of the culture to contemporary audiences.

**CA4 Criteria:** The course traces the way modern and contemporary France has culturally evolved from a nation built on "universalism" to one reshaped around the notion of "differentialism," from a country under colonial aspiration to one under postcolonial development and policies, from a nation man-made to a contemporary power equally shared between men and women, from a culture of high modernism to one of postmodernism. Special attention will be devoted to the French colonial empire, (Asia, Africa and the Caribbean), to the France-USA relations, to war times, to feminism, to intellectual life, to specific art and literature representative of each cultural segment.

There is a tendency on the part of US students to assume their moral superiority to the classic nineteenth century colonial empires that characterized Northwestern Europe, so an urgent mission of the course is to ask students to compare the French "mission civilisatrice" with American manifest destiny, and the intermittent development of French democracy with property qualifications and Jim Crow legislation in the U.S. These comparisons are an essential feature of the short quizzes that communicate the kind of thinking and writing required in the course. An additional essential part of the course is the discovery, on the part of elites on both sides of the North Atlantic, of the subjectivity of the colonized peoples of the Southern Hemisphere. A final ingredient is the evocation of decolonization to explain the heat of many of the struggles still preoccupying the French and British, in particular.

**Role of Grad Students:** Graduate students help with grading, or with presenting very limited amounts of select material. They are supervised by the course instructor.