CIEE Paris, France

Course title: 20th Century French Literature (in English)
Course code: LITT 3002 PAFR (ENG)
Programs offering course: Summer in Paris
Open Campus Track: Language, Literature, and Culture
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Summer Session III 2020

Course Description

This course explores key figures, trends, themes, and styles in 20th-century French prose literature. At the very beginning of the century, Colette’s short stories raise the question of gender which Simone de Beauvoir will theorize a few decades later. Around that time, Proust’s colossal project (Remembrance of Things Past, or In Search of Lost Time), marks the advent of Modernism in French literature and art. With Louis Aragon, Albert Camus, J.P Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir, we then move on to two major literary, artistic, and philosophical movements, Surrealism and Existentialism, which after World War I and II offer radically new ways of apprehending the modern world, culminating with the Theatre of the Absurd (Ionesco’s Bald Prima Donna). Finally Marguerite Duras’ La Douleur and its recent film adaptation bring up the essential question, for the 20th century and beyond, of France’s ambivalent relationship with Nazi Germany.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Explore the impact of a specific time, place, and culture on writing through key authors and literary movements of the period
- Familiarize students with a variety of modes and styles of writing around characteristically 20th-century themes and issues
- Develop and refine analytical skills through the practice of close reading and critical essays
• Understand the relevance of 20th-century literature to contemporary French literature and culture.

Course Prerequisites

This course is introductory and therefore open to all. However, since a substantial amount of reading and writing is required over a short period of time, students who are not familiar with reading and writing about literature may need to allot extra time to familiarize themselves with basic critical tools and approaches.

Methods of Instruction

Classes typically combine mini-lectures and discussions. They also include short oral presentations by students on an excerpt, a prompt, or a scene (film). Two outings related directly to the content of the course will be organized (museum or special exhibition and/or neighborhoods, cafés, or houses of writers on our list).

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Take-home Papers 30%
2. Short in-class Assignments 15%
3. Final Essay 20%
4. 10-minute Oral Presentation 15%
5. Preparation & Class Participation 20%

TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Take-home Papers

Two take-home papers combining a short commentary and a short essay (3-4 pages each)

Commentary (close reading of a selected excerpt)

Involves reading an excerpt closely on both the level of content and form; identifying what is characteristic and what may be specific to the text; and organizing the points
according to a clear analytical progression, avoiding simple plot description. Students are also expected to turn in a separate summary of the main argument (maximum 6 sentences).

Optional:

(At least) one revision or other paper can be submitted for extra credit.

Revisions include working on an existing outline; rewriting an introduction or a conclusion.

Extra papers include writing a summary and/or writing a paper on an excerpt, a prompt, or a related topic (subject to the instructor's approval). Old and new grades are then averaged out.

Handwritten papers are OK only in the event of a computer or printer failure. They should be clear and legible and written on A4-size paper.

Internet:

All internet material (background information, reviews, articles) must be printed out and turned in with the paper.

Short in-class Assignments

Minimum of 2 short in-class assignments (one page outlines for a close reading or a critical essay - only the best grade counts)

Critical Essay (from a prompt):

Involves rephrasing the prompt and identifying underlying assumptions; organizing main points according to a clear analytical progression, using relevant examples and citations and avoiding simple plot summary; defending multiple perspectives; formulating relevant questions or hypotheses, and making further connections. Students are also expected to turn in a separate summary of the main argument (maximum 6 sentences).

Outline:
The skeleton of a close reading or critical essay with main points and sub-points, following my writing guidelines.

Final Essay

Approx. 8-10 pages/2,000-2,500 words

A longer comparative essay that explores the relationship between material covered in class and external material.

Possibilities for the external material include:

1. Other texts or genres by authors on our list (e.g. another text by Colette, Beauvoir, Duras, Aragon, Camus, Sartre, or Ionesco)
2. Other contemporary or later French 20th-century authors (novelists, short-story writers, playwrights, essayists, poets): Apollinaire, Barthes, Breton, Céline, Gracq, Le Clézio, Modiano, Perec, Queneau, Robbe-Grillet, Sagan, Sarraute, Tournier.
3. Works by other 20th-century European authors
4. Theatre or film adaptations
5. Translations, History, Urban studies, Painting, Music, or another aspect of the course which the student would be interested in exploring further.

The subject must be approved by the professor.

The paper is due on the last day of class but outlines and summaries of the argument in progress must be submitted so that feedback can be provided.

All internet material must be printed out and turned in with the paper.

10-minute Oral Presentation

At least one 10-minute oral presentation on an excerpt or prompt (if more, only the best grade counts)

Oral presentations provide the opportunity to practice both types of assignment (commentary and essay) in the classroom.
Preparation & Class Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

The preparation and participation grade for this class specifically takes into account:

*The student’s attention and involvement (taking part in class discussions and/or voluntarily responding to an excerpt or prompt in writing; doing the quizzes and taking part in online discussions; attending activities out of the classroom)

*His or her command of the material (carefully read and researched)

*The logic of his or her argument (distinguishing between personal feeling and intellectual grasp)

*The contribution of his or her comments to the group’s continuing dialogue,

• making points that build on what has preceded them;
• being willing to consider new evidence;
• modifying an earlier position when warranted;
• being capable of justifying one’s own tangential points or those of others if the discussion is redirected or deviated;
• making sure the connections are still clear…

Plagiarism is a form of fraud that consists in presenting someone else’s work as though it were your own. Please note that the following counts as plagiarism:

• A sequence of words from another writer whom you have not quoted and referenced in footnotes
• A paraphrased passage from another writer’s work that you have not cited
• Facts or ideas gathered and reported by someone else
• Another student’s work that you claim as your own
• A paper that is purchased or “researched” by someone else for money
• A paper that is downloaded from the Internet.

For more information on CIEE academic policies, including grading criteria and plagiarism, please refer to the Academic Manual for Students and see the section on Academic Integrity at the end of the syllabus.

Important: all course assignments must be turned in on time.

While students will not be penalized for submissions up to and including 1 hour late,

• Students submitting work from 1 hour and 1 minute late up to and including 24 hours late will be penalized 15% from the assignment;
• Student work submitted from 24 hours and 1 minute late onward will receive a zero (0%) grade.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.

Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the
Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; 3% grade penalty &amp; <strong>written warning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td><strong>Automatic course failure</strong>, and possible expulsion</td>
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N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class 1.1
Introduction to the main authors, genres, and literary movements of 20th-century France. Colette short stories “If I Had a Daughter” (pp. 56-58) and “The Cashier” (pp.157-59).

Class 1.2

Colette short stories, “The Hand” (pp. 246-48); and “A Fable : The Tendrils of the Vine” (pp. 100-01); + the Colette section in Chapter One of Edmund White’s Le Flâneur, pp. 24-34. Film adaptation of Duras’s La Douleur playing in town with English subtitles after class.

Week 2
Class 2.1

Introduction to Modernism and to Proust’s A la Recherche du temps perdu. Excerpts 1 and 2 from The Way by Swann’s, pp. 7-10 (beginning of the novel) + pp. 85-88. Time, space, memory, the unconscious, reading, travelling.

Class 2.2

Proust, excerpts 3 and 4, pp. 57-61, and pp. 120-30. Comedy of manners; class; high society. Prompts for Paper 1.

Class 2.3

Paper 1 due + OUTING (visit of Haussmanian Paris).

Week 3
Class 3.1

Introduction to Haussmann’s Paris, to its arcades, and to the theme of the Flâneur. Introduction to Surrealism. Aragon’s “Preface to a Mythology” + the beginning of “The Passage de l’Opéra”, pp. 12-34.

Class 3.2
Excerpt from Aragon’s “The Passage de l'Opéra”, pp. 38-49.

Class 3.3


Class 3.4


Week 4

Class 4.1

Paper 2 due + OUTING.

Class 4.2


Class 4.3

Marguerite Duras, La Douleur, pp. 1-95 + Film.

Class 4.4

Final Essay due. Duras, La Douleur, pp. 96-192, and Conclusions.

Course Materials
Readings

To be purchased by students:
Camus, Albert, The Outsider, transl. Sandra Smith (1942/Penguin Classics 2013)

Duras, Marguerite, La Douleur, transl. B. Bray (1985/Flamingo, 1987)

Available on Canvas:


Beauvoir, Simone de, « Childhood » in : The Second Sex/Le Deuxième sexe (1949)

Camus, The Outsider, transl. Sandra Smith (1942/Penguin Classics 2013)


Cixous, Hélène, « The Laugh of the Medusa »/Le Rire de la méduse et autres ironies (Editions Galilée, 2010)


Ionesco, Eugène, The Bald Prima Donna (transl. Watson, John Calder 1958)

Phelps, Robert, Introduction to the Collected Stories of Colette (Vintage Classics 2003)

Proust, Marcel, In Search of Lost Time/A la Recherche du temps perdu [1913-27], Excerpts from Vol. 1, The Way By Swann’s, and 1 excerpt from Part II, A Love of Swann’s, transl. Lydia Davies (Penguin Classics, 2003) + General Editor’s Preface by Christopher Prendergast, and Translator’s Introduction by Lydia Davis.

White, Edmund, Chapter One of The Flâneur: A Stroll through the Paradoxes of Paris (Bloomsbury, 2001).