

UC Center Program Spring 2005

PCC 123. PARIS AS LITERATURE

French Writing in the 19th and 20th Century

Mon 11am-1pm
Wed 11am-1pm

Prof. [Alison Rice](#)

*This course will examine French novels, poetry, and essays from the 19th and 20th centuries that feature the city of Paris. We will focus on the various ways in which the French capital is represented in writing, beginning with the work of Balzac, Zola, and Baudelaire, including writings of Apollinaire, Aragon, and Perec, and concluding with the fiction of Calixthe Beyala. These diverse texts denote the city at different periods and shed light on accompanying historical, social, architectural, artistic, and cultural developments. Our close readings of these works will include analysis of the literary movements to which these publications belong; we will examine other creative works in art and music that characterize these movements as well, from realism to surrealism. The course will involve guest speakers who will address literary topics as well as a number of visits to sites in Paris that correspond to the novels, poems, and essays under study; these visits will be informed by our readings, but they will also inform our readings. The course is intended to work in both directions, to reveal that texts influence our relationship to the city, and that the city influences our relationship to texts. The course will illuminate the manner in which the rich and diverse urban center of Paris has provided inspiration for and drawn inspiration from literature over the past two centuries. [Comp Lit, Urban Studies, History, French] **6.0***

Credits

COURSE BOOKS

- Honoré de Balzac, *Illusions perdues (1837-1843)*, *Lost Illusions*, Penguin Books.
- Émile Zola, *Au Bonheur des dames (1883)*, *The Ladies' Paradise*, Oxford World's Classics.
- Louis Aragon, *Le Paysan de Paris (1926)*, *Paris Peasant*, Exact Change.
- A Course Reader containing all assigned texts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation in class discussion and brief in-class assignments	15 %
Two short papers	25 %
Term paper (8-10 pages)	35 %
Final examination	25 %

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1. February 21-25

First Session: INTRODUCTION, Paris in French literature

Second Session. The Rise of Realism

- BALZAC (1799-1850). *Illusions perdues* (1837; 1839; 1843), trans. *Lost Illusions*.
- “Publishing Novels: The Last Part of Honoré de Balzac’s *Illusions Perdues* Begins to Appear in Serial Form” **[CR]**

Week 2. February 28-March 3

First Session. Exploring the social and political climate of Paris in Balzac’s time

- BALZAC continued. *Lost Illusions*.

Second Session. BALZAC continued.

Week 3. March 7-10

First Session. Balzac completed.

***First two-page response paper due**

Second Session.

- VISIT to the Latin Quarter and the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève

Week 4. March 14-17

First Session: The transformation of the city: architecture and consumerism

- ZOLA (1840-1902). *Au Bonheur des dames* (1883), or *The Ladies’ Paradise*.
- “Haussmann’s Paris and the Revolution of Representation” **[CR]**

*****Second Session: Invited Guest Julia Kristeva, 15 March at 6 p.m. *****

(No class on Wednesday, 16 March.)

Week 5. March 21-24

First Session.

- ZOLA continued.

Second Session. Zola and Naturalism

- ZOLA completed. *The Ladies' Paradise*

Week 6. March 28-31

First Session.

- VISIT to Les Grands Boulevards and department stores

Second Session. Paris and the Invention of the Flâneur

- BAUDELAIRE (1821-1867). Selected poems from *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), translated as *The Flowers of Evil*. **[CR]**
- “Capital of Alienation” in *Paris: Capital of the World* **[CR]**

Week 7. April 4-7

First session. Reading the City through Verse, or the Avant-Garde in Poetry

- APOLLINAIRE (1880-1918). Selected poems from *Alcools* (1913) and *Calligrammes* (1918) with a focus on “Le pont Mirabeau” and “Zone.” **[CR]**

Second Session. Coming upon Surrealism, or the Avant-Garde in Prose

- Introducing Surrealism: Article “From Text to Performance” **[CR]**
- ARAGON (1897-1982). *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926), translated as *Paris Peasant*.

*** Short paper (4-5 pages)**

Week 8. April 18-21

First Session. Deeper into Surrealist Paris

- Completion of *Paris Peasant*.
- “The Surrealists’ Quest” **[CR]**

Second Session. Life and City Intertwined

- PEREC (1936-1982). Excerpts from *La Vie mode d'emploi* (1978) **[CR]**
- Passages from *Espèces d'espaces* (1974) **[CR]**

Week 9. April 25-28

First Session. Paris Underground through the Ages.

- Excerpts from Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (1862); Gaston Leroux, *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (1910) **[CR]**

Second Session. VISIT to the Paris Sewer and/or Catacombs

***One-page outline of Term Paper due**

Week 10. May 2-5

First Session. Guest Speaker.

Olivier Morel, Paris X.

“The Parisian Literary Landscape”

Second Session. Women’s Writing in post-1968 France

- “French Feminism” by Jane Gallop **[CR]**
- “The Laugh of the Medusa” by Hélène Cixous **[CR]**

Week 11. May 9-12

First Session. Guest Speaker.

Zahia Rahmani, Institut national d’histoire de l’art. “Paris and the Post-Colonial Writer”

Second Session. The Immigrant’s Experience in Paris

- BEYALA (1961-). *Le Petit Prince de Belleville* (1992), *Loukoum, The ‘Little Prince’ of Belleville* . **[CR]**

Week 12. May 16-19

First Session. The Immigrant’s Experience in Paris – Part II.

- BEYALA completed.

Second Session. VISIT to Belleville

Last week of classes and final exams . May 23-26

First Session. Review for final exam

***Term Paper due**

Second Session. Final exam