PARIS, CAPITAL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This course could be taught in French or in English. I have calibrated the length and frequency of the papers according to the former possibility. Nonetheless, for the reader’s convenience, all the works cited here are given in their English translation, except for a few texts that have not been translated. A French version of the present document is available upon request at pdetholozany@wellesley.edu or on my teaching portfolio website at www.pdetholozany.weebly.com.

SUMMARY

In his famous essay Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century, Benjamin makes of Paris the emblematic space of modern life: a space shaped by industrial capitalism, new forms of leisure, ever-changing fashions, codes, and tastes. This course will take Benjamin and Baudelaire’s writings on Paris as a point of departure in order to explore the concept of modernity and the interrogations that it triggered. We will look at the ways in which modern city life challenged individual and collective identities, redesigning and in many ways blurring the boundaries between the subject and his environment. The second half of the semester will be dedicated to major novels from the period by Balzac, Flaubert, and Zola. These texts all deal extensively with the capital as a space of both endless possibilities and dangerous alienation, Paris becoming a site of attraction that typically pulls their characters away from tranquil provincial life and draws them into the whirl of modernity.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at every meeting and completion in due time of the assigned readings are mandatory. Work in this class will consist of active class participation, a presentation, two short response papers on the readings assigned, a midterm paper (5-7 pages) and a final paper (10-12 pages) due on December 15th. The grade will be calculated as follows:

Final paper: 35%  Class participation: 15%
Short response papers: 25%  Presentation: 10%
Midterm paper: 15%

SCHEDULE

Reading marked with an asterisk are pdfs available online, either through Gallica (G) or the Brown University Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century (PC) website.
WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

- General introduction of the course and its objectives.
- Presentation of digital resources: Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century website and Gallica.
- In-class discussion of prints by Gavarni and Daumier.

WEEK 2: PARIS, CAPITAL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY


RECOMMENDED:

PARISIAN IDENTITIES: FLÂNERIES IN THE CITY

WEEK 3: PARISIAN CROWDS AND FIGURES


RECOMMENDED:
- Prendergast, “Framing the City: Two Parisian Windows” section II, in Paris and the Nineteenth Century (36-40).

WEEK 4: REPRESENTING MODERN LIFE

- * Meryon, Etchings of Paris (22 plates)
- J. A. Hiddleston, “From landscape to the painting of modern life” in Baudelaire and the art of memory, 192-221 (on Meryon and Guys).

RECOMMENDED:

WEEK 5: THE FLÂNEUR: PHYSIOLOGIES AND PANORAMIC LITERATURE


RECOMMENDED:
- Keith Tester, ed. *The flâneur*.

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**WEEK 6: GRAPHIC PHANTASMAGORIAS**

Mid-term paper due

- * Honoré Daumier, Selections from the *Types parisiens*, and *Les cent Robert Macaire*.

RECOMMENDED:

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**WRITING THE CITY: PARISIAN NOVELS**

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**WEEK 7. LOST ILLUSIONS (1)**


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**WEEK 8. LOST ILLUSIONS (2)**


RECOMMENDED:
- Lukacs, George. “Balzac, Lost Illusions” in *Studies on European Realism*.

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**WEEK 9: A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION**

- Gustave Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education*, Part I & Part II, Chapters 1, 2, 3.

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**WEEK 10: A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION (2)**

- Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education*, Part II Chapters 4, 5, 6 & Part III.

RECOMMENDED:
**WEEK 11: THE LADIES’ DELIGHT: DEPARTMENT STORES AND CONSUMPTION**
- Emile Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (The Ladies’ Delight) (1)

**WEEK 12: THE LADIES’ DELIGHT: DEPARTMENT STORES AND CONSUMPTION (2)**
- Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (The Ladies’ Delight) (2)

**RECOMMENDED:**

**WEEK 13: THE SEWERS OF PARIS: LES MISÉRABLES**
- Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*. Part Five, Books 1 (« The Intestine of the Leviathan ») and 2 (« Mud but the Soul »).

**CONCLUSION**

**WEEK 14: CHILDREN OF PARADISE: A TWENTIETH-CENTURY REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY**

**RECOMMENDED:**

Final paper due one week after classes end.