

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 pdetholo@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%

Short response papers: 25%

Midterm paper: 15%

Class participation: 15%

Presentation: 10%

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.
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WEEK 2: PARIS, CAPITAL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

- Walter Benjamin, *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century* in *The Arcades Project*, 3-13.
- Benjamin, "The flâneur" in *The Writer of Modern Life*, 66-96.
- Margaret Cohen. "Walter Benjamin's Phantasmagoria." *New German Critique*, 1989, 87-107.

RECOMMENDED:

- Karl Marx. *Capital* I, "Commodities and money," especially section 4 in Chapter 1, "The Fetishism of Commodities and Secret Thereof," 163-177.
- Christopher Prendergast, "Parisian Identities" in *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, 1-30.

PARISIAN IDENTITIES: FLÂNERIES IN THE CITY

WEEK 3: PARISIAN CROWDS AND FIGURES

- Charles Baudelaire, "Parisian Scenes" in *The Flowers of Evil*, transl. James N. McGowan Engl/French edition, 86-214.
- Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen*, transl. Louise Varese.

RECOMMENDED:

- Benjamin, "Modernity" in "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," *The Writer of Modern Life, Essays on Charles Baudelaire* (96-128).
 - Prendergast, "Framing the City: Two Parisian Windows" section II, in *Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (36-40).
 - Prendergast, "The High View: Three Cityscapes" section III, *ibid*, (59-66).
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WEEK 4: REPRESENTING MODERN LIFE

- Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, 1-41.
- * 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:

- Baudelaire, "Landscapes," Salon of 1859, in *Art in Paris, 1845-1862: salons and other exhibitions*.
 - Edgar Poe. "The Man of the Crowd"/transl. Baudelaire, "L'homme des foules."
 - Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" sections V, VI, VII, 181-190.
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WEEK 5: THE FLÂNEUR: PHYSIOLOGIES AND PANORAMIC LITERATURE

- * P.J. Stahl, "Ce que c'est qu'un passant" in *Le Diable à Paris*, 69-73.
- * *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*. Introduction (Jules Janin), Monographie du rentier (Balzac), Le flâneur, (de La Croix).
- * Louis Huard & Daumier, "Le flâneur," *La bibliothèque pour rire*, 10-16.

- * Mary Gluck, "The flâneur and the aesthetic appropriation of urban culture in mid nineteenth-century Paris," in *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 53-80.

RECOMMENDED:

- Walter Benjamin, Convolute Q, *Panorama*, in *Arcades Project*, 527-536.
- Keith Tester, ed. *The flâneur*.
- Margaret Cohen, "Panoramic Literature and the Invention of Everyday Genres," in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, 227-252.

WEEK 6: GRAPHIC PHANTASMAGORIAS

Mid-term paper due

- * J.J. Grandville. *Un autre monde*, 29-75, 97-104, & 137-147.
- * Gavarni. "Les lorettes vieilles," "La vie de jeune homme," "Le carnaval" in *Masques et visages*; "Gens de Paris" in *Le Diable à Paris* (selection).
- * Honoré Daumier, Selections from the *Types parisiens*, and *Les cent Robert Macaire*.

RECOMMENDED:

- Baudelaire. "Some French Caricaturists" in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, 166-186.
- Benjamin. *The ring of Saturn*, in *The Arcades Project*, 885-7.
- Benjamin. Convolute M, "le flâneur" in *The Arcades Project*, 416-455.

WRITING THE CITY: PARISIAN NOVELS

WEEK 7. *LOST ILLUSIONS* (1)

- Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions*, Part I: *The Two Poets*, excerpt, and Part II: *A Provincial Celebrity in Paris*, 153-265.

WEEK 8. *LOST ILLUSIONS* (2)

- Balzac, *Lost Illusions*, Part II: *A Provincial Celebrity in Paris*, 266-488

RECOMMENDED:

- Lukacs, George. "Balzac, Lost Illusions" in *Studies on European Realism*.
- Peter Brooks, "Balzac invents the nineteenth century," *Realist Vision*, p 21-39.

WEEK 9: *A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION*

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

WEEK 10: *A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION* (2)

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

RECOMMENDED:

- Prenderghast, "Insurrection" in *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, 111-125.

WEEK 11: *THE LADIES' DELIGHT*: DEPARTMENT STORES AND CONSUMPTION

- Emile Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Delight*) (1)
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WEEK 12: *THE LADIES' DELIGHT*: DEPARTMENT STORES AND CONSUMPTION (2)

- Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (*The Ladies' Delight*) (2)
- Michael B. Miller, "Introduction" in *The Bon Marché*, 3-16.

RECOMMENDED:

- Rosalind H. Williams. *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, especially "1. Implications of the Consumer Revolution," 1-15.
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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

- Marcel Carné, *Children of Paradise* (film).

RECOMMENDED:

- Edward Baron Turk, "The Design of Children of Paradise," in *Child of Paradise: Marcel Carné and the Golden Age of French Cinema*, 219-244.

Final paper due one week after classes end.