

Spring, 2011

T-Th 11- 12:30 Garrison 0.128

Judith Coffin, Associate Professor, History

Garrison 2.122

Office hours Thursday 1-4 and by appointment: [jcoffin@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:jcoffin@austin.utexas.edu) (475-7235)<sup>1</sup>

## HISTORY 354 (39785): FRANCE IN MODERN TIMES

This course surveys the major themes of French history from 1914 to 1962, with an emphasis on World Wars 1 and 2 and their legacies.

Paris has been called “the capital of the nineteenth century,” and for most of the nineteenth century, France stood as a beacon of democracy, liberalism (in the sense of individual rights and the rule of law), and European culture. In the first half of the twentieth century, France provided one of the most dramatic cases of the sudden and devastating collapse of all that – and of political polarization, the corrosive effects of the Great Depression, xenophobia, and authoritarianism.

How did France (and Europe) collapse? How did the country (and the continent) recover? We will look at the costs of victory in World War I, France’s defeat in 1940, collaboration and resistance, and the war’s difficult aftermath. Throughout this period, France was an empire as well as a nation-state and we will study how the empire and its violent dissolution, especially the Algerian war, have mattered to creating the country we will visit in May.

The following books are available at the Coop:

- Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*
- Hélène Berr, *The Journal of Hélène Berr*
- Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French*
- Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*
- Alice Kaplan, *French Lessons*

Additional required reading is available on Blackboard.

The following films, shown outside of class, are also required:

- *Life and Nothing But* (Bertrand Tavernier, 1989)
- *Army of Shadows* (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1969)
- *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966) note date: April 13, 6 pm
- *Hate (La Haine)*(Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995)

Course requirements:

- **Attendance** (see Normandy program regulations): **10%**
- **Discussions of reading, lectures, and films: 20 %** Since this is a small class, participation and *quality* of participation matters. Listen to each other. Be prepared to summarize another person’s argument, especially

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<sup>1</sup> For useful tips on how to email, see: <http://educationaladvocates.blogspot.com/2010/08/email-etiquette-what-students-need-to.html> or <http://www.101emailtippetips.com/>

when you disagree with it. Bring everyone in to the discussion.

In-class writing, quizzes, and occasional short assignments: **20%**

- **Short research paper. 50%.** This paper will be 11-12 pages, and biographical in focus. Each of you will choose one of the figures we deal with in the course: Beauvoir, Blum, Camus, Clouzot, de Gaulle, Duras, Fanon, Koestler (he's not French, but that's OK, so is Orwell), Lanzmann, Melville, and Pétain would all be good choices. You need to clear your choice with me. The paper should be based on 3-4 books and perhaps 3-4 articles. Whenever possible, your sources should include that person's memoirs, which you analyze with some care. The work includes a short presentation to the class on the week that we deal with your person. If you choose Clouzot, for instance, who made films during the Occupation, you would present when we see *The Raven*. (Some of you will have to get going early in the semester, but that's a good thing.) That presentation is not formal, but it does need to be good, and counts for 10% of the paper grade. The rest of the grade is based on the thoroughness of your research, the quality of your analysis, and the organization and clarity of your writing. The paper is due Thursday, April 28.

#### Course policies

- -Please come on time and check the attendance sheet every class.
- -No laptops or mobile phones in the classroom.
- -I use +/- grades (for example A-, C+, etc.).
- -Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations.  
<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>
- -It is easy to copy from the web. It's also easy to catch. I will give you a zero for the paper.
- On academic dishonesty, see <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>; on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

#### SCHEDULE OF READINGS, FILMS, LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS

Schedules and readings almost inevitably change, so keep up with announcements in class and check your email.

#### **Week One (Jan 18 and 20): Paris, Capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

Reading: Begin Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*

#### **Week Two (Jan 25 and 27): The Great War**

Reading: John Keegan, *The First World War*: ch 3, "The Crisis of 1914" (optional), ch 4, "The Battle of the Frontiers and the Marne" (required), for Tuesday;

Keegan, ch 8, "The Year of Battles" (required, but concentrate on Verdun and the Somme) for Thursday.

Continue Beauvoir, *Memoirs*

Jan 31 *Life and Nothing But* in film series

#### **Week Three (Feb 1 and 3): A Haunted Peace**

Reading: Modris Eksteins, *The Rites of Spring*, ch 9 "Memory," for Tuesday;

Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, pp 3-35 and 366-426 for Thursday.

**Week Four (Feb 8): Gender and Cultural Change**

Reading: finish Beauvoir for discussion Tuesday. What historical events mattered most to her life and why? (Think about the relationship between public and private.) How important are her family background, social class, and gender in this story?

No class Thursday. Decide on your paper topic and email me a short description and bibliography.

**Week Five (Feb 15 and 17): Fascism and anti-fascism**

Reading: Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," *Journal of Modern History* 70, 1 (March 1998): 1-23. (Blackboard)

**Week Six (Feb 22-24): Appeasement and its failure**

Reading: Arthur Koestler, *Scum of the Earth*, 19-140 (Blackboard)  
Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French*, intro (quickly) and chs 1-2

**Week Seven (March 1 and 3) Living in Vichy France**

Reading: Vinen, *The Unfree French*, chs 3-4  
*The Journal of Hélene Berr*, section on 1942

March 7 Film: *Army of Shadows*

**Week Eight (March 8 and 10) Dying in Vichy France**

Reading: finish *The Journal of Hélene Berr*, including the back material, for Thursday.

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 14-17**

**Week Nine (March 22 and 24) Collaboration? Resistance?**

Clouzot, *The Raven* in class

Reading: Albert Camus, "Letters to A German Friend" in Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*. Pay careful attention to when each essay was written,

**Week Ten (March 29 and 31) Liberation and Retribution**

Reading: Vinen, *The Unfree French*, ch 10 and conclusion

**Week Eleven (April 5 and 7) Existentialism and postwar culture**

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, introduction. I have posted the first 5-6 pages. The entire introduction is at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/introduction.htm>

**Week Twelve (April 12 and 14) The Algerian War**

Reading: Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, "Algeria," 111-153

FILM: Battle of Algiers, 6 pm Wed April 13.

**Week Thirteen (April 19 and 21) “Frenchness”**

Reading: Vanessa Schwartz, *It's So French*, ch 1 “The Belle Époque That Never Ended: Frenchness and the Can-Can Film of the 1950s”

April 25 film: *La Haine*

**Week Fourteen (April 26 and 28) Frenchness**

Reading: Gerard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, pp 1-10, for Tuesday.

**Thursday: final papers due**

**Week Fifteen (May 3 and 5) Being there**

reading: Kaplan, *French Lessons*