

OXFORD COLLEGE of Emory University
Humanities Division

Matthew Moyle, PhD
matthew.moyle@emory.edu • 4-4673
Language 111 • 10:45-11:45 MTuWF
fren388.matthewmoyle.com

French 388R – Topics in French Literature and Culture
Spring 2016 • 8:30-9:20 MWF • Language Hall 102

Topographies

À mesure que les années passent, chaque quartier, chaque rue d'une ville, évoque un souvenir, une rencontre, un chagrin, un moment de bonheur. Et souvent, la même rue est liée pour vous à des souvenirs successifs, si bien que grâce à la topographie d'une ville, c'est toute votre vie qui vous revient à la mémoire, par couches successives, comme si vous pouviez déchiffrer les écritures superposées d'un palimpseste. Et aussi la vie des autres, de ces milliers et milliers d'inconnus, croisés dans les rues ou dans les couloirs du métro aux heures de pointe.

– Patrick Modiano
Conférence Nobel, 7 décembre 2014

Introduction and course objectives: Places are living things, filled with the sights, sounds, and smells of the contemporary moment, the breaths of inhabitants, and, as Modiano puts it, “the writings and overwritings of a palimpsest.” The lived experience of creators is marked by this full meaning of place, and these marks can, in many cases, be discerned in their works. In this course, students will deepen their knowledge of literary texts by comparing the description of places in novels with the place itself and they will extend their study of 20th century art by seeing paintings up close in museums as well as experiencing places frequented by the artists.

While the course’s orientation is thus broadly thematic, and we will focus particularly on questions of place in each work, our analyses will be based on the formal structures of the works and our insights should not be limited to the themes of the course. Our primary mode of inquiry will be the careful reading of a set of texts and reflection on them through discussion and writing.

The course also aims to improve language skills. It is hoped that by the end of the course, students will be more confident readers, attentive to nuance and style, while also improving their conversational fluency, pronunciation, as well as grammatical and lexical accuracy both orally and on the page. Within the limits imposed by the short length of the trip, students will also deepen their knowledge of and fluency with French language and culture by *being there*.

Of the twelve objectives of higher education identified by the IDEA Center (<www.theideacenter.org>), this course primarily contributes to these: 1) *Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classification, methods, trends)*; 7) *Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of [French-language] intellectual and cultural activity*; 8) *Developing skill in*

expressing oneself orally or in writing: learning how to speak and write about literature in French as well as giving you new insights into English and/or your first language; 9) Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems: becoming independent readers of complicated texts and learning how to conduct research in literature; and 11) Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view: especially constructing such an analysis in clear and persuasive prose.

This course is part of the Humanities, Arts, and Language component of Oxford's general education program. It also counts toward both the minor and the major in French at Emory College.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor. French 203, French 314, a score of 4 or 5 on the AP French exam, or equivalent experience suggest readiness for the course. Students concurrently enrolled in French 203 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Texts to purchase:

- Louis ARAGON, *Le Paysan de Paris*. 1926. Paris: Gallimard (Folio), 2009. ISBN 978-2-07-036782-5.
- Jean-Marie Gustave LE CLÉZIO, *Mondo et autres histoires*. 1978. Paris: Gallimard (FolioPlus), 2006. ISBN 978-2-07-033785-9.
- Patrick MODIANO, *Dora Bruder*. 1997. Paris: Gallimard (Folio), 1999. ISBN 978-2-07-040848-1.

Other readings to be distributed in class and/or posted on the course website from André Breton, Sylvie Germain, Le Clézio, Modiano, Régine Robin, and other secondary sources.

Assessment:

Présence, préparation, participation (30%)

This is a discussion-based course which functions best when each student comes to class prepared to carefully engage with the texts and the ideas, worlds, and cultures that they come from and create.

You should **read well**: There will be daily readings from texts in the corpus. The introductory material in each edition will help you identify and situate authors and texts. Use of other secondary sources is not ordinarily required for daily discussions; instead, you are asked to carefully read, and reread, texts in order to be able to discuss them thoughtfully. It is not necessary to understand every word – remember to rely on context and other lexical strategies in your first reading, before going back and rereading more closely sections that you identify as particularly important. Poems should be read ALOUD at least once.

You should **question well**: Keep track of comprehension questions that you come across: important words that you didn't understand, sections that didn't make sense, or anything else. No question is too basic. In addition, I will, especially in the early part of the term, post discussion questions before each class. These questions are meant to guide your reading and provoke in-class discussions. It is therefore suggested that notes be jotted down before class to ensure that you can actively engage in discussion. In any case, there are no incorrect answers, and students should never hesitate to venture a response or contribution – however tentative – as it is especially by this activity that literary texts come alive.

You should, therefore, **participate frequently**: Active participation in class discussions (and therefore, regular attendance) is indispensable for successful completion of the course.

In practical terms, 10 points are assigned for in-class participation each day, according to the following approximate scale:

- 10: you are present, fully engaged, well-prepared, and participating willingly in small- and large-group discussions.
- 8-9: You mostly meet the above standards but there is room for improvement.
- 6-7: Infrequent participation or evidence of poor preparation.
- 5 or less: Infrequent participation AND evidence of poor preparation. Evidence of disengagement (cell phone use, working on other homework, sleeping...).
- 0: absent.

Participation points are also deducted for arriving late, leaving early, or leaving and returning. Please also refer to the separate document *Standards for Mutual Respect*, incorporated by reference into this syllabus.

TWICE only during the semester, you may turn in a written response to a discussion question or questions (1 page long, due at the next class) in lieu of presence for a maximum of 7.5 points. Absences beyond two forfeit all points.

NOTE: Some class sessions may be replaced by one-on-one meetings with me; missing such a meeting without giving advance notice will count as an absence.

Petits travaux écrits (20%)

You will write 4 **short essays** -- either responses to a specific question or open-ended. There will at least one assignment that everyone writes; beyond this, I will propose 5-6 paper prompts, and you will be required to complete **three** of these. Written work will be graded according to the following approximate rubric:

- A: clear, coherent, and compelling argument that closely engages with the text and fully addresses the assignment parameters, written with careful attention to correct expression in French.
- B: the paper has a clear argument that is only partially supported, only partially addresses the assignment, OR is written in comprehensible French, but there are sufficient errors to suggest a rushed composition.
- C: more than one of the issues named under “B;” argument difficult to determine, issues in expression that partially interfere with understanding of the paper.
- D: more than one of the issues mentioned under “C.”
- F: the paper fails to even remotely address the prompt, shows a complete lack of effort.

In most cases, you may resubmit these essays with corrections for an improved grade.

Analyse d'un lieu (10%)

I will ask you to choose a relatively specific place treated in one of the works we study and carefully analyze both its role within the story (as a setting or theme) and the form and style of its description. This will be completed by a reflection on the actual place when we travel to France in May.

Examens (10%)

Two exams will be given, at approximately the fifth and tenth week, consisting of identification, short-answer and/or essay questions over the works studied. There will be no final exam.

En voyage (30%)

This course includes a trip to the Côte d'Azur and Paris from May 7th-15th. Your grade for this experience will be based on your participation; specifically in daily discussions but also your engagement in the program more generally (15%), and three assignments (15%): 1 – a continuation of the “Analyse d'un lieu” above; 2 – a creative work (short fiction, poem, essay, drawing...) rooted in one of the places we visit; 3 – a journal of your thoughts and reactions.

Grading Scale: 93-100%: A; 90-92: A-; 88-89: B+; 84-87: B; 80-83: B-; 78-79: C+; 74-77: C; 70-73: C-; 68-69: D+; 60-67: D; 59 or less.

A word on academic integrity:

Students are expected to be familiar with, and to strictly abide by the Oxford College Honor Code. In the context of this course, please be aware that the following are considered “unauthorized assistance,” and therefore constitute academic misconduct (see Honor Code, art. 1, A.3.):

- 1) The use of online or automated translators in ANY written or oral work.
- 2) Having a more advanced student or native speaker correct or complete assignments. (I want to see YOUR French, mistakes and all.)
- 3) The recycling of your own or other people's work.
- 4) Using the words or ideas of another person (such as you might find in a secondary source) without specifically citing the author and work where those ideas are found. See also *On the Citation of Sources*, incorporated into this syllabus by reference.

The normal penalty for a first offense of academic misconduct is a grade of 'F' in the course.

If you have a documented disability, please arrange for the office of Access and Disability Resources (Murphy Hall, <ods.emory.edu>) to send me a letter detailing any necessary accommodations, then see me to discuss it.

Kindly note the following: “Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.”

Pour le bien-être de tous... please refrain from eating or chewing gum, silence and stow cell phones, participate with enthusiasm, ask questions when you have them, and do all you can to contribute to the learning experience.

Programme précis provisoire

le mercredi 13 janvier	introduction au cours extrait d'un entretien radio entre Christophe Ono-dit-Biot et Anselm Kiefer (<i>Le Temps des écrivains</i> , France Culture, 5 décembre 2015)
le vendredi 15 janvier	Stephen Henderson, « Where are we ? »
le lundi 18 janvier fête de Martin Luther King, Jr.	
le mercredi 20 janvier	Patrick Modiano, Conférence prononcée lors de la remise du Prix Nobel en littérature, 7 décembre 2014
le vendredi 22 janvier	Sylvie Germain, <i>La Pleurante des rues de Prague</i> , pp. 15-36, 47-51
le lundi 25 janvier	<i>La Pleurante des rues de Prague</i> , pp. 81-92, 114-117
le mercredi 27 janvier premier travail écrit à rendre	Henri Behar « Le Paris des surréalistes » (<i>Guide du Paris surréaliste</i> , pp. 5-21) André Breton, <i>Nadja</i> , pp. 24-38
le vendredi 29 janvier	<i>Nadja</i> , pp. 71-103
le lundi 1 ^{er} février	Aragon, <i>Le paysan de Paris</i> , pp. 19-49 (jusqu'à « ...avec son épouse »)
le mercredi 3 février	<i>Le paysan de Paris</i> , pp. 49-84 (« le guichet que voici »)
le vendredi 5 février deuxième travail écrit à rendre	<i>Le paysan de Paris</i> , pp. 84-120 (+/-)
le lundi 8 février	visite de la professeur Cottrell <i>Le paysan de Paris</i> , pp. 120-155 (+/-)
le mercredi 10 février	<i>Le paysan de Paris</i> , pp. 155-190 (+/-)
le vendredi 12 février	<i>Le paysan de Paris</i> , pp. 190-229 (+/-)
le lundi 15 février	Robert Desnos, « Sol de Compiègne » et « Le Veilleur du Pont-au-Change »
le mercredi 17 février	Julian Hale, <i>The French Riviera : A Cultural History</i> , chs. 7-8 (pp. 111-163)

le vendredi 19 février premier examen	
le lundi 22 février troisième travail écrit à rendre	visite de la professeur Cottrell
le mercredi 24 février	films : <i>A propos de Nice</i> (J. Vigo, 1930) <i>Du côté de la côte</i> (A. Varda, 1958)
le vendredi 26 février	J.-M.G. Le Clézio, « Mondo » (<i>Mondo et autres histoires</i>), jusqu'à « ...Mondo était déjà parti. »
le lundi 29 février	« Mondo », à partir de « Il y avait des feux... »
le mercredi 2 mars	Le Clézio, « Lullaby » (<i>Mondo et autres histoires</i>)
le vendredi 4 mars	Le Clézio, « Celui qui n'avait jamais vu la mer » (<i>Mondo et autres histoires</i>) Bruno Thibault, « La ville de Nice en mots et en images » (<i>A propos de Nice</i> , pp. 83-99)
les 7-11 mars vacances du printemps	
le lundi 14 mars	Le Clézio, <i>Étoile errante</i> , pp. 15-52
le mercredi 16 mars quatrième travail écrit à rendre	<i>Étoile errante</i> , pp. 53-93
le vendredi 18 mars pas de cours	
le lundi 21 mars	Madeleine Borgomano, « Nice et son arrière-pays » (<i>À propos de Nice</i> , pp. 17-32)
le mercredi 23 mars	Maryline Desbiolles, <i>Ce n'est pourtant pas la guerre</i> , extrait
le vendredi 25 mars	Patrick Modiano, <i>Dora Bruder</i> , pp. 7-35 (jusqu'à « impasse des Chiens »)
le lundi 28 mars cinquième travail écrit à rendre	<i>Dora Bruder</i> , pp. 35-59 (« l'étau qui va se resserrer sur vous »)
le mercredi 30 mars	<i>Dora Bruder</i> , pp. 60-87 (« et elle est française »)
le vendredi 1 ^{er} avril	<i>Dora Bruder</i> , pp. 87-111 (« à la porte des Lilas »)
le lundi 4 avril	visite de la professeur Cottrell
le mercredi 6 avril	<i>Dora Bruder</i> , 112-145

le vendredi 8 avril	rattrapages/révisions
le lundi 11 avril deuxième examen	
le mercredi 13 avril sixième et/ou septième travaux écrits à rendre	Régine Robin, <i>Le Mal de Paris</i> , pp. 75-90 ; 91-104
le vendredi 16 avril	<i>Le Mal de Paris</i> , 104-139 ; 186-197
le lundi 18 avril	Jacques Réda, « La petite porte bleue » (<i>Ruines de Paris</i> , pp. 74-99)
le mercredi 20 avril analyse d'un lieu à rendre	Alain Mabanckou, <i>Black Bazar</i> , extrait
le vendredi 22 avril	rattrapages, conclusions
le lundi 25 avril huitième travail écrit à rendre	conclusions

le jeudi 28 avril, 9h00-12h00 : pre-trip orientation

voyage en France : itinéraire provisoire

le samedi 7 mai	départ de l'aéroport d'Atlanta (20h45)
le dimanche 8 mai	arrivée à l'aéroport de Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle (11h10) voyage à Nice par TGV (13h58-20h37)
le lundi 9 mai	matinée : Fondation Maeght (Saint-Paul-de-Vence) après-midi : Musée Chagall (Nice)
le mardi 10 mai	matinée : Saint-Martin-Vésubie après-midi : le Nice de Le Clézio
le mercredi 11 mai	matinée : Musée Picasso (Antibes) après-midi : choix d'excursions
le jeudi 12 mai	voyage à Paris par TGV (06h52-12h53) promenade : quais de la Seine
le vendredi 13 mai	matinée : le Paris des surréalistes ; espace Dali après-midi libre
le samedi 14 mai	matinée : choix d'excursions après-midi : le Paris de Modiano
le dimanche 15 mai	fin du programme vers 10h00 départ pour l'aéroport pour la plupart des étudiants

Bibliographie

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- Desbiolles, Maryline. *Ce n'est pourtant pas la guerre*. Paris : Le Seuil, 2007.
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