



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

CAS LF 342 Paris Aujourd'hui

Credits:4

Instructors: Elisabeth Montfort-Siewert (siewert@bu.edu) & Hanadi Sobh (hsobh@bu.edu)

Course schedule: 17 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks
(Monday & Wednesday – 12:30 to 3 pm + 2 additional sessions)

Additional required activities:

- Two visits: “*Sur les traces d’Edith Piaf*” & a guided visit in Paris with *Set in Paris* to see the real-life locations that inspired some of the world's popular and universal stories.
- Two film viewings in Parisian movie theaters
- Two theater outings
- One optional outing to the *Comédie Française*

Office hours: Monday 3:00-3:30 (Hanadi), Wednesday 3:00-4:00 (Elisabeth)

Course material

Course pack:

Required readings and worksheets are included in a course pack to be purchased by the student. All required films are available on DVD at the BU Paris Center; students may also watch films online with their personal Netflix or Amazon Prime subscriptions.

Required films:

- *Dheepan* (Jacques Audiard, 2015)
- *Arrête ton cinéma !* (Diane Kurys, 2016)

Films for cinema project:

- *Marguerite* (Xavier Giannoli, 2015)
- *La famille Bélier* (Eric Lartigau, 2014)
- *Qu’est-ce qu’on a fait au Bon Dieu* (Philippe de Chauveron, 2014)
- *Yves Saint-Laurent* (Jalil Lespert, 2014)
- *Saint-Laurent* (Bertrand Bonello, 2014)
- *Les combattants* (Thomas Cailley, 2014)

Plays studied in class:

- *Et pendant ce temps Simone veille* (Corinne Berron et Hélène Serres)
- *L’être ou pas* (Jean-Claude Grumberg)

I. COURSE PRESENTATION AND OUTCOMES

The performing arts form a window to a culture, a civilization, a mentality. They help us penetrate the cultural intimacy of a people, making us discover not only the essential subjects of a society, but also the unique ways to address, to express and to contemplate these subjects. This course combines several elements: diverse forms of expression (theater, film, song), diverse time periods (from the 1920s to today), and diverse aspects of a work (style, themes, sociocultural context).

Amongst all of this diversity, students will surely find common approaches. Students are thus encouraged to surpass the formal separations between various components of the course to identify the similarities between the past, the present, between the plays, films and songs, both in the themes addressed and the ways of thinking. Beyond thinking whether or not they like a work,



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

students should ask themselves how it is typically French. They should use this course as a cultural experience that will enable them to discover that which really concerns the French people today.

The course is structurally divided into two sections: theater, and music and film. Classes will alternate between these two sections with additional outings to view films, attend theatrical performances, and visit sites in the city related to its theatrical, musical, and cinematic history. The study of the works themselves (plays, movies, song lyrics) will be supplemented by the reading of critical articles.

This course of study will help students live in present-day Paris, understand current issues, and live more like real Parisians.

The course, including additional seminars and visits, is conducted entirely in French.

Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have developed

- basic knowledge of
 - major French popular music movements, from the 1920's to present day, and of their main characteristics (*Roaring Twenties, chanson réaliste, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, protest songs, techno-house, slam, la nouvelle scène française*);
 - the history of French theater from the Middle Ages to present day;
- in-depth knowledge of
 - a number of songs written by major French singers from 1950 to present day, through the in-class analysis of lyrics, meaning, impact, public perception;
 - two contemporary theater plays which they will have integrally read and analyzed before seeing them performed;
 - several recent films which they will have seen and analyzed, collectively or individually, reflecting both on their inner structure and content and on the responses they inspire to the public, be it French or American;
- a concrete experience of Paris, of its cultural and artistic popular history, through group visits, outings to the cinema or the theater, meetings with actors, authors or directors, individual cultural site explorations for oral presentations;
- the ability to build a formal critical argumentation (oral or written), and to debate about text characteristics or implications ;
- a subtle understanding of the French way of thinking, society and culture, allowing a better integration in the Parisian environment and a clearer perspective on personal intercultural experience.

II. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Exams (2): 37.5%

The midterm exam (12.5%) will cover the theater component of the first half of the course, while the final exam (25%) will cover the latter half of the theater component as well as the song texts studied throughout the semester.

Film report: 12.5%

Students will choose a French film from a list and write a paper (2-4 pages) reacting to and analyzing the film's themes and images. The paper will be graded based on the student's understanding of the film in general, the pertinence of the analysis, and the organization and effort of expression. All the films are available in the DVD library at the BU Paris center.



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

Theater presentation: 10%

Working in groups or alone, students will prepare a presentation of about 15 minutes on a given subject related to contemporary French theater and its public reception: the administration of the Comédie Française and its treatment in the press, Ionesco and the Théâtre de la Huchette, Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil, etc.

Music presentation: 10%

Working in groups, students will present a French song and their reaction to and analysis of it, treating as both a lyrical text and a historical and cultural moment. The 10-12 minute presentation will be followed by a class discussion led by the presenting students.

Participation, effort, and progress: 30%

Included in this grade is weekly homework, which involves reading texts (song lyrics and plays) and completing worksheets to ensure comprehension and prepare class discussion. This grade also takes into account the quality of a student's presence in class, energy, relevance of comments, effort and progress in language proficiency, and attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Policy

1 absence (class session or activity) = -1 point on the overall grade

4 or more unexcused absences = grade of F for the course

Missed assignment or test = grade of 0 for the assignment

Plagiarism on an assignment = grade of 0 for the assignment

NB: Excused absences must be justified by a doctor's note or a scheduled internship interview.

Plagiarism (BU Policy)

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on the examinations or for plagiarism may be 'expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean.' Read the full Academic Conduct Code online at <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>.

III. Calendar

Additional readings and homework may be assigned in class each day.

Session 1

- **VISIT:** Set in Paris, a walking tour

Session 2 (Music and cinema)

- Presentation of the course
- The evolution of the *chanson française* from 1920 to today, part I
- How do we analyze the *chanson française*? Practical tools and discussion of the current musical phenomena in France
 - For Session 4:
 - Listen to songs by Calogero, Grand Corps Malade and Chrys Nammour and answer the questions on p. 9-11



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

Session 3 (Theater)

- Presentation of the course
- Theatrical vocabulary, essential themes and topics
- *Pariscope* and contemporary theater in Paris
- Historical and theoretical overview: Western theater from the Middle Ages to the 20th century

Session 4 (Music and cinema)

- Jacques Audiard and the genre movie
- Introduction to *Dheepan* (Jacques Audiard, 2015)
- The evolution of the *chanson française* from 1920 to today, part II
- Music presentation 1: At the heart of current events, Calogero, Grand Corps Malade & Chrys Nammour
 - For Session 5:
 - Complete the worksheet handed out on *Dheepan*
 - Lecture n°1: « Cannes 2015 : *Dheepan*, le film Palme d'Or de Jacques Audiard », article de Christophe Guyon, mai 2015, www.oblikon.net (2 pages)
 - For Session 7:
 - Listen to the selected songs by Thomas Dutronc and Oxmo Puccino and answer the questions on p. 15-17

CINEMA OUTING <i>Dheepan</i>
--

Session 5 (Music and cinema)

- *Dheepan*: Group discussion and debate

Session 6 (Theater)

- *Et pendant ce temps Simone veille* (first part) Presentation and analysis.

Session 7 (Music and cinema)

- The evolution of the *chanson française* from 1920 to today, part III
- The evolution of Paris as a musical theme: from *guinguette* to rap
- Lecture n°2: « *Paris en chansons* » by Christian Marcadet, Chapter « Espaces symboliques et mythologie de Paris » (p.154-160)
- Music presentation 2: Scenes of Parisian life, Thomas Dutronc & Oxmo Puccino
 - For Session 9:
 - Listen to the selected songs by Edith Piaf and Serge Gainsbourg and answer the questions on p. 21-23

Session 8 (Theater)

- *Et pendant ce temps Simone veille* (second part) Presentation and analysis.

THEATER OUTING <i>Et pendant ce temps Simone veille</i>



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

Session 9 (Music and cinema)

- Portrait of French mythic artists : from Edith Piaf to Serge Gainsbourg (Selected texts)
- Selected excerpts from *La mère* (Olivier Dahan, 2007) and *Gainsbourg - Vie héroïque* (Joann Sfar, 2010)
 - For Session 11:
 - Listen to the selected songs by Danakil and MC Solaar and answer the questions on p.25-27

Session 10 (Theater)

MIDTERM

Session 11 (Theater)

Meeting with the authors and actress from *Et pendant ce temps Simone veille*

Session 12 (Music and cinema)

- Introduction to *Arrête ton cinéma!* (Diane Kurys, 2016)
- Music presentation 3: mythical artists in the Parisian space today, Danakil & MC Solaar
 - For Session 13:
 - Complete the worksheet on *Arrête ton cinéma!*
 - Complete the worksheet related to the movie you chose, following the guidelines in the course pack

CINEMA OUTING
Arrête ton cinéma!

Session 13 (Theater)

- *L'être ou pas*. Jean-Claude Grumberg. First part : presentation and analysis

Session 14 (Music and cinema)

- *Arrête ton cinéma!* : Group discussion and debate
- Review for final exam

Session 15 (Theater)

- *L'être ou pas*. Jean-Claude Grumberg. Second part : presentation and analysis

THEATER OUTING
L'être ou pas

Session 16 (Music and cinema)

- Visit in Paris: *sur les traces d'Edith Piaf*
- Review for final exam

Session 17 (Theater)

- Theater presentations
- Review for final exam

FINAL EXAM: Last Friday



Boston University Study Abroad
Paris

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

THEATER:

Required readings

Et pendant ce temps, Simone veille ! Corinne Berron et Hélène Serres. Edition édite théâtre 2012
L Être ou pas. Jean-Claude Grumberg. Acte sud
Michel Viegnes, *Le théâtre, problématiques essentielles*, Hatier, 1992

Press and websites

Pariscope ou *l'Officiel des spectacles*
Télérama
billettereduc.com

CINEMA :

Studied films

Dheepan (Jacques Audiard, 2015)
Arrête ton cinéma! (Diane Kurys, 2016)
La famille Bélier (Eric Lartigau, 2014)
Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu de Philippe de Chauveron (2014)
Yves Saint-Laurent de Jalil Lespert (2014)
Saint-Laurent de Bertrand Bonello (2014)
Les combattants de Thomas Cailley (2014)
Marguerite (Xavier Giannoli, 2015)

Required readings

Christophe Guyon, *Cannes 2015 : Dheepan, le film Palme d'Or de Jacques Audiard* », mai 2015, www.oblikon.net

Press and websites

Studio Ciné live (magazine mensuel de cinéma)
www.allociné.fr www.lefilmfrancais.com www.lescahiersducinéma.com

MUSIC

Studied songs

Stromae:	Carmen (2015)
Calogero:	Un jour au mauvais endroit (2014)
Grand Corps Malade :	Je suis Charlie (2015)
Chrys Nammour	Paris se relève (2015)
Thomas Dutronc :	J'aime Plus Paris (2007)
Oxmo Puccino :	Pam Pa Nam (2013)
Edith Piaf :	Non, je ne regrette rien (1956)
Serge Gainsbourg :	La Javanaise (1963)
Danakil :	Non, rien de rien (2011)
MC Solaar :	Nouveau Western (1994)
Stromae:	Formidable (2013)
Oxmo Puccino :	Le vide en soi (2015)
Grand Corps Malade :	Saint-Denis (2006)
Jacques Dutronc :	Il est cinq heures, Paris s'éveille (1968)
Serge Gainsbourg :	Bonnie and Clyde (1967)

Required readings

Christian Marcadet, *Paris en chansons*, Chapitre « Espaces symboliques et mythologie de Paris » (pages 154-160)

Websites

www.lehalldelachansonfrancaise.fr www.jukebo.fr www.deezer.fr



Boston University Study Abroad

Paris

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Theater

André Degaine, *Le théâtre raconté aux jeunes*, Nizet, 2006
Michel Viegnès, *Le théâtre, problématiques essentielles*, Hatier, 1992
La littérature française, Repères pratiques, Nathan 2002
M.M Fragonard, *Précis d'histoire de la littérature française*, Didier, 1981
Raymond Queneau, *Exercices de style*, Folio
Eugène Ionesco, *La Cantatrice chauve*, Folio
Gilles Dyrek, *La touche étoile*
Jean-Michel Ribes, *Théâtre sans animaux*, Babel
Yasmina Reza, *Art*, Magnard

Cinema

Christiane Cadet, René Charles, Jean-Luc Galus, *La communication par l'image*, Nathan, Repères pratiques, 1990
F. Vanoye, F. Frey, A. Goliot-Lété, *Le Cinéma*, Nathan, Repères pratiques, 1998
Yann Darré, *Une histoire sociale du cinéma français*, édition La découverte, 2000
René Prédal, *Le cinéma français depuis 2000 - Un renouvellement incessant*, Armand Colin Cinéma, 2008

Music

Pierre Saka, Yann Plougastel, *La chanson française et francophone*, Larousse, 1999
Jacques Pessis, Emilie Leduc, Charles Aznavour, *Chronique de la chanson Française*, Relié, 2003
Marc Robine, Fred Hidalgo, *Il était une fois la chanson française, Des trouvères à nos jours*, Poche, 2006
Ludovic Perrin, Carla Bruni, *La nouvelle chanson française*, Hors Collection, Janvier 2005
Céline Fontana, *La Chanson française Histoire, interprètes, auteurs, compositeurs*, Hachette pratique, 2007
Christian Marcadet, *Paris en chansons*, Paris bibliothèques, février 2012

Cultural studies and general topics

Bernard Darras, *Images et études culturelles*. Publications de la Sorbonne
Armand Mattelart, Erik Neveu, *Introduction aux Cultural Studies*, La Découverte, Coll. Repères, 2003
Jean-Benoît Nadeau, Julie Barlow, *Pas si fous ces Français*, Ponts, 2005
Christiane Cadet, René Charles, Jean-Luc Galus, *La communication par l'image*, Nathan, Repères pratiques, 1990