CAS HI 268 / CAS LF 344 Postcolonial Paris

Credits: 4

Professor: Jean-Philippe DEDIEU (jph.dedieu@wanadoo.fr)
Schedule: 16 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks
(Tuesday & Thursday – 9:30 to 12 pm + 2 additional sessions)
Office hours: Tuesday 12-12:30, and by appointment
Course visits:
- Musée du Quai Branly
- Paris mosque in the Latin quarter
- Parisian neighborhood la Goutte d’Or
- Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration

Course material:
- A course pack with all required readings (to be purchased by each student).

I. COURSE PRESENTATION AND OUTCOMES

This course is a postcolonial approach to the history of both Paris and France in general, at the nexus of colonialist, immigration, and urban histories. Throughout the course, students will examine both the history of French colonial expansion and the extent of its influence on French culture as well as anticolonial movements in West Africa, the Maghreb, and France. The history of immigration and emigration will be studied with a focus on migrant housing and working conditions in the decades following colonial independence. Finally, the course will conclude by interrogating the political stakes of the colonial legacy in France and the social destiny of the “second generation”, notably through the lens of the unrest of 2005.

Student participation is essential during each class, which will include a mixture of discussion, lecture, debate, viewing of film clips, and guided visits to notable sites in Paris. Students are expected to read the assigned texts before the class in which they will be covered.

Students will also be evaluated upon their ability to conduct an investigation of a Parisian neighborhood or emblematic site, including research, on-site visit and meeting with inhabitants, trying to understand to which extent it should or not be qualified as postcolonial.

Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have developed

- a knowledge of major dates and events of colonization and decolonization history in the French Empire, an awareness of the importance of colonial transactions and of intermediaries’ key roles and an overall understanding of theoretical aspects of colonial history;
• a knowledge of two Parisian museums related to colonial legacy (Musée du Quai Branly and Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration), of their collections and site genealogies, and hence the ability to view a museum from an analytical perspective;

• an understanding of the main current issues and stakes related to the colonial past, an awareness of the political use of memory and oblivion, and hence the means to interpret and discuss militant positions about colonial period oblivion;

• a knowledge of at least one Parisian cosmopolitan neighborhood, of its location, of its relation to different waves of immigration (postcolonial or not), notions of urban anthropology and an understanding of the issues related to the concept of diversity as viewed by different players;

• a methodical approach in reading historical or anthropological specialized literature written in French or in English, allowing to identify main themes and raised issues and produce oral or written reports showing understanding of texts’ ideas and implications.

II. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Oral presentation and written report (20%): Students will give a 10-minute oral presentation on a given topic (based on an academic article or book chapter) with an accompanying 2-page written report, both in French. The subjects and dates of each presentation will be decided on in conversation with the professor during the first week of class.

Essay (20%): Each student will write an essay of at least three pages (typed, double-spaced) in French on a monument, neighborhood, or historical site in Paris, analyzing its postcolonial aspects. The essay will be a descriptive narrative of the site or monument from the perspective of its colonial, migratory, or postcolonial influences. Each student must also interview local inhabitants of the area and incorporate these interviews into their report. Images and maps may accompany the text. Examples of sites include the former Palais des Colonies, or the Belleville or Goutte d’Or neighborhoods of Paris. The professor will provide a list of suggestions during the first week of class. The writing of this essay will be supported by the study in class of methodological aspects related to urban anthropology.

Visit report (10%): Students will write a report of at least two pages (typed, double-spaced) inspired by the visit of the Musée du Quai Branly. The report will focus on one item chosen from the permanent collection, which will be presented through an accounting of its history from its fabrication to the present time, and will analyze the intellectual and aesthetic reasons for its presence in the museum. This report will rely on readings studied in class and will result in a questioning about the way artifacts are exhibited and the importance attached to their history, most often related to the colonial period.

Two Exams (20% + 20%): The midterm and final exams will cover, respectively, the first and second halves of the course. Students will have access to a dictionary during each exam. The format and specific content of each exam will be provided beforehand.

Participation (10%)

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

Session 1. Introduction
Seminar presentation
An urban space and its history: traces, memory and oblivion of the colonial time.

In-class reading:

Session 2. Colonialism, power and knowledge.
Historical landmarks: Paris, capital of an Empire of variable extension.
Connections and transactions: current approaches in the historiography of colonization.

Reading:

Session 3. Colonial Representations and Staging the Otherness
Empire at its climax: the Exposition Coloniale in 1931.
Presentation of the distinct ethnographic museums established in Paris throughout the 20th century.
Preparation of the visit to the Musée du Quai Branly.

Film:
MARKER Chris, Alain RESNAIS, Les Statues meurent aussi (30’), 1953.

In-class reading:

Session 4. VISIT: Musée du Quai Branly
Meet at 9.30 am at the Museum’s ticket office.

Session 5. Paris, anti-imperial capital
Anticolonial movements and decolonization processes.
Paris, intellectual and activist centre.

Reading:

Session 6. The Algerian war in Paris
Algerian nationalist movements and their roots in immigration.


Reading

Session 7. From colonized to « Muslims »
« Islam français » from the interwar period to the 1950s, presentation of its sites in the greater Paris region.
Preparation of the visit of the Mosquée de Paris.

Reading:

Session 8. VISIT: Mosquée de Paris
Meet at 10.00 am in front of the Mosquée de Paris (2 place du Puits de l’Ermite - 5e Paris)

Reading:

Session 9. MIDTERM EXAM

Session 10. Immigrant neighborhoods and ‘banlieues’ : social and racial segregation in the greater Paris
Preparation of the visit of the of la Goutte d’Or.
Historical landmarks on social and immigrant geography of Paris and its area in the 20th century.

Reading:

Session 11. VISIT: la Goutte d’Or (Parisian neighborhood)
Meet at 9.45 am at Institut des Cultures d’Islam, 19-23 rue Léon, 75018 Paris.

Presentation on the waves of labor migration, on the working conditions of workers and on the struggles in the 1960s and 1970s.
The case of the former car-factories Renault in Boulonge-Billancourt.

*Reading:*

**Session 13. Paris, city of immigration : 2. Living conditions**
Social history of the housing conditions of North and West African migrants in Paris. Focus on the housing dedicated to single men, their political struggles, based on maps and iconographic documents.

*Reading:*

**Session 14. VISIT: Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration**
*Meet at 10.00 am in front of Palais de la Porte Dorée - 293 Avenue Daumesnil – Paris 12e*

**Session 15. (Post)colonial memories and immigrant memories**
The resurgence of colonial memories in French public debates in the 2000s.

*Reading:*

**ESSAY DUE**

**Session 16. Conclusion**

**FINAL EXAM**
IV. ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY


Cooper Frederick, Ann Laura Stoler Repenser le colonialisme, Paris, Payot, 2013.


