CAS LF 342 French Society through Theater, Cinema, and Music  
Credits: 4  
French Language Prerequisite: LF212 and above (or the equivalent)

Professors: Elisabeth Montfort-Siewert (siewert@bu.edu) - Theater  
Hanadi Sobh (hsobh@bu.edu) – Cinema & Music

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

Schedule: 16 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks 
- 14 weekly sessions: Mondays & Wednesdays 12:30 – 3 pm  
- 2 additional sessions: Dates to be determined  
- Final exam: Last Friday

Additional required activities*:  
- Two visits: “Sur les traces d’Edith Piaf” & a guided visit and meeting with the director of the Lucernaire, a cultural center in the heart of Paris combining all performing arts  
- Two film viewings in Parisian movie theaters  
- Two theater outings  
- One optional outing to the Comédie Française

Tutoring for oral presentations  
- Individual meeting with the professor two weeks before the oral presentation  
- Individual rehearsal with the Program’s Language Coordinator one week before the oral presentation

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.

Works studied (see Bibliography)  
- Two recent French films to be viewed by all students  
- Choice of recent French films for individual film report  
- Two plays studied in class and currently performed in Parisian theaters (outings)

* To be noted: this course being based on cultural current events in Paris, all works in this syllabus refer to the Spring 2019 semester (as an example) and this selection is updated every semester.
Assessment for the course:
- Participation, effort, and progress (30%)
- Midterm exam (theater) (12.5%)
- Written film report (12.5%)
- Theater presentation (10%)
- Music presentation (10%).*
- Final exam (theater, cinema and music) (25%)

Homework includes
- Preparation for each session (worksheets to complete about songs and plays, reading plays, viewing movies trailers, video clips and/or listening to songs, reading articles and critiques;
- Individual viewing of a movie and research for the essay about a recent film;
- Individual visit to a cultural site/center and research for the theater oral presentation.

In-class sessions are mostly interactive and include collective debates, individual or group presentations, small group activities, as well as in-class viewing of videos and websites and listening to songs. They are supplemented by collective guided visits to popular cultural centers or thematic tours as well as theater and cinema outings.

This course, including assignments and additional visits, is conducted entirely in French.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

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, 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 will give them 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. HUB AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Hub area: Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy

1. Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis, an understanding of global diversity as expressed in at least two different languages, cultures, religions, political systems, or societies. Note: A course in this area might, for example, explore the political systems of two countries, while another might explore multiple religious traditions within a single country, and another might explore the literature of a single country and, in assignments, invite comparative analysis of works of other national literary traditions, including those of students’ countries of origin.

The goal of this course is to explore how works from current popular culture (movies, plays, songs) are the expression of cultural, social, political but also more intimate and implicit aspects of French society and way of thinking. The perception of such culturally influenced works, particularly when living in Paris, involves immediate and spontaneous reactions which lead students to identify their own cultural perceptions and in turn compare them with the French perceptions. This awareness of cultural differences is explicited throughout the course, be it during class discussion, or in the oral and written assignments.

2. Students will demonstrate detailed understanding of at least two cultural contexts through foreign language or culture study at BU, participation in a language or culture living-learning community at BU, or study abroad. This will involve reflection on the challenges and pleasures students discover in orienting themselves in new and unfamiliar cultures.

This course, conducted exclusively in French, is rooted in current Paris, be it through the choice of works or by the numerous outings and visits it involves. It deals with popular culture, a field which easily engages students to discuss the pleasures and challenges inherent to the need to identify (even decode) intentions, references, implicit meanings, irony, hidden under the obvious, both linguistically and culturally. By essence, the very purpose of this course is to confront students with unfamiliar ways of thinking or expressing thoughts, forcing them out of their cultural comfort zone.

Hub area: Oral and/or Signed Communication

1. Students will be able to craft and deliver responsible, considered and well-structured oral and/or signed arguments using media and modes of expression appropriate to the situation.

This course requires students to craft a formal oral presentation about a Parisian cultural site, its history and founder, its singularity and public reputation, using clear, relevant and elegant Powerpoint presentation and following a well-organized outline. The formal aspect of this presentation is refined through a private rehearsal tutoring session.

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding that oral/signed communication is generally interactive, and they should be able to attend and respond thoughtfully to others.

This course involves numerous opportunities for debates and discussion and students become quickly aware of the need to express themselves clearly, to respect time limits in order to let others speak, to listen to others, to respectfully disagree and welcome controversial arguments.

3. Students will be able to speak/sign effectively in situations ranging from the formal to the extemporaneous and interact comfortably with diverse audiences.

Students oral expression in this course range from spontaneous interventions to formal presentation, as well as group facilitation (song presentations require student to lead class discussion). If freedom of expression is at the heart of this course, students also distinguish moments when they can express their emotional reactions from moments when their interventions need to be more analytical. The study of songs, contemporary plays and films also helps them become aware of the different levels of language, from slang and familiar language to formal expression.
Hub area: Critical Thinking

1. **Students will be able to identify key elements of critical thinking, such as habits of distinguishing deductive from inductive modes of inference, recognizing common logical fallacies and cognitive biases, translating ordinary language into formal argument, distinguishing empirical claims about matters of fact from normative or evaluative judgments, and recognizing the ways in which emotional responses can affect reasoning processes.**

   The course material and subject involves popular culture works which by essence lead to emotional reactions and immediate judgment. The very goal of this course is to encourage students first to acknowledge this natural reaction in order to go past it and see further. In order to do so, the first step is objective exploration of a work (identifying meaning and stylistic features); doing research about these works (author’s statements or press reviews) provides different viewpoints, which are usually subjective, and this helps students see a given work from diverse perspectives and recognize judgmental arguments.

   *More specifically, by the end of this course, students will be able to:*
   - List major landmarks and describe main characteristics of French popular music movements, from the 1920’s to present day (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;
   - Quote and describe eight to twelve 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;
   - Three recent films which they will have seen and analyzed, collectively or individually;
   - Analyze, assess and critique theater plays, films, songs and video clips, during collective debates as well as through formal group oral presentations and individual written critical essays, requiring to focus on:
     - Aesthetic aspects: stylistic literary, musical, scenicographic or cinematographic features;
     - Intrinsic meaning: main themes, narrative, implicit meaning and references;
     - Cultural and societal implications: reception by the French public and how these works reflect aspects of French culture, mentality, current issues;
   - Assess to which extent their own spontaneous reactions to these works reflect a personal perception or a more general cultural difference, identify how different cultural backgrounds may lead to different values and perceptions and thus evaluate the validity of their own arguments and judgments;
   - Identify common cultural features among plays, films, songs representative of a diversity of genres and styles;
   - Locate and describe Parisian sites representative of Paris’ cultural and artistic popular history, through group visits, outings to the cinema or the theater, and individual cultural site explorations for oral presentations;
   - Recognize and resort to on-line or press resources (newspapers, websites) related to popular culture and current event, commonly used by Parisians;
   - Demonstrate a diversity of oral communication skills, such as respectful and relevant participation in informal collective debates (cinema, theater, songs), formal oral presentations supported by Powerpoint presentations and other visual media (theater), group facilitation requiring to lead class discussion (songs), small-group activities requiring cooperative sharing and listening (cinema).
II. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Theater midterm Exam: 12.5%
The midterm exam will cover the theater component of the first half of the course (history of French theater and first play).

Final exam: 25%
The final exam includes:
- A theater section devoted to the second play;
- A music section devoted to the thematical study of specific songs throughout the course;
- A global essay question requiring a transversal and synthetical analysis about common cultural features among all studied works.

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.

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.

Grading conversion (out of 100)

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<tr>
<th>FINAL GRADE FOR THE COURSE</th>
<th>GRADES FOR INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS/ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100: A 77-79.5: C+</td>
<td>B+/A- = 89.5 C+/B- = 79.5 D+/C- = 69.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92.5: A 73-76.5: C</td>
<td>A+  = 97  B+  = 88  C+  = 78  D+  = 68</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89.5: B 70-72.5: C-</td>
<td>A/A+ = 96  B/B+ = 86.5  C/C+ = 76.5  D/D+ = 66.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86.5: B 69-60: D</td>
<td>A/A-  = 92.5  B/B- = 82.5  C/C- = 72.5  D/D- = 62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82.5: B- 59.5-0: F</td>
<td>A-  = 91  B-  = 81  C-  = 71  D-  = 61</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-/B+  = 89.5  B-/C+ = 79.5  C-/D+ = 69.5  F  = 55</td>
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Attendance Policy

Our program is subject to French student visa laws where an active student status is mandatory. As the sponsor of your visa, Boston University has the legal obligation to ensure that you comply with visa requirements. If you do not attend classes or your internship as required, you will be considered to be in breach of your visa and can be deported. Any student who does not comply with this policy may be sent home from the program at the discretion of the program director, and may, as a result, forfeit credit and program costs for part or all of the semester.

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<tr>
<th>Absence Type</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 absence (courses* or internship**)</td>
<td>-1 point on your final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 3 unexcused absences</td>
<td>F for the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsubmitted written work</td>
<td>F (0 points) for the assignment in question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence for a presentation or exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
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*Courses: class sessions, exposé preparation, in-class presentation
**Internship: EUSA meetings, BU Paris workshops, work placement schedule

EXCUSED ABSENCES =
- Absence for illness excused by the certificate of a French doctor
- Internship interview
- OFII medical visit (must have convocation)
- Professional imperative that conflicts with academic workshop

Documentation to be submitted to buparis@bu.edu the day following the absence

TARDINESS
- The professor reserves the right to not admit a tardy student to class or to count a tardy arrival as either a half or whole unexcused absence.
- Late arrivals to class will impact the class participation grade.
- Leaving class before it ends is considered as tardiness.
- Late submission of written work will entail a penalty on the assignment grade.
- Written work submitted more than a week late or after final exams will not receive credit (grade =F).

Students who do not complete a course on time will be given an F.

There are no withdrawals from classes, the internship nor the internship course.

PLAGIARISM – OFFICIAL BU POLICY

Simply stated, plagiarism is taking another’s work and presenting it as your own. It is, in fact, intellectual theft. It is one of the most serious forms of academic misconduct. Plagiarism committed by a student will certainly result in course failure and may result in suspension or dismissal. It can take many forms, including reproduction of published material without acknowledgement, or representing work done by others as your own. This includes the increasing common practice of purchasing and downloading work from the Internet “paper mills”. Plagiarism applies to all media – printed matter of all kinds, video, audio, and oral presentation. Even unacknowledged paraphrasing or use of another’s methodology, structure or management of material is plagiarism. You must use quotation when quoting even if you do the translating yourself.

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:** Le Lucernaïre, a cultural experience in Paris

**Session 2** (Music and cinema)
- Presentation of the course
- Introduction to Film 1
- The evolution of the *chanson française* from 1920 to today, part I
  → For Session 4:
    - Read the worksheet handed out on Film 1

**Session 3** (Theater)
- Presentation of the course
- Vocabulary of the theater, essential themes and topics
- *L’Officiel des spectacles* and contemporary theater in Paris
- Historical and theoretical overview: Western theater from the Middle Ages to the 20th century

**Session 4** (Music and cinema)

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<tr>
<th>CINEMA OUTING 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>→ For Session 6:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Complete the worksheet handed out on Film 1</td>
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<td>- Listen to the selected songs and answer the questions</td>
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**Session 5** (Theater)
- Play 1 (first part): Presentation and analysis.
- Theater presentation 1

**Session 6** (Music and cinema)
- The evolution of the *chanson française* from 1920 to today, part I
- How do we analyze the *chanson française*? Practical tools and discussion
- Film 2: Group discussion and debate
  → For Session 8:
    - Listen to the selected songs and answer the questions

**Session 7** (Theater)
- Play 1 (second part): Presentation and analysis.
- Theater presentation 2
Session 8 (Music and cinema)
- The evolution of the *chanson française* from 1920 to today, part III
- Music presentation 1
  → For Session 10:
    ▪ Listen to the selected songs and answer the questions

Session 9 (Theater)

THEATER OUTING 1

Session 10 (Music and cinema)
- Introduction to Film 2
- Music presentation 2
  → For Session 12:
    ▪ Listen to the selected and answer the questions
    ▪ Complete the worksheet on Film 2

CINEMA OUTING 2

Session 11 (Theater)
- Play 2 (first part) Presentation and analysis.
  Reading: *Des femmes au Panthéon* (La Vie, 2013)
- Theater presentation 3

Session 12 (Music and cinema)
- Film 2 : Group discussion and debate
- Music presentation 3
- Review for final exam
  → For Session 15:
    ▪ Complete the worksheet related to the movie you chose, following the guidelines in the course pack

Session 13 (Theater)
- Play 2 (second part): Presentation and analysis.
  Reading: *Paris est une femme* (Elle, 2014)
- Theater presentation 4

THEATER OUTING 2

Session 14 (Music and cinema)
- Visit in Paris : *Sur les traces d’Edith Piaf*
- Review for final exam & Cinema project

Session 15 (Theater)
- Review for final exam

FINAL EXAM: Last Friday
IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

THEATER:
Required readings (Fall 2017)
* Play one (to be determined)
* Et pendant ce temps, Simone veille ! Corinne Berron et Hélène Serres. Edition édite théâtre 2012

Press and websites
* L’Officiel des spectacles
* Théâtres et spectacles de Paris
* Télérama
* billetreduc.com

CINEMA:
Studied films (Fall 2018)
(to be determined)

Films for film report (Fall 2018)
* Mal de pierres (Nicole Garcia, 2016)
* Victoria (Justine Triet, 2016)
* Chocolat (Roschdy Zem, 2016)
* La danseuse (Stéphanie di Gusto, 2016)
* Frantz (François Ozon, 2016)

Required readings (Fall 2018)
(to be determined)

Press and websites
* Studio Ciné live (magazine mensuel de cinéma)

MUSIC (Fall 2018)

Monsieur :            Mercy (2018)
Madame Monsieur :  Dommage (2017)
Gael Faye :                  La pluie (2017)
OrelSan feat. Stromae :  La même (2017)
Maître Gims feat. Vianney :  Non, je ne regrette rien (1956)
Edith Piaf :          La Javanaise (1963)
Serge Gainsbourg :  Non, je ne regrette rien (2011)
Danakil :                 Nouveau Western (1994)
MC Solaar :             Bonnie and Clyde (1967)
Serge Gainsbourg :

Websites
ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Theater
Ionesco Marie-France, Portrait de l’écrivain dans le siècle, Eugène Ionesco 1909-1994
Michel Viegnes, Le théâtre, problématiques essentielles, Hatier, 1992
André Degaine, Le théâtre raconté aux jeunes, Nizet, 2006
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
Gilles Dyrek, La touche étoile
Jean-Michel Ribes, Théâtre sans animaux, Babel
Yasmina Reza, Art, Magnard

Cinema
Yann Darré, Une histoire sociale du cinéma français, édition La découverte, 2000
Vincent Pinel, Genres et mouvements au cinéma, Larousse, 2009
Laurent Jullier, Michel Marie, Lire les images de cinéma, Larousse, 2012
Emmanuel Ethis, Le cinéma et ses publics: Comment le cinéma nous aide à nous comprendre et à comprendre les autres, Editions Universitaires d’Avignon, 2015

Music
Ludovic Perrin, Carla Bruni, La nouvelle chanson française, Hors Collection, Janvier 2005
Marc Robine, Fred Hidalgo, Il était une fois la chanson française, Des trouvères à nos jours, Poche, 2006
Céline Fontana, La Chanson française Histoire, interprètes, auteurs, compositeurs, Hachette pratique, 2007

Cultural studies and general topics
Bernard Darras, Images et études culturelles. Publications de la Sorbonne
Jean-Benoît Nadeau, Julie Barlow, Pas si fous ces Français, Ponts, 2005