

Last update: January 2019
Office Hours & Course Number: TBD.

French Upper-Division “Race & Diversity in French Cinema”



Bonjour!

Bienvenue à notre cours de français. You can call me Valentin (pronouns: he/him/his), and reach out if you have any questions: yduquet@utexas.edu.

Courses Objectives:

The goal for this course is for students to acquire a better understanding of diversity in France by analyzing the way French cinema represents race, Otherness, minorities and disenfranchised youth. France has a long and complicated history of colonization, immigration, secularism and republican universalism that is very distinct from that of the US. This course will provide students with intellectual and interpretative tools to think critically about race and/in French cinema. Who gets to direct films in France, and what is their outlook on the minorities they portray? Who is given a podium, and who remains invisible? When minorities are represented, how are stereotypes reinforced or undermined? Do filmmakers from underrepresented backgrounds depict diversity differently? In what ways does France’s historical context—rejection of hyphenated identities and institutional “colorblindness”—translate into cinema as a medium? How does France’s strict rejection of the very term “race” influence representations and cultural awareness both on and off screen? With the tools and vocabulary this course will provide, student will be empowered to analyze complex socio-cultural contexts all the while decoding films’ stylistic choices. I encourage students to follow their own interests, whether they be film production, cultural studies or film analysis. Throughout the semester, the material we will read (articles and essays in both French and English) and watch (French movies from 1965 to 2016) will provide great resources and templates for the midterm of final projects: students will be encouraged to step behind the camera and create their own short film or video essay. Since the course will be conducted in French, it will also offer opportunities for students to improve their clarity of expression and fluency.

Grading scale & Work expectations:

- **Attendance & engagement (15%):** Active engagement with the rest of the class in French is necessary for the success of our course. You will get three free absences during the semester. Any further unexcused absence will count against your participation grade. Habitual lateness, or arriving to class more than 5 minutes late will be considered an absence. Use of technology for purposes unrelated to the course or excessive and unwarranted use of English will also make you count as “absent.” For each week, you are required to watch the primary film. A secondary film is suggested to go deeper in the topic, but you don’t have to watch it unless you are presenting that week. An additional essay or article is linked for each theme: make sure you come into class having read/watched it. *By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a **religious holy day**. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.*
- **Weekly discussion posts (15%):** Once a week, you will need to "blog" and analyze a theme, motif or scene once per week from the film(s) we are watching that week. Explain briefly why this passage interests you. A successful post will identify, locate (via timestamp) and comment on an aspect that was striking to you and that you want to discuss more in class. Everyone should have read others' blog posts before class. Feel free to propose theories, muse, ask questions, or draw connections with other films or material. We will discuss impressions and opinions in class, don't just blog “I liked it” or “I didn't like it.” Feel free to include questions for the rest of the group.
- **Presentation (20%):** Once during the semester, you will do a 15-min. individual presentation on a topic of your choice and continue to animate the discussion thereafter. You are expected to have seen both the primary and secondary film of that week, and to have read the additional reading. Try to initiate respectful engaging conversations. See this as a way for you to practice teaching. You can create a Powerpoint and/or bring along additional multimedia material you want to show the class. If you bring examples from other movie clips or YouTube videos, email them to me ahead of time. The day before, you will pre-circulate on Canvas a brief slideshow you plan to use or a brief outline with bullet points. Think of this presentation as ‘micro-teaching’—Reading a script is strongly discouraged, but you’re welcome to bring prepared remarks.
- **Mid-term paper (20%):** See details [here](#).
- **Final project (30%):** See details [here](#).

Grades:

93-100 A	83-86 B	73-76 C	63-66 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-
87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	0-59 F

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Unité 1: La Banlieue, hier & aujourd'hui

Week 2: Bandes et banlieues

- **Primary film to watch:** *La Haine* (1995)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *Girlhood (Bande de filles)*, 2014)
- **Article to read:** [“Beur Hip-Hop Culture and Banlieue Cinema in Urban France”](#)

Week 3: Femmes de couleur dans la cité

- **Primary film to watch:** *Divines* (2016)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *Papa was not a Rolling Stone* (2014)
- **Video essay to watch:** [“How does an Editor Think and Feel?”](#)

Week 4: Les années 1980

- **Primary film to watch:** *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed* (1985)
 - **Secondary film to watch:** *La Marche* (2013)
 - **Article to read:** [“De la littérature beure à la littérature urbaine”](#)
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Unité 2: Islam, défis & réussites

Week 5: La femme maghrébine face à la société

- **Primary film to watch:** *Inch'Allah Dimanche* (2001)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *Fatima* (2015)
- **Article to read:** [“Beurs et Beurettes of France”: Crisis of Identity](#)

Week 6: Pèlerinages et rencontres

- **Primary film to watch:** *Monsieur Ibrahim* (2003)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *Le grand voyage* (2004)
- **To read:** [Extract from the novel *Monsieur Ibrahim et les fleurs du Coran*](#)

Week 7: Mobilité sociale, mobilité géographique

- **Primary film to watch:** *Nous trois ou rien* (2015)
 - **Secondary film to watch:** *Qu'Allah bénisse la France* (2014)
 - **Academic article to read:** [“Displaced Mothers, veils in motion, and fatherlands”](#)
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Unité 3: Entraide, mixité & face-à-faces

Week 8: Subvertir la dynamique Noir/Blanc

- **Primary film to watch:** *Intouchables* (2011)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *Chocolat* (2016)
- **Article to read:** [“Rethinking Intouchables: Race and Performance in Contemporary France”](#)

Week 9: Relations amoureuses interraciales

- **Primary film to watch:** *Mon amie Victoria* (2014)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *Demain tout commence* (2016)
- **Magazine article to read:** [Sciences Humaines: Faire face au racisme](#)

Week 10: La crise des migrants

- **Primary film to watch:** *Welcome* (2009)
 - **Secondary film to watch:** *Samba* (2014)
 - **Magazine article to read:** [Sciences Humaines: La fin de l’hospitalité](#)
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Unité 4: Passé historique, mythes & réalités

Week 11: Shoah et mémoire collective

- **Primary film to watch:** *Les héritiers* (2014)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *La rafle* (2011)
- **Magazine article to read:** [Sciences Humaines: Qu’est-ce que le racisme?](#)

Week 12: La Nouvelle Vague

- **Film to watch:** *Pierrot le fou* (1965)
- **Video essay to watch:** [“Breaking the Rules – The French New Wave”](#)

Week 13: Algérie coloniale et Afrique juive

- **Film to watch:** *Le chat du rabbin* (2011)
- **Magazine article to read:** [Sciences Humaines: Égalité républicaine et discriminations](#)

Week 14: Comédie et choc des cultures

- **Primary film to watch:** *Astérix & Obélix: mission Cléopâtre* (2002)
- **Secondary film to watch:** *OSS 117: le Caire, nid d’espions* (2006)

- **Video essay to watch:** [“How to Do Visual Comedy”](#)

Week 15: Conférence et conclusions

Statement about Teaching Film and the Course Theme:

Film as a medium is ubiquitous in our lives in the form of entertainment, but close attention to style and production remain uncommon. Movies can be very palatable objects of study, but the mainstreaming of Hollywood standards has caused some students to be less patient with unconventional or unfamiliar situations or aesthetics. The French films I have chosen for this course represent a breadth of postures, styles and experiences. Most of them are recent and popular. Some were blockbuster comedies (like [Intouchables](#) and [Astérix & Obélix: Mission Cléopâtre](#)) whose humor might be lost in translation; others are American favorites like [La Haine](#) (1995). *La Haine* is a staple of Banlieues cinema and hip hop culture; it crystalized the spirit of a generation, and I couldn't imagine starting this course with any other film (which is why my selection is not chronological but thematic). Other movies like [Divines](#) (2016) came out more recently and flip the script of *La Haine* into a female perspective.

Diversity in French cinema (both behind and in front of the camera) has been growing remarkably in the past 30 years. Social stigmas, however, sometimes seem to stagnate or regress. In other words, some social realities haven't evolved a lot since the 1980s, but *who* gets to represent them, *who* watches, *how* the situations are represented and *how* people of color are portrayed *have* fundamentally changed. This is the crucial message—both optimistic and bleak—that I want students to take home. A sociology course would analyze data and link the economic downturns since the 1980s to racial inequality; a cultural studies approach might compare institutional structures between the US and France and argue pro- or against affirmative action; a film studies method, however, goes further: it examines all those *who*'s and *why*'s and *how*'s of the politics and aesthetics of representation. This is why a film studies approach with focus on form *and* content is the cornerstone of this course. Other disciplinary frameworks will also be useful to contextualize and color our class discussions.

Official Resources:

[University of Texas Honor Code](#)

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the *student's own work*. Should plagiarism, i.e. appropriation of another's work without proper attribution, be deemed to have occurred, the student will automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

[Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#)

SSD ensures students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experiences at the

University of Texas at Austin by determining eligibility and approving reasonable accommodations.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical.

Thrive is a free iPhone app designed to enhance UT Austin student well-being and help better manage the ups and downs of campus life. Students will find short videos of actual UT Austin students sharing their own stories as well as interactive activities designed to help them apply these concepts to their own unique experience.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050.

Counselors in Academic Residence Program (CARE)

CARE is a program of the Counseling and Mental Health Center that was created in collaboration with the Office of the Provost. CARE counselors are located within the colleges they serve. They are licensed mental health professionals and work with students who have been referred by faculty and staff. CARE's primary mission is to provide access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically. Cassy Moreno, LPC, is the CARE counselor for Liberal Arts and is available to meet with COLA students in need of mental health assistance.

Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC)

In addition to CARE, students can visit the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) for counseling services: Counseling and Mental Health Center Crisis Line 512-471-CALL (2255). (UT Students Only - available every day of the year including holidays). CMHC Crisis Line is a confidential service of CMHC that offers an opportunity for UT-Austin students to talk with trained counselors about urgent concerns. A counselor is available every day of the year, including holidays. You can call us when you want, at your convenience. Our telephone counselors will spend time addressing your immediate concerns. Our telephone counselors also have specific training in responding to crisis situations. Counseling and Mental Health Center offers several discussion groups students may attend that cover various topics. Some groups are drop-in groups while other groups topics range from identity-based groups, Voices Against Violence, Mindfulness groups, and other support groups. A list of all the group options are available at [this link](#).

Student Emergency Services (SES)

Student Emergency Services provides assistance, intervention, and referrals to support students navigating challenging or unexpected issues that impact their well-being and academic success. SES can be reached at 512-471-5017 (Mon – Fri from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.). Emergency situations include but are not limited to: Missing Student; Family Emergency; Fire or Natural Disaster; Student Death (current or former); Medical or Mental Health Concern; Academic difficulties due to crisis or emergency situations; Interpersonal Violence (stalking, harassment, physical and/or sexual assault).

UT Outpost

UT Outpost will help battle hunger and food insecurities of our students, as well as giving students access to professional attire for job and internship interviews. The service is located in the UA9 Building (2609 University Avenue) which is behind the Student Services Building (SSB).

Center for Students in Recovery (CSR)

The Center for Students in Recovery (CSR) provides a safe space and supportive community for students in recovery or seeking recovery from addiction. Participation at CSR is completely voluntary and there is no barrier to entry. Students at any stage of recovery and at any point in their academic journeys are welcome.

Sanger Learning Center

The Sanger Learning Center is UT Austin's main resource for academic support. Some of the services offered at the Sanger Learning Center include but aren't limited to: 1-on-1 tutoring or drop in tutoring; improving your study skills with a learning specialist; weekly meetings with a Peer Academic Coach; and help with public speaking assignment.

Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC)

The mission of the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) is to provide opportunities for all members of the UT Austin community to explore, organize, and promote learning around issues of gender and sexuality. The center also facilitates a greater responsiveness to the needs of women and the LGBTQIA+ communities through education, outreach, and advocacy.