Course Description

This course traces the significance of France, and especially Paris, in African American historical experience, intellectual history, and artistic production. Using biography, memoir, literature, art, and film, we will explore the lives of African American writers, artists, exiles, and expatriates within and beyond France. Our course will be divided into two parts. The first half will explore the lives of enslaved African Americans, fugitive slaves, abolitionists, and les gens de couleur libres in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France, including the legacies of the Haitian Revolution and the experiences, writings, intellectual and artistic production of Sally Hemings, William Wells Brown, Armand Lanusse, B. Valcour, and Camille Thierry. The second half will explore the lives of African Americans in France in the long twentieth century, including the experiences, writings, intellectual and artistic production of W.E.B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, Josephine Baker, Carter Woodson, Countee Cullen, Jessie Fauset, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Bennett, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Sidney Bechet, Chester Himes, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Finally, we will consider the public history and legacies of these experiences in France and the United States. Students may have the opportunity to participate in an excursion to James Baldwin’s home in St. Paul de Vence.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the Tufts University bookstore. Students may also locate these books through online booksellers. Occasional articles and selections will be available in class.

Michel Fabre, From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980 (University of Illinois, 1993)
Annette Gordon Reed, The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family (Norton, 2009)
William A. Shack, Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars (University of California, 2001)
Tyler Stovall, Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light (Houghton Mifflin, 1996)
Shay Youngblood, Black Girl in Paris (Blue Cloud Press, 2013)
Course Requirements

- Attendance and informed participation in class 20%
- Weekly Reading Responses 30%
- First Essay (5 pages) 20%
- Final Paper (8-10 pages) 30%

All students are expected to be respectful of one another and the instructor at all times. Any incidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in a zero on the assignment, possible failure of the course, and disciplinary action. Extensions will not generally be granted.

Students requesting an accommodation as a result of a disability should register with Student Accessibility Services at the beginning of the semester. In this case, you should make an appointment with Linda Sullivan, Director of Student Accessibility Services, who will provide faculty notification.

If you have any questions at all, please contact me.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction to Course

Readings:
Fabre, From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980, selected chapters
Stovall, Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light, selected chapters

Week 2: Enslaved and Free in Paris

Sally Hemings and Enslaved African Americans in Paris
William Wells Brown, Fugitive Slaves, and the Abolition Circuit in Europe

Readings:
Fabre, From Harlem to Paris, selected chapters
Gordon Reed, The Hemingses of Monticello, Part Two

Week 3: The Haitian Revolution and Les Gens de Couleur Libres in France

African-Americans and the French and Haitian Revolutions
Lanusse, Valcour, Thierry, and Les Gens de Couleur Libres in France

Readings:
Fabre, From Harlem to Paris, selected chapters

Week 4: Jim Crow and The Paris Exposition

W.E.B. Du Bois and the 1900 Paris Exposition
**Anna Julia Cooper, Carter Woodson, and The University of Paris-Sorbonne**

Readings:
Lewis, W.E.B. Du Bois: A Biography, selected chapters

**First Essay Due**

Week 5: The Harlem Renaissance and the Jazz Age in Paris

Josephine Baker, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and the “New Negro” in Paris

Readings:
Guterl, Josephine Baker and the Rainbow Tribe
Shack, Harlem in Montmartre, selected chapters
Stovall, Paris Noir, selected chapters

Week 6: Civil Rights, Black Power, and African Independence in France

Writers in Exile: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Chester Himes
Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Sidney Bechet, and the Black Arts Movement

Readings:
Morrison, Ed., James Baldwin: Collected Essays, selected essays
Stovall, Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light, selected chapters
Fabre, From Harlem to Paris, selected chapters

Week 7: Contemporary Legacies

Readings/Art:
Jean-Michel Basquiat, selected works
Youngblood, Black Girl in Paris
Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Interview with James Baldwin and Josephine Baker

**Final Essay Due**