

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History  
Semester II, 2015-16

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History 349  
Tu-Th 1–2:15

**Contemporary France, 1914 to the Present**

This course analyzes key issues in contemporary French history from the outbreak of World War I to the twenty first century. Topics to be studied include the Great War, the Depression and Popular Front, the German occupation and the Vichy Régime, the Liberation and the Fourth Republic, Decolonization and the end of Empire, De Gaulle and the Fifth Republic, and France and the European Union. We will pay close attention to broader themes such as the changing nature of French society, the disappearance of the traditional rural society, immigration and citizenship, transformations in gender roles, the challenges facing the Muslim and Jewish communities, and France's place in a globalized world.

**Objectives:** This is an upper division course that will provide you with an in-depth overview of French history in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this class you will:

- Gain an understanding of France's social, political and cultural history.
- Situate France's changing place in the world (collapse of the Empire; the construction of Europe).
- Understand how French history is the subject of deeply contested interpretations.
- Understand how the past informs France's present, and understand how contemporary developments shape our understanding of that nation's past.
- Learn how to use different kinds of sources (novels, films, secondary sources) to make persuasive arguments about the past.
- Learn how to make concise arguments.

**Requirements:** There will be one two-hour final examination, two one-page papers, and two six-page papers. Essay topics will be distributed in advance; papers require no outside research and will be based on class readings.

- **Students should have completed the readings in time for our in-class discussions. These are marked with an ➔ on this syllabus.**

**Movies:** We will watch (and discuss) two movies: Jean Renoir's Grand Illusion (*La grande illusion*) and Gillo Pontecorvo's Battle of Algiers. Links to the movies will be posted on our Learn@UW page. You will need your UW net ID and password to login.

**Grading:** Papers (30% each), final (20%), Discussion (20% -- this includes the Learn@UW posts and the one-page papers)

**Discussion:** We will discuss the movies and the readings during class. By 9 pm on the evening before each discussion students should post on the class Learn@UW site: **1) A one paragraph response to the reading.** Among the question you may wish to consider: Was the reading compelling and why? What questions are left unanswered? Does it shed light on the issues we are studying in class? **2) One question for discussion.** Your posts will not be graded, but I will take them into account when I calculate your discussion grade.

**Electronic Devices:** Please turn off electronic devices (laptops, phones) during lecture. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that students learn more when they take notes by hand and they perform better than students who are electronically connected. Laptops can be distracting both for the user (who is often tempted to surf the web) and for his or her neighbors. Multitasking is not conducive to learning. During lecture and discussion you should focus on the material and keep outside distractions to a minimum.

**Plagiarism:** I expect you to hand in your own work, and not to borrow sentences or sentence fragments from books, articles, or the web. In other words, all your sentences should be of your own making (if you use more than three successive words from a book, you should put them in quotation marks). You should take the time to familiarize yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism which is available at: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/students/> and check out the Writing Center's excellent tips on quoting and paraphrasing sources: (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>). Students who plagiarize put themselves at risk of failing the class. **So don't do it!**

**Books** are available for purchase at the bookstore of your choice and are also on 3-hour reserve in Helen C. White library. Some of the books have been translated from the French, and those of you with a good knowledge of *la langue française* may want to read them in their original version (copies available at Memorial Library). I have listed weekly readings from the Roderick Kedward textbook (France and the French) to enable you to keep up with lectures; by and large, the Kedward readings will not be the object of discussion. I have also placed a alternative textbook on reserve (Tyler Stovall, Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation) that you should feel free to consult in place of Kedward. A **short reader** is available for purchase at the Letters & Science Copy Center in the Social Science Building (hours: M-F, 7:30-11:45 and 12:30 to 4).

**Office hours: Tuesday between 10 and noon.** You can also speak with me after class or send me an email to set up an alternative meeting time. I'm always happy to meet with you to discuss the class.

**Required Books:**

Henri Barbusse, Under Fire (Penguin Books, 2004) [*Le Feu*]

Emilie Carles, A Life of her Own. A Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France (Penguin, 1992) [*Une soupe aux herbes sauvages*]

Robert Gildea, Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France during the German Occupation (Picador, 2004)

Irène Némirovsky, Suite Française (Vintage Books, 2007) [*Suite française*]

Henri Alleg, The Question (Bison Books, 2006) [*La question*]

Azouz Begag, Shantytown Kid (Bison Books, 2007) [*Le gone du Chaâba*]

Françoise Gaspard, A Small City in France. A Socialist Mayor Confronts Neofascism (Harvard University Press, 1995) [*Une petite ville en France*]

Roderick Kedward, France and the French: A Modern History (Overlook Press, 2007)

**Week 1**

January 19: The Origins of the Great War

January 21: The Front Lines and the Home Front

**Reading:** Begin Henri Barbusse, Under Fire

**Week 2**

January 26: The War and its Consequences

January 28: French Fascism

**Reading:** Henri Barbusse, Under Fire, chapters 1-12; Kedward, France and the French, 62-87

**Week 3**

→February 2: **Discussion Barbusse, Under Fire** (Finish book). Post on Learn@UW

February 2: **Due in class: write a one-page paper explaining what the *poilus* in Under Fire are fighting for.**

February 4: The Popular Front

**Reading:** Kedward, France and the French, 88-111; “Programme of the Popular Front,” (reader)

**Week 4**

→February 9: **Discussion of Grand Illusion (Movie) + Lecture: The Coming of WWII**

February 11: The Strange Defeat

**Movie:** Jean Renoir, Grand Illusion. **View before the Feb 9** lecture/discussion.

**Reading:** Irène Némirovsky, Suite Française, 1-144; Kedward, France and the French, 167-218.

**Week 5.**

February 16: Vichy France

→February 18: **Discussion, Némirovsky, Suite Française**

**Reading:** Irène Némirovsky, Suite Française, 145-300 [I encourage you to read beyond p. 300 and finish the book]; Kedward, France and the French, 219-44

**Week 6**

February 23: Collaboration, Accommodation and Resistance

February 25: Purges and the New Regime

**Reading:** Robert Gildea, Marianne in Chains, 1-115; Kedward, France and the French, 245-71.

**Week 7**

□□□ **First 6 page paper due in class on March 1** □□□

March 1: The New Regime

March 3: Intellectuals

**Reading:** Robert Gildea, Marianne in Chains, 209-90; 317-47 ; Kedward, France and the French, 272-309

**Week 8**

→March 8: **Discussion, Gildea, Marianne in Chains**

March 10: Empire

**Reading:** Tony Judt, Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-56 (Reader)

**Week 9:**

March 15: The Algerian War

→March 17: **Discussion, Alleg, The Question + Battle of Algiers (movie)**

**Due in class March 17: write a one-page paper explaining why the French army tortured in Algeria**

**Reading:** Henri Alleg, The Question, 33-96; Kedward, France and the French, 310-48 **Movie:** Gillo Pontecorvo, The Battle of Algiers, view by March 17.

**Week 10. Spring Break****Week 11**

March 29: Charles De Gaulle

March 31: May 68

**Reading:** Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman, When Poetry Ruled the Streets (reader); Begin Emilie Carles, A Life of Her Own; Kedward, France and the French, 384-431.

**Week 12**

April 5: Rural Society

→April 7: **Discussion, Emilie Carles, A Life of her Own.**

**Reading:** Emilie Carles, A Life of her Own. A Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France (finish book)

**Week 13**

□□□ **Second 6-page paper due on April 14** □□□

April 12: European Unity

April 14: A Nation of Immigrants

**Reading:** Begin, Azouz Begag, The Shantytown Kid; Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (reader)

**Week 14**

April 19: Memory of the Past

→ April 21: **Discussion Azouz Begag, The Shantytown Kid**

**Reading:** Azouz Begag, Shantytown Kid, finish book; Kedward, France and the French, 551-69.

**Week 15**

April 26: Religion

April 28: The End of Socialism

**Week 16**

May 3: The Extreme Right from Jean-Marie Le Pen to Marine Le Pen

→ May 5: **Discussion Gaspard, A Small City in France**

**Reading:** Françoise Gaspard, A Small City in France. A Socialist Mayor Confronts Neofascism (entire book); Kedward, France and the French, 476-508.

**FINAL EXAMINATION: May 12, 2:45-4:45**

### Goals of the History Major

The goal of the history major is to offer students the knowledge and skills they need to gain a critical perspective on the past. Students will learn to define important historical questions, analyze relevant evidence with rigor and creativity, and present convincing arguments and conclusions based on original research in a manner that contributes to academic and public discussions. In History, as in other humanistic disciplines, students will practice resourceful inquiry and careful reading. They will advance their writing and public speaking skills to engage historical and contemporary issues.

To insure that students gain exposure to some of the great diversity of topics, methodologies, and philosophical concerns that inform the study of history, the department requires a combination of courses that offers breadth, depth, and variety of exposition. Through those courses, students should develop:

1. Broad acquaintance with several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Familiarity with the range of sources and modes through which historical information can be found and expressed. Sources may include textual, oral, physical, and visual materials. The data within them may be qualitative or quantitative, and they may be available in printed, digital, or other formats. Modes of expression may include textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, essays, literary works, or digital presentations.
3. In-depth understanding of a topic of their choice through original or creative research.
4. The ability to identify the skills developed in the history major and to articulate the applicability of those skills to a variety of endeavors and career paths beyond the professional practice of history.

### Skills Developed in the Major

#### *Define Important Historical Questions*

1. Pose a historical question and explain its academic and public implications.
2. Using appropriate research procedures and aids, find the secondary resources in history and other disciplines available to answer a historical question.
3. Evaluate the evidentiary and theoretical bases of pertinent historical conversations in order to highlight opportunities for further investigation.

#### *Collect and Analyze Evidence*

1. Identify the range and limitations of primary sources available to engage the historical problem under investigation.

2. Examine the context in which sources were created, search for chronological and other relationships among them, and assess the sources in light of that knowledge.
3. Employ and, if necessary, modify appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine sources and develop arguments.

*Present Original Conclusions*

1. Present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.
2. Orally convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.
3. Use appropriate presentation formats and platforms to share information with academic and public audiences.

*Contribute to Ongoing Discussions*

1. Extend insights from research to analysis of other historical problems.
2. Demonstrate the relevance of a historical perspective to contemporary issues.
3. Recognize, challenge, and avoid false analogies, overgeneralizations, anachronisms, and other logical fallacies.