

**Americans in Paris**  
**Raquel Scherr**  
**Class guide and assignments, 2022**

**General Information**

**[Note: THE SYLLABUS WILL BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE to accommodate the films we will be seeing, music we will be listening to, and *current events* that I will ask you to see, or participate in]**

This program examines representations of Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and its role as the capital of modern culture. We will discuss a number of major texts from Jefferson to Baldwin, listen to musicians (e.g. Sidney Bêchet, Josephine Baker), and view films (e.g. *Midnight in Paris*) inspired by Paris.

Most important, we learn to read the city and report on it from the vantage point of young 21<sup>st</sup>- century Americans by walking its streets, visiting its museums, exploring jazz clubs, reading works, viewing films, and sitting at cafes to people watch.

Central to our study, we question why Paris emerged as the center of western design, architecture, literature, art, music, and film, and why western culture has so prized Paris and copied its city planning, architecture, literature, and art.

**Journal Work: How to approach the journal**

Typically, a journal is a daily record of personal nature. They are central not only to the goals of this course and should be used to record the places you visited and the events you experienced. Your journals should provide you as well with a substantial study guide and a record of your experiences in Paris. Since you are in Paris as a student, you will want to respond to readings, film, music, and class discussions as well as to your experiences in Paris.

You should consider beginning your entries by recording your gut responses to the readings you do, films you see, walks you take, etc. and then trying to assess and analyze why you responded as you did. The journal should be a record of what you are thinking and feeling during your month in Paris.

**Some tips:**

- Should you want, you can buy typical student notebooks in Paris to use as journals—**make sure to put your name and Foyer room number on the inside cover of the journal.**
- You want to make sure to begin each entry with **the date.**

[You should **read in advance the journal prompts** that I give re: your field work—should you not complete your field work on a given day, or should you do your field work in advance, record your response on the day that you do it.]

- You should get in the habit of writing an entry every day either in a park or in a café—the entries need not be long (do not spend much more than 20 minutes on each journal entry).

- You should record what you think is most important **to you**. Should you want to include things that you don't want me to read, you can fold the page(s) so that I can't see the entry. I will honor your request. **Please don't use the same notebook for your class notes and journals. You will be able to use your journals on exams.**

**Read *Lonely Planet online (hereafter referenced as LP)*** General sections on orientation, ***before arriving in Paris.***

**See: Netflix at least 4 episodes of *Emily in Paris*.**

Students will receive detailed instructions for visits to specific sights. Students will keep logs/journals, read extensively, write reports, watch movies, and do in class presentations.

**Classes will be held at the Foyer from 10-1pm. Office hours upon request**

### **Journal Entry #1:**

**Jot down your answers to the following questions before your arrival in Paris:** What expectations do you have about your study abroad in Paris? What do you imagine seeing, learning? What are your initial observations—include any problems, experiences, etc. you had on your trip and your first day(s) here. What did you see, do after you arrived at the Foyer? [You can write this down on paper and paste it to a French notebook, should you want to use a French notebook]

### **Tips on some things to see for those who arrive before Sunday or early on Sunday**

- If you want organic food, vegetables etc. head towards Rue Raspail market between Rue de Rennes and Rue de Cherche Midi on Sunday morning. **It is a terrific market.** (N.B. Rue de Cherche Midi and the surrounding area have upscale stores you might want to look at) .
- Go to Champs Elysées, on the **first Sunday each month** it is closed to traffic. You will be returning to this area when we study Mark Twain, so you may want to jot down what you see (see fieldwork for 7/4).
- **Do both if you are not too tired.** If you are into walking you can cross over at Place de la Concorde. It is a long but pleasant walk, as are all walks in Paris. Otherwise, I advise taking a bus so that you can see Paris as you ride.
- If you are really tired, cross the street to the Luxembourg gardens and walk around, lounge, observe, and do what the Parisians do.

[N.B. first Sunday of the month many museums are free]

### **6/19 5pm Orientation at the Foyer**

**Field Work:** After the orientation, you should walk around the neighborhood of the Foyer and observe on your way grocery stores, pharmacies, post offices, bakeries, vegetarian restaurants, French cafés and bistros, and any other places that you might use or be interested in.

**Take a walk to Rue Mouffetard.** You can go the long way by turning right as you exit the Foyer, you should easily be able to **locate the Pantheon, St. Etienne-du-Mont** (See relevant maps *LP*). If they are open, go into the Pantheon and the church (the land was set aside by the Pope for a church in the 12<sup>th</sup>

century). All of these sites are on Montagne **St. Genevieve**, the patron Saint of Paris (You can see a statue of her on the Seine, near Quai de Tournelle as well).

When you come out head east on Rue St. Etienne-du-Mont to Rue Descartes. Turn right on Rue Descartes and continue to Rue Mouffetard. Should you want to sit down at a café and hang out where Parisian students often hang out, go to a café on Place Contrascarpe (see Map *LP*)

**Return to the Foyer along a different route.** (You may want to go back via Rue Guy-Lussac)

**Journal:** Jot down your **detailed** impressions and thoughts of what you saw on your walk, consider the Pantheon, St. Etienne-du-Mont (*N.B.* the steps of St. Etienne are where Owen's character, in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*, was picked up for his midnight rides), the architecture you see, the cafes, the people, the experience of being in Paris.

**Look at the plaques** on the walls as you walk—in other words, begin to “read” the city.

Make sure you also jot down the streets (and addresses) of the following: pharmacies (those closest to the Foyer), laundromats, stores, markets (besides Rue Mouffetard), cafés, bistros, jazz clubs, or restaurants where you can find inexpensive food and may want to eat. Locate, as well, a mailbox close to the Foyer in case you want to send postcards home.

**Note: Readings are due before class on the day designated below; Journal entries should be done during/after fieldwork.**

### **The Tourist in Paris—Discussion of Tourism.**

Exploring why Paris has been the world's #1 tourist destination and important to American history and culture.

#### **M. 6/20**

**Read:** *Lonely Planet (LP)*— skim the tour guide. Read carefully a section that most interests you. Then turn to the section on “Neighborhoods” skim through the subsections. Read the **sections on the Latin Quarter (see above), and St. Germain & Invalides** (pay close attention to the description of Jardins de Luxembourg), which cover the general area where you live.

Read, as well, “American Tourists in Paris from Jefferson to the Jazz Age.”

**Field work:** If you haven't already, take a stroll through the beautiful Luxembourg gardens and stop to observe the Palais de Luxembourg, which houses the French Senate, but which was originally built for Marie de Medici in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Head down Blvd. St. Michel towards St. Germain to see **Lutèce**, the Roman ruins. (The Musée National du Moyen Âge is open only on Wed-Mon. ) Once on Blvd. St. Michel walk toward the Seine. You will pass by Place St. Michel, where street artists hang out. To your right you will see the **Île St. Louis**). **Go to Notre Dame. Look at the tourists looking at Notre Dame and other tourists.**

**Journal:** Jot down your impression of the tourist spots you saw. Compare these and the interactions you observed to those places where Parisians go. Provide details. (See journal work below—you can combine these)

Jot down to what extent Emily's experiences in Paris represent Parisian stereotypes of American tourists in Paris and American stereotypes of Parisians. Consider in what ways you relate to, or do not relate to, Emily's initial experiences in Paris. In what ways does the series provide a "tourist's perspective" of Paris—e.g. what sites do we first see? What do we observe about the Parisians? What are Emily's reactions to as she first experiences Paris? Etc.

### **Tu. 6/21**

**Read:** Read Jefferson's Letters, Jefferson's Paris.

**Journal:** What did you find most useful? Why? Least? Why? Compare **your** impressions of Paris in your "undirected walks" in the last couple of days, with what the tour book asks you to see. Consider what you might tell a friend not to miss.

After reading "American Tourists in Paris..." what overarching conclusion do you come to about why Americans have come to Paris? How might you compare the reasons these Americans journey to Paris to your own? Write down how you're feeling and what you're thinking on your 3<sup>rd</sup> day in Paris. Consider what Jefferson focused on.

### **W. 6/22**

**Read:** Jefferson's Letters, Jefferson's Paris

**Field Work: Walk to 56 Rue Jacob** to see where in 1783 Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay signed the treaty with a representative of King George III recognizing formally the United States' independence from Britain. [If you walk from the Foyer down Rue M. le Prince to Odeon, you will see **Polidor**, the restaurant where Owen's character meets Hemingway, *Midnight in Paris*]. **Count the bookstores and newsstands that you saw on your way to Rue Jacob.**

Stop by the **Procope**, the world's oldest café, and the place that the Philosophes and others met (including French notables such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Marat, Danton, George Sand, and Americans such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson). It is located on **13 Rue de L'Ancienne Comedie**, right down the street from the Odeon metro station. Go through the back entrance, which is on a cobblestone street (Cours de Commerce St.Andre), and get a look at the pictures of the original philosophes; order a cup of coffee or tea (Note: it was the first place coffee was served in Paris). The Comedie Francaise originally stood across the street from the Procope. Observe the activity on Rue St. Andres des Arts (which turns into Rue Buci). [ You may want to return some evening and go to **La Palette (43 Rue de Seine)**, where Picasso, Braque, Cezanne, Hemingway, Jim Morrison, Julia Roberts, Harrison Ford, etc. used to hang out—it is now a place for trendy young students and artists, who flock to it at night.]

When you reach your destination, look at the plaque [there are plaques identifying figures in history throughout Paris]. Note as well that **Hemingway**, the quintessential North American writer stayed at the **Hotel Angleterre (44 Rue Jacob)** the first time he visited Paris.

If you are on **Rue Jacob** in the St. Germain area, you may want to cross over to **Île de la Cité (Pont des Arts** is a walking bridge), and head over to the **Marais**. From the Marais walk over to the **Place des Vosges and the Bastille**, where Jefferson witnessed the beginnings of the French revolution and where currently the young hang out—if you are not too tired, you may want to go to **Canal St. Martin**.

Look at the architecture and imagine the buildings that Jefferson might have seen (Read the section on Architecture in the *LP* and, if architecture interests you, try to identify the styles that were prevalent during Jefferson's time).

**Journal work:** Describe in detail your walk to Rue Jacob. Who did you walk with? Describe, as well, what caught your interest on your walk—e.g. architecture, door handles, plaques on the street, people, stores, fashion. Consider taking pictures if you want to document visually your walk. Describe as well how the Marais struck you. [See assignment 7/23—you may want to combine these]

### Th. 6/23

**Read: *Reader*,** Mark Twain, (He inspired Hemingway and along with Hemingway is considered the quintessential American writer). Finish discussion of Jefferson, French Revolution, and begin discussion of Twain.

**Field Work:** Visit or revisit, Mark Twain's Paris (The Right bank)

**Journal Work: You may want to go to** the Eiffel Tower on this visit. Sit in a café on the Right Bank and jot down your observations—look at the Blvds., streets, and buildings. Consider the scale.

Consider how the architecture, the streets, etc. are different from those of the Marais, for example? Because your experience is primarily in the U.S., you should compare what you see in Paris with a major city in the U.S. (should you be a native of another country you should look at it from a triple perspective.)

Consider in what way Twain's view of the French empire is similar or different to the way the U.S. Empire or other empires have been portrayed.

### F.6/24

#### NO CLASS

**Watch Sophia Coppola's, *Marie Antoinette*.**

**Field Work:** Versailles (see pgs 263-8, *LP*)

**Journal:** Reflect on Jefferson's Paris. What are your impressions of Versailles? Describe what you saw and what you did. Jot down your impressions of Coppola's film—think of the characters, setting, music, etc. What connections does Coppola make between the political, social, cultural life of Versailles and political, social, cultural life of 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. ? What does her political, social, and cultural commentary reflect?

Discuss the **role of gardens in Paris** (you can include the Luxembourg garden or any other gardens you might have seen on your walks); compare them to public gardens in the U.S.

**Suggestion for Sat. 6/25** Go to Giverny to see Monet's gardens or use your museum pass to go to museums that interest you, or to do Monday's fieldwork assignment. [

**Next week you will read Henry James.** He is a contemporary of Twain's but his style can be difficult, so begin reading him now. Look at how he portrays Mme. de Mauve, Monsieur de Mauve, and Longmore. Begin to think about the difference between the American tourist and the expatriate, who has adopted Paris as a home.

**The American Expatriate: Theorizing Innocence and Experience abroad.**

**M. 6/27**

**Read:** Henry James, *Madame de Mauve*

**Finish discussion** of Twain; begin discussion of *Madame de Mauve*

**Fieldwork:** Musée d'Orsay, Musée de l'Orangerie. Main themes in late nineteenth century realist and Impressionist painting. [see 7/16—you may want to go to the Picasso museum to take advantage of your museum pass].

**Journal:** Jot down your impressions of at least 3 paintings that you see at the Musée d'Orsay and 3 paintings you see at Musée de l'Orangerie.

As you know, at the turn of the century Impressionists were rebelling against traditional French painting. Do you see anything similar in the prose of James'—i.e. in what ways might you call his work "impressionistic". Think of specific scenes that you can point to and explain why.

**Tu. 6/28**

**Discussion** of *Madame de Mauve*

**Fieldwork:** **Either go to** St. Germain-en-Laye, the town, the castle, the park where James' novella is located, **OR** visit the **Jardin des Plantes**, established in 1626 by Louis XIII as a medicinal herb garden (closes at 6pm on weekdays). Go see the menagerie established in 1794 (during the Prussian siege of Paris in 1870, starving Parisians ate all the animals there). When you're finished exploring the Jardin des Plantes, go to the **Mosquée de Paris**, which was built in 1926 following WWI and which hid Jewish people during WWII.

**Journal:** Identify the subject of your project and why it interests you.

**W. 6/29 Discussion Mme de Mauves**

**Read:** *Reader*, Edmund White, "The Flâneur"; **Finish discussion of Mme de Mauves.**

**Fieldwork:** begin field work on your project.

**Th. 6/30**

**Discussion:** "The Flâneur"

**Fieldwork:** The word *flâneur* was coined by the well-known French poet Charles Baudelaire. Be a *flâneur* and walk through either Barbès OR Belleville. Make a point of observing streets and people.

**Journal:** You might want to sit at a café in Belleville and then sit at a café in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement and compare what and whom you see. Describe a couple of events or details that caught your attention. Describe or take pictures of the fashion you see. Consider how fashion does/does not change in the different areas of Paris. Jot down the differences/similarities between how people dress, walk, behave here as compared to a city in the U.S. Include these observations and/or photos in your journal.

**MIDTERM/JOURNALS DUE**

**Go to a jazz club this weekend or some other musical event [see next week's assignment].**

**F. 7/1 No Class****Places you may want to see if you haven't already:**

- L'Institute de Monde Arabe—note what Edmund White has to say about the architecture of the Monde Arabe.
- Right bank covered passages—these were the first commercial “malls”.
- Père Lachaise cemetery, which honors Abelarde and Heloise, Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde and others. See also the monument to those who died in WWII

**See *Midnight in Paris* and *Paris the Luminous Years: The Making of the Modern*****M. 7/4**

**Read:** *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, selected readings Ch.1-3, to pp. 42 to “So the Saturday evenings began.”; pg.56 fr. “But to return to those old days...” –pg. 68, Ch. 4.

**Discussion:** *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*

**Fieldwork:** **Picasso museum in the Marais** (See overlapping field work below)

**Journal:** In many ways Picasso and Stein shared the same “modern” sensibility. In what ways are Picasso’s experimentation with form similar to Stein’s experimentation with form. Explain by providing specific examples from his work and from her work.

**4<sup>th</sup> of July. Enjoy****Political Expatriate—War and Post War Years****Tu. 7/5**

**Read:** Ch.5, 86-95 end of first paragraph; Ch 6, 143-158, end of 2nd paragraph on Apollinaire; pg. 178- from 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph “In the meantime, the Americans had come into the war...p. 192; pg. 206-220; pp. 246, “Gertrude Stein’s readers are...”—the end. Bring these observations up in class.

**Fieldwork:** Explore Montparnasse and Latin Quarter area, if you haven’t already; locate cafes Hemingway visited (Coupole, Dôme, Rotonde, Closerie des Lilas, Le Palette and cafés on Place de la Contrascarpe); locate historic buildings or buildings where someone famous lived (usually marked with a small plaque: e.g., Modigliani’s studio on **Rue de Chevreuse**; Gertrude Stein’s house on 27 **Rue de Fleurus**, Sylvia Beach’s Shakespeare and Co. on **8 rue Dupuytren**, and, the original, on **12 rue de l’Odeon**.

Find at least 5 historical plaques. [N.B. Hemingway first lived on 113 Nôtre Dame des Champs, not far from the Foyer and last lived on 6 Rue Ferou—now the Hotel Luxembourg Parc; and Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald lived on 58 Rue Vaugirard, across from the Luxembourg gardens, not far from Hemingway’s last address.)

**Watch the film *Americans in Paris*****Journal**

You are to sit in one of the cafes that Hemingway frequented and do whatever French people do in cafes—write down what you saw on your walk and what you observe as you sit in the café. Pay attention to detail.

Imagine you are writing down impressions that will later become your ‘Moveable Feast’.

### W. 7/6

**Read:** Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*

**Fieldwork: if you haven’t done this already,** visit cafés and shops in the Montmartre-Sacré Coeur area. Retrace the steps of Picasso and his American musician and painter friends, the places where they congregated and worked.

**Journal:** Look at the episode where Hemingway describes sitting at a café as a young woman comes into view. Think about why Hemingway entitles his work ‘A Moveable Feast.’

Write down your impressions. How well do you think “Midnight in Paris” portrayed the era? Explain? How did the movie express the angst or *zeitgeist* of Hemingway and Stein’s Generation (The Lost Generation) and of your generation? What name might you give your generation and why? Expl

**Early evening in St. Chapelle, weather permitting,**

### Th. 7/7

**Discussion of Hemingway continued**

**Fieldwork:** Do field work for your own project.

**Journal:** Record how you will organize your project

### Fri. 7/8-Sun.7/10

**Weekend Trip to Normandy and Granville**

**All that Jazz: Music, Art, Cafes, Parks, Restaurants...in present day Paris**

### M. 7/11

**Read:** Anaïs Nin, Henry Miller [Note: Miller lived on 36 Rue Bonaparte]

Finish discussion of Hemingway. Discussion **of** Nin and Miller

**Fieldwork:** If you can, ride a bike to the **Marais** from the Left Bank [Velib]. Sit at **Les Philosophes** in the Marais, **visit the toilets of Les Philosophes, La Chaise au Plafond, La Belle Hortense, L’Etoile Manquant,** all of which, tongue-in-cheek engage the client in an “artistic” space.

If you haven’t already, walk around the Jewish district (the oldest in Europe). **Locate Rue de Rosiers walk down it**—on the side streets. You will still find Jewish restaurants, bookstores, and other shops. Make sure to try L’As de Falafel (34 Rue de Rosiers).

In the first century B.C. Jewish quarters existed in the 5<sup>th</sup> arrondissement—it is believed that the church St. Julien le Pauvre was built on the ruins of a synagogue. **Walk on Hospitalière St. Gervais.** Towards the

end of the street, you will find a plaque that commemorates the 165 students and teachers of the boy's school (on #6), who were deported and murdered in Auschwitz. Should you have time go to the Jewish Museum on Rue de Temple.

If you haven't already done it, **walk or ride along the banks of the Canal St. Martin.**

Sit at a café along the way. Visit the 10th or 11th Arrondissement. This is the new "hang out" for young Parisians—the equivalent of Hemingway and Stein's Paris. For those interested in the vanguard of art and fashion, this is where you may want to go.

**Journal:** Both Nin and Miller **compare** Paris to the U.S. Describe how you feel sitting at a café and just observing, and writing. Think of the differences between Paris and a city you know in the U.S.

**Consider:** Do you feel homesick the way Nin often does, or do you feel, as does Miller, that Paris offers uninhibited freedom when compared to the U.S. Explain.

What particularly struck you about the "artistic" spaces you have seen? In *Les Philosophes*, the "artist" asks the client to participate—how? (You may need someone to translate for you). In what ways do the toilets at the *Philosophes* parody Miller's desire to escape social norms? Does Nin express similar desires? How? Where?

To what extent has gentrification of the Marais undone the Jewish quarter? Describe. Is there a place or an area in Paris that approaches the places the "Lost Generation" frequented? Where?

**Tu. 7/12**

**See the documentary on Josephine Baker;** review the second part of Edmund White's piece on himself as a *flâneur*.

**Read:** Henry Gates Jr. on Josephine Baker, James Baldwin, "Equal in Paris". We will be discussing Bêchet, Baker, and Baldwin and the **Black experience in Paris.**

**Fieldwork:** Your own

**W. 7/13**

**Finish discussions of the reading.**

**Group Discussions of field work.**

**Fieldwork:** your own

**Th. July 14**

**Bastille Day**

**Group presentations**

- **Picnic and class tour on bateau—weather permitting**
- **A list of some locations for the Bastille Day Fireman's Balls in Paris:**

- CCL5 Station, 47-59 Rue Monge 5<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement. Metro Place de Monge
- Colombier Station 11 rue du Vieux Colombier, 6<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement, Metro St. Sulpice.
- Port Royal Station, 53-55 Blvd. Port-Royal, 13<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement, Metro Les Gobelins.
- Menilemontant Station, 47 Saint-Fargeau, 20<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement, Metro Pelleport

### **Journals Due**

**F. 7/15**

**Final Exam Farewell Dinner**

**Email me your group project no later than Saturday July 16.**

**Grades are based on the following percentages:**

**Class Participation: 25%**

**Journal: P/NP [you will be able to use your journals In your exams]**

**Midterm: 20%**

**Oral Group Presentation: 30%** [20% your contribution to the group project/10% your own work independent from the group, i.e. your concept and portion of the oral presentation.

**Final Exam: 25%**

### **Texts you should have bought:**

- Hemingway, Ernest. *A Moveable Feast*. Scribner 068482499
- Stein, Gertrude. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Vintage 067972463X