
TOPICS: THE FRANCO-AMERICAN NOVEL in Spring 2019 (CL2091)

Course Code	CL2091	Professor(s)	Russell Williams
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G108
Class Schedule	MR: 15:20-16:40 in G-102	Office Hours	Monday-Thursday, 14h00-15h00, or by appointment
Credits	4	Email	rwilliams@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	667

Course Description

English-language fiction has long played a vital role in shaping and inspiring French writing. The increasing cultural hegemony of the USA in the twentieth century is both part of this pattern and a more paradoxical phenomenon, inseparable from the challenge that new cultural forms, including the cinema and pop music, has placed on literary fiction. What is at stake when French fiction tries to do things *à l'américaine*, articulating French experience using American forms, settings and characters?

This course will consider moments of literary exchange, anxious tension and resistance between the two nations. It will map and examine moments of such implicit and explicit dialogue from the nineteenth century to the present day. In particular, it will focus on writing from the last thirty years. This course will encourage students to consider how writers have explored notions of 'Americanness' and 'Frenchness' within fiction as well as analysing the porous relationship between the 'European' avant-garde and 'American' genre writing: the detective novel; the thriller; and even the romance novel.

These moments of direct and indirect exchange will consider how contemporary American writers such as Bret Easton Ellis have been inspired by French novelists of the nineteenth century (especially Flaubert) and, in turn, have influenced contemporary French writers such as Houellebecq. The influential Gallimard crime imprint, the Série Noire (formerly home to Jean-Patrick Manchette and Thierry Jonquet), will also form part of our investigation. The class will additionally explore how recent French fiction (Virginie Despentes) has been inspired by the US TV series form and consider to what extent the contemporary French novel (Leila Slimani, Delphine de Vigan) too builds on the form of American bestsellers. The porous relationship between the contemporary novel and film and music will also be considered in this course.

In addition to theories and implicit politics of genre, this course will also explore how translation has contributed to transatlantic exchanges, key moments of Franco-American history (from the French Revolution, World Wars, military engagement, or otherwise, in Iraq), and cultural history (including French anti-Americanism, the pivotal political role played by Jack Lang, and the 1992 opening of Disneyland Paris).

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

This course does not yet form part of the AUP General Education/GLACC requirements.

Course Outline

Week Commencing	Monday Class	Thursday Class
21/1	Introductions	Sketching some important dates
28/1	Writing genre	Writing and crime The néo-polar
4/2	Writing and crime Manchette	Writing and crime Manchette
11/2	Writing the 90s Ellis	Class to be postponed

18/2	Writing the 90s Ellis	Writing the 90s Beigbeder
25/2	Writing the 90s Beigbeder	Writing the 90s Beigbeder
4/3	Break	Break
11/3	Break	Break
18/3	Writing the 90s Houellebecq	Writing the 90s Houellebecq
25/3	Writing the 90s Film screening, TBC	Writing the 2010s TBC
1/4	Writing the 2010s Desportes	Writing the 2010s Desportes
8/4	Writing the 2010s Desportes	Writing 'Greater Paris' Guène
15/4	Writing 'Greater Paris' Guène	Writing and 'satisfaction'/The domestic thriller Slimani

22/4	No class	Writing and 'satisfaction' Slimani
29/4	Writing and 'satisfaction' Slimani	Student presentations
6/5	Revision session	No class

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Windows on the World	Frédéric Beigbeder	Harper Perennial	9780007184705	Yes
Atomised	Michel Houellebecq	Vintage	9780099283362	Yes
Glamorama	Bret Easton Ellis	Picador	9780330536318	Yes
Lullaby	Leila Slimani	Faber and Faber	9780571337545	Yes
Vernon Subutex One	Virginie Despentes	Maclehose Pres	9780857055422	Yes
The Mad and the Bad	Jean-Patrick Manchette	Serpent's Tale	9781590177204	Yes
Just Like Tomorrow	Faiza Guéne	Definitions	9781862301580	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

1. Research paper (30%).

This assignment will be based around the discussion of one or more literary texts (or literary texts and films) as agreed with the professor. The exact nature of the project (will it be a conventional scholarly essay or some form of digital project?) is also to be decided upon.

This assignment will be the opportunity for students to demonstrate a sustained critical engagement with a number of texts – ideally those inspired by class readings, rather than texts directly studied in class. Students will be encouraged to draw out themes in the texts that relate to the major themes considered in the class with the aim of demonstrating the critical reflection that has taken place during the semester. The nature of the assignment will likely be a traditional academic essay, but student who wish to take a more digital approach (such as using software to map film and music influences) will be encouraged to do so in consultation with Professor Williams.

2. Midterm paper (at home) (15%). Title, deadline and length to be confirmed.

3. Final exams (15%)

These two assignments will require the students to write structured essays responding to

specific essay prompts concerning the texts studied in class. Students will be encouraged to make clear their engagement with both primary and secondary text material.

4. Presentation and participation (20%)

This part of the grade will be based on attendance, engagement with and preparation for ongoing classroom discussions. Students will be invited, too, to present a personal response to a section of one of the core texts studied which problematizes the core concepts of “Americannness” and “Frenchness”.

5. Collaborative digital project (20%)

This nature of this activity will be agreed on in class following start-of-semester brainstorm activity. It will aim to provide a home for short student reactions to the texts studied in class (blog posts, podcasts, mapping – places, film and musical references) and encourage, too, students to reflect on-going moments of Franco-American Exchange in contemporary culture.

The form of this activity will be agreed upon depending on the interests and skills of the class members. It will, however, almost certainly take the form of an online journal which will evolve throughout the semester and provide a forum for showcasing student responses to and engagement with the issues, texts and ideas discussed. It may well, for example, host short written contributions from students in addition to links to film and music clips which relate to the texts studied. It will also host an evolving reading list and a list of (streaming) music and cinematic/television links. In the early weeks of the semester, students will be provided with a clear grading rubric based on the form of this project. That said, there are likely to be moments this semester when laptop use is encouraged.

Other

Laptops and mobile phone use policy

The use of mobile phones is not permitted in class, except when special permission is granted. I don't want to see them on your desks or on your laps or be distracted by buzzing or beeping. If students repeatedly use mobile phones, or class is disrupted because of them, their final grade will be reduced by one letter. All phones should be switched off and in bags or pockets. I'm not a fan of using laptops in class, particularly for reading, and I'd prefer you to refrain. Please discuss with your professor if you need to use a laptop. That said, there are likely to be moments this semester when laptop use is encouraged.

Online resources

This class has a BlackBoard site, where readings will be made available

Online collaboration is a key element for readings, discussions and textual inquiry. We'll be using a website, <https://francoamericannovel.wordpress.com>, as a starting point to share links and to host a dynamic reading list, so please add it to your bookmarks.

Other resources

Remember that AUP's Academic Resource Centre (ARC) and Writing Lab can assist you in your writing. The Writing Lab's online site is the place to go for information on writing research papers, using and citing sources, creating bibliographies in MLA format, etc. You can also make an appointment to get help with your writing from a Writing Lab tutor. The AUP librarians will also be happy to help you in your research.

Visit the Library online at: <http://library.aup.fr/>. It is located at 9 Rue de Monttessuy.