

Viewing: **FR 179 : Migration and French National Identity**

Last approved: 04/28/22 3:56 am

Last edit: 04/27/22 10:57 am

History

1. Jun 16, 2017 by Kathy Martensen (kmartens)
2. Apr 28, 2022 by Zsuzsanna Fagyal (zsfagyal)

General Information

Effective Term:

College: Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department/Unit Name (ORG Code): French and Italian (1985)

Course Subject: French (FR)

Course Number: 179

Course Title: Migration and French National Identity

Abbreviated Title: Migration & French National ID

Course

Description:

Studies books and films that introduce students to historical and contemporary debates surrounding French national identity in migrant and immigrant contexts in France. Emphasizes cultural difference and the complexities of the post-colonial world. Emphasizes themes of collective identity and community formation, immigration and exile, tensions between relations of domination and exploitation and between colonizing and colonized peoples, and the cultural pluralities of community and nation.

Justification

Justification for change:

Please Note: a syllabus is required for General Education review:

Course Information

Course Credit

Course credit:

Undergraduate: 3

Graduate:

Professional:

Registrar Use**Only:**

Banner Credit: 3

Billable Hours: 3

Grading Type

Grading type: Letter Grade

Alternate Grading
Type (optional):

Available for DFR: No

Repeatability

May this course be repeated? No

Credit Restrictions

Credit
Restrictions:**Advisory Statements**

Prerequisites:

Concurrent
Enrollment
Statement:Restricted
Audience
Statement:

Cross-listing

Cross Listed

Courses:

Class Schedule Information

Class Schedule

Information:

Fees

Is a fee requested No
for this course?

Course Description in the Catalog Entry

This is how the above information will be represented in the Catalog:

Studies books and films that introduce students to historical and contemporary debates surrounding French national identity in migrant and immigrant contexts in France. Emphasizes cultural difference and the complexities of the post-colonial world. Emphasizes themes of collective identity and community formation, immigration and exile, tensions between relations of domination and exploitation and between colonizing and colonized peoples, and the cultural pluralities of community and nation.

Additional Course Notes

Enter any other
course
information
details to be
included in the
catalog:

Course Detail

Frequency of
course:
Other

Describe other
frequency:
once every two semesters

Duration of the Full

course

Anticipated 150

Enrollment:

Expected distribution of student registration:	Freshman: 50 %	Sophomore: 25 %	Junior: 25 %	Senior: N/A
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General Education

General Education Western/Comparative Culture(s)

Category Literature and the Arts

General Information

Is the course required for a major concentration? No

Is the course part of a sequence? No

What is the frequency with which the course will be offered?:

(For Example: every semester, once a year)

once every two semesters

Briefly describe how the course fulfills the General Education objectives:

The goal of this course is to introduce students to historical and contemporary debates surrounding French national identity in migrant and immigrant contexts in France. It presents students with a longitudinal perspective on migrant communities in France as they are represented in selected literature, cinema, and other cultural productions from early modern to present times. These sources will draw on a variety of literary perspectives on national identity formation, migratory movements from former French colonies to the main metropolitan areas of France. Many of these new communities find their ethnic origins in France's ex-colonies in Africa, Middle East, Asia, and the Caribbean. France's 300-year long history of colonial empire, coupled with unproblematized and unregulated assumptions of French universalism, conflict with the attitudes of the white majority French populations towards the presence of ex-colonial ethnic minorities. This fact coupled with France's positivist reframing of the colonial project (see French Law on Colonialism from 2005) ignores the cultural multiplicity and its impact on modern society. Article 4 of the aforementioned law requires teachers to "recognize the positive role" that France's presence abroad had, but such a position clashes with the current cultural landscape of France.

The course will provide a substantive but broad introduction to French political ideologies like "universalism", "republicanism", and "communitarianism"; but it also

aims at introducing students to the realities of postcolonialism and new movements in decolonialization. These concepts aim to broaden students' thought about western cultures and the communities that comprise them, encouraging reflective analysis about their own localities and communities in the U.S. It is therefore through this approach that students will enhance analytical thinking by means of short response essays as they reflect on the temporalities of migrant individuals in France and the multicultural reality that potentially makes up French national identity.

Within this framework, we will give special consideration to French identities at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender. Using excerpts from the English translation of the activist movement's *Neither Whores nor Doormats: Women's Rights and Human Rights in Contemporary France* manifesto by Fadela Amara and Sylvia Zappi (2006), we will discuss how ethnically-mixed working-class suburbs of large cities are considered male-dominated spaces where abuse of women is rampant, and how the opposition to the hijab (*le voile musulman*) in the name of republican secularism (*laïcité*), which is at the core of French politics, has been instrumentalized as discrimination against Muslim women.

Scholarship on women and gender are also broadly integrated into the course, and will be pointed out as essential, in the following ways:

Literary Texts:

Two texts five literary texts are woman authors: *Claire de Duras, Ourika*; and *Grace Ly, Young Model Female Citizen*.

Supplemental and Theoretical Readings on race and identity:

Five of the eight supplemental readings that aim at unpacking French national identity are authored by woman writers: Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*; Rokhaya Diallo "France refuses to talk about race"; *The Black Populations of France* edited by two women: Sylvain Pattieu and Emmanuelle Sibeaud (as well as Tyler Stovall); Colette Baune *The Birth of an Ideology*; and Fadela Amara and Sylvia Zappi *Neither Whores nor Doormats*.

Filmography

Of the three movies to be viewed during the course of the semester, we have one producer: Mame Fatou-Niang and her documentary *Mariannes Noires*

Finally, the course will explore debates of national identity formation and the perceptions of migratory movements to France regarding cultural identity. It will ask the questions: how do migrant and immigrant groups integrate themselves into the social fabric of a country in which they are forever considered ethnic minorities? To what extent are they able to continue to speak their own language(s) or dialects; practice their own religion(s); or embrace other aspects of their culture? The readings, filmography, and additional media encourage students to reflect on how these elements shape cultural identities. It will push students to identify what patterns of discrimination migrant communities have faced and continue to face? The course will interrogate which cultural artifacts of their countries of arrival do these ethnic minorities appropriate and transform to construct a framework for identity; while also

asking how does the collective vision of the nation shift or perhaps not shift in light of growing multiculturalism?

Describe the instructional format and provide special justification, if necessary:

The course will adopt a two-day, weekly lecture format. Each week will start with a face-to-face lecture that introduces a concept and topic, so students develop insight and background knowledge regarding the various postcolonial communities present in France today. The second weekly session will be face-to-face as well but geared towards interactive discussion (traditional group discussion guided by CITL group discussion strategies as well as technologically enhanced discussion using iClicker, Poll Everywhere, PearDeck) about the reality of these communities in a universalist society like France. This model allows for students to have dedicated sessions to address the empirical facts brought up in class while also being able to ask for clarifications. This instructional format also allows students to activate their knowledge to not just debate these matters but to discuss their implications in other contexts and to compare non-western immigrant communities in the U.S. additionally. This comparatist approach helps prioritize achieving the student learning outcomes of: Social Awareness and Cultural Understanding; and Global Consciousness.

Describe the means by which the Communication Skills goal will be achieved:

This course will promote the development of written skills by means of two larger written assignments, weekly short response essays, and critical thinking skills by means of two open-book quizzes. The short response essays serve to develop their written communication as well as ensure their comprehension of the weekly topics. The larger written assignments will help develop a student's argumentative skills through process-based writing that guides them to form an argument and support it while refining their college-level writing skills. Lastly, the quizzes are succinct methods for students to prove they understand the basic concepts of the class.

Additionally, the course seeks to encourage students to develop oral skills through communication with peers by means of small-group work. Drawing from the CITL guidelines for small-group discussion, students will be given the following before dividing into groups:

- A clear goal for the discussion based off a reading, or a video shown in class
- A problematized topic, aka an open-ended question they can share their thoughts on
- A clear debriefing method using a corkboard app (e.g.: Padlet) allowing groups to share major bullet points with the class.

Describe how evaluation and adherence to General Education guidelines will be monitored:

Please indicate the timeline for such evaluations

Each year, prior to offering the course, the instructors will present the course objectives and the instructional materials to faculty in the department in order to solicit their feedback. Everyone will be invited to provide feedback on content and can also visit

class sessions to advise instructors on course structure. Instructional Guidelines for general education, as outlined by the Provost, will be communicated to the faculty in advanced, and the results of the faculty review will be discussed at one of the faculty meetings during the semester when the course is taught: <https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/policies/guidelines-for-general-education-courses/#sthash.U8dgzo4W.vqpMPJx6.dpbs>.

Indicate those who will teach the course and describe procedures for training & supervising teaching assistants:

The course will be taught and supervised by the Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies whose specialty is Francophone minority cultures in France, North Africa, and Middle East. Additional tenure-line faculty with similar cultural and postcolonial training will aid in instruction from time to time. This ensures that there are always two individuals in the department prepared to teach the course with an expertise in minority communities in France.

Literature and the Arts

Describe the reading requirements in this course.

The course will feature texts from prominent French language authors whose works detail life for non-white French citizens living in France. *Ourika* by Claire du Duras is a classic 19th century text that introduces students to the colonial tradition in France and what it means/meant to be Black in France during the mid-1800s. Furthermore, students must confront the reality of a white woman (Claire de Duras) writing about the experiences of a black female youth. *The Slow Life* by Abdellah Taïa is a rich testimony of a character who is both gay, Moroccan, and Muslim living in Paris post-2015 terrorist attacks. It's a novel that demonstrates an intersectional approach to Frenchness through sexuality and national identity. Grace Ly's *Young Model Female Citizen* is one of a few examples of Asian authors discussing anti-Asian phobias in France. Her autofictional text highlights how even when individuals are born in France, they still aren't considered French because of their ethnicity. Finally, *A Shantytown Kid* is a look at the lower socio-economic groups predominantly of non-western ethnic minorities living in the Lyonnais suburbs and the systemic issues they face.

Describe the writing requirements in this course.

Students will have 14 Short Response Essays available to them throughout the semester. These low-stakes Short Response Essays are weekly and allow students to not only demonstrate reading comprehension, but also the opportunity to react to the primary source text or the critical/theoretical reading we use in class. Only the highest top 10 out of the 14 will be counted towards their grade allowing them the opportunity to grow in their writing based off the rubric feedback they get each week. In total,

these writing assignments are the equivalent to 6-7 pages.

Additionally, students will have two longer writing prompts that will be developed using a process-based approach. Per the syllabus, the Short Response Essay in Week 5 & 10 are dedicated to paper drafting. Students will elaborate on their topic as well as submit a general outline. These items will be graded via rubric, so students know whether their response to the topic is too general or their outline too broad helping them develop their own writing skills.

How does the course introduce students to the typical critical approaches and methods of the discipline, and to past accomplishments in the field?

Due to the H&A nature of the course, students are encouraged to write often in a low-stakes environment to help them develop communicative skills where they interpret how these authors expressed their lived experiences in France as non-western entities (judgement). Furthermore, since each primary source will be supplemented with some easy-to-digest critical theory, students will be engaging with the practice of criticism while simultaneously expanding their understanding of how cultural is articulated and expressed (professional practice and critical thinking).

How does the course foster the goals of humanistic study, including: skill in communication; discriminating judgment and appreciation of ideas; understanding of cultural traditions; appreciation awareness of cultural ethnic and national diversity; and reflection on the human condition?

Understanding culture is at the heart of the course because students will investigate how authors/artists confront their own ethnic reality with that of a dominant and monolithic ones like French universalism. We want students to be able to critique universalism and French republicanism for its rejection of national diversity all the while noticing how these authors and artists are embracing the pluralistic qualities of modern French society. Ultimately, this course exposes students to other examples of the human condition especially ones that our own student body might be able to recognize prevalent in U.S. culture. The critiques they foster towards French cultural tradition should provide them with new lens to examine the intersections of their cultures in the U.S.

If the course contains elements of more than one category within the Humanities and the Arts (literature, the arts, historical perspectives, or philosophical perspectives), explain why this course is more appropriate for the category for which it is proposed.

Is this a course in Yes
literature:

Show that the course gives significant consideration to the aesthetic characteristics and the

formal aspects of the works studied.

Each literary text studied in the course provides an introduction into multiple aspects of post-colonial theories, as well as theories of race and gender. In addition, the course will also address both the aesthetic and formal characteristics of the literary works studied, relating them to their historical and cultural contexts. It will be emphasized, for instance, that many foundational texts of modern French literature were produced during a period of struggle over the meaning of community, both religious (heresy) and political (wars of succession). These struggles are reflected in the proliferation of literary genre and diversity of voices, from epic poems to journalistic pamphlets, addressing the nature and forms of national identity and cultural diversity.

What aspects of literature will this course emphasize? They may include authorship, audience, cultural attitudes or values, specific themes, stylistic and generic features, historical, socio-political and/or philosophical issues.

The course will emphasize authorship and cultural and literary attitudes towards historical and socio-political aspects of individual and collective identities in autobiographies and autofictional work. It will also touch to specific themes, such as migrants, immigration, and social justice in novels and short stories.

Is this a course in Yes No
the arts:

List or describe the art forms, genres or specific objects to be studied.

How will the course concern itself with the characteristics of the medium and other appropriate issues, such as its social function, its means of conveying meaning, and the evaluation of the art forms?

Will the students participate in the creation of art? If so, please elaborate.

Western/Comparative Cultures

Show how the course treats topics and issues that promote a deeper understanding of the culture(s) discussed.

The course will provide students with a wide variety of written and audio-visual material that highlight the historical process of national identity formation and impact of historical migrations and the French colonial and postcolonial projects on the concept of French national identity. The works studied in this course emphasize issues of cultural difference and the complexities of concepts, such as nation, nationalism, universalism, and republicanism, but most importantly—identity. They will stress themes of immigration but also exile as these visual and textual sources will highlight the intersection of western ideologies and non-western practices. The course will underscore the complexities of languages of origin (i.e., Arabic, East Asian languages, Indigenous and Creole languages of the Caribbean), identity, and religion (Christianity vs Islam) that post-colonialism has problematized for France. For example, students will interrogate the role of Arabic in modern France today, but also examine the role of French in former colonies. Another example will be food: students will be tooled to understand the impact of Halal and Kosher practices on current food trends in France. While these are just examples, the idea is that students glean a better understanding of how perceptions and practices of French national identity interact with non-western migration practices from Africa, Asia, Pacific Islands, the Caribbean and even other European countries. Finally, it will highlight the immigrant or first-generation immigrant experience through short excerpts from autobiographical or autofictional works: •First-generation Asian: Grace Ly *A Young Model Citizen* •Queer Muslim immigrant: Abdellah Taïa, *A Slow Life* •First-generation Algerian: Azouz Begag, *Shantytown Kid* The chosen texts are short, accessible, and provide simple snapshots about life as an ethnic other in France.

Show how the course provides at least one of the following: (i) a broad description and analysis of the interaction of intellectual, artistic, political, economic, social, and other aspects of a society's cultural life; (ii) an intensive investigation of the cultural life of a society or group in a particular time and place; (iii) a focused investigation of particular aspects of the culture of a society or group (e.g., its art and architecture); or (iv) a comparative investigation of cultural systems and the development of constructs for cross-cultural sensitivity and analysis.

This course combines several forms of inquiry listed above, namely goals (i) and (ii) as it will introduce the French colonial empire to students as well as the de-colonialization of each major territory (MENA, Caribbean, Asia). Regarding goal (ii), the course will unpack the various issues listed above (e.g.: language, religion, cultural practices) of each group and how those practices integrate (or not) into French society. Finally, the course's tertiary contribution aligns with goal (iv) as its aim is to inform students on cross-cultural competency as well as awareness of the impacts of immigration on diasporic populations in France. Weeks 6, 9, and 13 are dedicated to comparative analysis as they are "summary weeks" where students are completing major units like language, religion, identity, etc.... Students will be tasked with comparative analysis of identifying what the actual conflict is (cultural, social, religious, etc...) with the aim of ultimately responding to the major question of the course: How do the principles of French republicanism engage and or with non-western practices of the country's ethnic minority populations (final Short Response Essay, Week 15).

If the course contains elements of both the Western, U.S. Minority, and/or Non-Western categories, show how the emphasis of the course makes it more appropriate for the Western/Comparative Cultures category for which it is being proposed.

Although we feel that there are important discrepancies between the perceptions of national and ethnic identities by the host (French) community and non-Western ethnic minorities living on its soil, we agree that the course is, still, primarily presenting non-western cultures through the lens of a western cultural community. Elements indicating a more pronounced Western cultural focus are: (a) the Western gaze on working-class immigrant condition that transpires in most of our readings and films (e.g., *Shantytown Kid* by Azouz Begag, and *La Haine* by Mathieu Kassovitz), (b) our guiding concepts, such as race, nation, and class, are all of Western-focused and originating in Western philosophical and cultural traditions, and (c) the sole cultural and geographical focus on the Metropole, France, rather than its many, diverse former colonies, or Francophonie outside of France.

Show how the course provides understanding and awareness of significant aspects of the cultural tradition evolved from the confluence of Greek and Roman philosophical thought and European religious traditions, i.e., the cultural traditions associated with European and North American countries; OR show how the course provides understanding and appreciation of significant aspects of the cultural traditions of both Western and Non-Western cultural traditions, and indicate the comparisons and contrasts drawn between the different traditions.

From a predominantly Western comparative perspective, this course presents multiple non-Western cultural traditions, including but not limited to food and religion across the French-speaking world. For instance, the course provides a better understanding and appreciation of significant aspects of food traditions in both French and its minority ethnic cultures. Veganism and Halal and Kosher practices will be covered and compared to food consumption and policies in non-western countries where France had a colonial presence. Another important source of comparisons and contrasts between Western and non-Western traditions in this course will be religion. Particular emphasis will be placed on celebrations, such as Ramadan and the challenges faced by observant Muslims fasting from sunrise to sundown during Ramadan in an increasingly secular France.

Additional Course Information

Does this course No
replace an
existing course?

Does this course No
impact other

courses?

Does the addition of this course impact the departmental curriculum? No

Has this course been offered as a special topics or other type of experimental course? No

Will this course be offered on-line?

Face-to-Face

Faculty members who will teach this course:

Daniel Maroun, Julie Gaillard, Felisa Reynolds

Course ID: 1009198

Comments to Reviewers:

All material submitted is from Dan Maroun; the Head is acting as scribe in absence of an experienced OM.

Course Edits

Proposed by:

Key: 4095