Paris as Text and Context (HIST 334)

Course Description: This course examines themes, topics and episodes related to the cultural history of Paris through selected readings in literature, sociology, architecture, and gender studies.

Course Objectives: Course assignments— a collection of primary sources, secondary literature, and an optional site visit— are designed to develop skills in “reading” the history of a city in order to better understand the links between urban and cultural change. Students will learn about early planning, development and administration; the evolution of architectural design; the organization of domestic, public, and commercial spaces; the regulation of social and economic activities; the role of marginal and bohemian communities; traditions of popular unrest and political revolt; the conditions that foster multiple urban cultures; as well as how urban landscapes mirror and project urban history and identity.

Student Learning Objectives: Students will have the opportunity to: *identify dominant historical and contemporary urban cultural trends and patterns (such as the geography of gentrification, architectural civics, and urban museumification); *demonstrate the ability to access instructional materials via digital portals; *synthesize primary and secondary materials from different disciplines into a final research project; *and, evaluate the pertinence of evidence culled from primary sources pertinent to the final research project on the city being examined.

Learning Objectives Measured: Via weekly 2-page dialogical reading essays that measure the student’s ability to identify and evaluate relevant materials along with a final 12-15-page site project or research paper synthesizing: assigned readings, library and/or field research, and evaluating historical continuities and discontinuities across time and space and through selected topics and themes.

Optional Lab Component will be available through the Honors Program for students desiring to build historically accurate 3-D models using Sketchup2 or develop learning modules using KML for the Hypercities “Digital Paris Project.”

Spring Break travel is sometimes offered as an optional dimension to this course. Those who participate in this travel component of this course must complete a travel-based on-site project that includes the collection of data using the technologies at their disposal.
**Course Requirements:** regular attendance; close reading skills; weekly reading responses and/or class presentations (worth 50% of final grade); one 5-page essay (worth 20% of final grade); a final paper annotated research bibliography and prospectus (worth 5% of final grade); and a final 10-page research paper or site project (recommended for students incorporating a CITY VISIT) that addresses themes or topics related to the history of the city examined over a minimum period of two centuries (worth 25% of final grade).

**General Expectations** to excel in this course, you should expect to do the following:
1) Study and prepare approximately 10 hours per week outside of class;
2) Carefully read approximately 80-100 pages per week outside of class;
3) Make school your first priority and attend class regularly;
4) Attend class and turn in all assigned work on time;
5) Be prepared to write about 60 typed pages.

**Attendance** at all scheduled outings and class participation are necessary for you to learn. Each student should arrive at class on time and remain the entire class period. Refrain from distracting those around you during class discussions. Polite and constructive participation is expected. I adhere to the University Policy outlined in the current University catalog. In the catalog it says that if you miss 25% of your classes without legitimate excuse, you may receive an ‘F’.

**Classroom Demeanor** that contributes to a negative educational environment will not be tolerated. I also expect each student to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity.

**Extra Credit:** There are no traditional extra credit assignments in this course, as they are unfair to those students who work diligently and reward, instead, those that wait until the last minute.

**Reading Response Grading:** √+ outstanding work, equiv. to an A; √ acceptable work, equiv. to a B; feel free to come in if you want to improve your understanding of the material; √- equiv. to a C; suggests that work is not being done carefully, or you are having difficulty understanding concepts; you are encouraged to come in for extra help; √0 for work that was not done or isn’t worth the paper it is written on or raises academic honesty concerns.

**Paris Presentation:** During the semester, each student will put together a ten-minute presentation on one aspect of the Parisian cityscape (the Bois de Boulogne, Place de la Concorde, Hotel de Ville, the Bon Marché, the Eiffel Tower, etc.); presentations should address the subject’s historical origins and lasting significance. While there is no specific formula for these presentations, you are encouraged to use images, film clips and websites to support your presentations (devised by Anne O'Neil-Henry).

**Grading:** A= 92-100; B+= 87-91; B= 82-86; C+= 77-81; C= 70-76; D+= 68-69; D= 60-67; F= 0-59; FX= failure as a result of academic dishonesty.

**Student Consultations:** You are welcome to call me or stop by my office at any time. The best time to catch me is after class and during my scheduled office hours. If these times are inconvenient, I would be happy to meet with you at a more agreeable time. You may contact me by phone, by email, or by leaving a note for me in my faculty mailbox.
Required Readings:

Alistair Horne, *The Seven Ages of Paris*
Emile Zola, *The Kill*
Robert Herbert, *Impressionism*
George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris*...
Ph. Whalen, “Paris Reader” CD-ROM
Honoré de Balzac, *Old Goriot*

Schedule of Lectures and List of Required Readings:

Week 1  
**Seventeenth-Century Paris**
**Film Clip:** Paris seen form the Sky (8), “We Built this City: Romans Origins” (1-17:00)
**Documentary:** “We Built this City: The Pont Neuf” (17-29:00 mins.)

Week 2  
**Eighteenth-Century Paris**
**Documentary:** “We Built this City: Cemeteries” (23-30:00 mins.)

Week 3  
**Napoleonic Paris**
**Documentary:** “We Built this City: Underground Water System” (10-16 mins.)

Week 4  
**Restoration Paris**
**Read:** Balzac, *Old Goriot* (selections)

Week 5  
**Development and Speculation**
**First Essay on Ancien Régime Paris Due**
**Documentary:** “We Built this City: Haussmann’s Rebuilding” (30:00-39 mins.).
**Film Clip:** “Children of Paradise” (Boulevard du Crime sequence).
**Read:** Hall, “The City of Perpetual Works” and Zola, *The Kill*, “Introduction” and chs. 1 and 2.
Week 6  Transforming Paris under Napoleon III  
**Documentary:** David Jordan, “Nineteenth-Century Paris” (30 min.)  

Week 7  Decadence, Parasitism, Dissipation, and Creativity  
**Film Clips:** “Paris by Night” and TBA  
**Read:** Herbert, “Café and Café Concert” and Zola, *The Kill*, chs. 5 and 6. Also consider Steele, “Fashionable Rendez-vous.”

Week 8  Popular Urban Culture  
**Slide Show:** The Café Concert and Dance Halls  
**Read:** Olsen, “Paris: The Garden and the Street,” Hall, “City of Light.” Also consider Herbert, “Theatre, Opera and Dance.”  
**Explore Art Nouveau** @<http://exhibitions.europeana.eu/exhibits/show/art-nouveau/themes>

SPRING BREAK

“There are in Paris, certain streets,” wrote Honoré de Balzac in Ferragus, “as dishonored as can be any man convicted of infamy; then there are noble streets, also streets that are simply honest, also young streets concerning whose morality the public has not yet formed any opinion; then there are murderous streets, streets older than the oldest possible dowagers, estimable streets, streets that are always clean, streets that are always dirty, workingmen’s streets, students’ streets, and mercantile streets. In short, the streets of Paris have human qualities, and impress us by their physiognomy with certain ideas against which we are defenseless.”


Week 9  Visualizing Urban Culture  
**Digital Library Instructional Class**  
**Film Clip:** Marcel Carné, “Children of Paradise” (Theatre des Funambules sequence)  
**Read:** Gold and Gold, “The Place of Spectacle,” Higonnet, “City of Pleasure,” and Halpern, “Mind Control and the Internet.”

Week 10  The Paris Commune  
**Office Consultations on Final Research Papers**  
**Film Clip:** René Clément, “Gervaise” (opening sequence)  

Week 11  The Cultural Politics of the Third French Republic
**Final Paper Annotated Bibliography Due**

**Documentary:** “Paris the Luminous Years”


Week 12  **Democratization and Anti-Semitism**

**Film Clip:** Jean Vigo, “Zéro de Conduite” (44 min.).


Week 13  **Apogee: The 1900 Paris International Exposition**

**Documentary:** “The 1900 Paris Exposition” (20 min.) or “Paris, 1900-1914.”

**Office Visits to review Final Project Drafts**

**YouTube:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-BE-ZTV10>


Week 14  **Cosmopolitanism and Paris Moderne**


**Film Clip:** Jean Vigo, “L’Atalante” (underwater, cabaret, and Old Jules)


Week 15  **Interwar Paris Mythologized**

**Musical Interlude:** Popular Front Songbook

**Film Clip:** Marcel Carné, “Port of Shadows.”

**Read:** Orwell, Down and Out in Paris (selections), Colette (Willy), selections from Backstage at the Music Hall, and Chandler and Whalen, “The 1937 Paris International Exposition.”

**Final paper due at scheduled final examination** The specific date and time for the final can be found at: <http://www.coastal.edu/registrar/examsched.html>

**Digital Resources:**


“Bibliography of the History of Paris” @ <http://www.h-france.net/bibliogparis2.html>

“Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century” @ <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/paris/>

“Online resources for 19th-century France” @ <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/paris/online.html>

“Belle Epoque Comix” <www.coolfrenchcomics.com>


**Essay Format:** all essays are to be typewritten and be formatted accordingly: 1-inch margins all around; 1 1/2 spaced, provide footnotes, and use a conventional font and size. Assistance in all aspects of written assignments is available at the Writing Center in the Prince Building. Late Essays- will loose one letter grade per class. This will also apply to papers returned for not
properly following the formatting instructions. Also, remember to put your name, course number, and section number on your work.

Citation Guide: <http://libguides.coastal.edu/content.php?hs=a&pid=48406>

Essay Grading:
A= This paper is *insightful*. It addresses the assignment in a way that indicates your comprehension of and control over the assignment itself as well as an understanding of the underlying issues. The message is communicated *clearly*, *concisely*, and *directly*. There is confidence in this writing.

B= This paper meets and, at times, exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment. The paper indicates that you are *beginning*, at times, to think through and deal with major ideas in the assignment. The message is communicated with generally effective clarity, directness, and conciseness. Some *unevenness* in writing may be apparent.

C= While the paper offers *little insight* into the greater issues of the assignment, it meets the basic requirements. The message, for the most part, is reasonably clear, concise, and direct, although there may be *unevenness* in the writing.

D= The basic requirements of the assignment are *partially met*; however, additional revision is necessary if you are to communicate the message clearly. There is considerable *unevenness* in the writing.

F= The assignment's *basic requirements* are met only marginally or are not met at all. The writing is not clear, concise, nor direct.

**Plagiarism** is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship and undermines the credibility of academic inquiry. Generally, plagiarism is the use of another’s work and the presentation of it as one’s own. Plagiarism takes many forms; the clearest abuse is the use of another's language or written work without quotation marks and citation (even if it is in one's own words). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: any limited borrowing, without attribution, of another person's research findings, hypotheses, data, theories, rhetorical strategies, interpretations; the submission of laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., not authored by the student; the submission of material copied from any published source without attribution (including the Internet); the resubmission of a student’s previously submitted laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., without the instructor’s approval. More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without attribution. For more information about the “Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility,” see the CCU Student Handbook.

**Make-ups:** students must take all exams and hand in all assignments at the specified times and places. If this is impossible due to *extraordinary* circumstances, inform me before class and alternative arrangements may be possible (extraordinary circumstances include documented illness, death in the family, or institutional activities as approved by the Provost or academic deans (such as playing sports or marching in a band…!).

**Reasonable accommodation policy:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so that
we might discuss accommodations and resources necessary to insure your full participation and facilitate your educational experience here at Coastal. You also need to contact Counseling Services who will assess your disability and provide you with documentation that you will pass on to me.

**Professor Whalen retains the right to alter the syllabus, assignments and course requirements as deemed necessary for student learning during the semester**

All assignments are due by 5PM on dates indicated in syllabus. There will be no extensions without prior arrangement with the professor. Late projects are subject to grade reductions.

**Why study cities:** Cities are constantly built and rebuilt; each successive layer leaves a trace. Cities have many constituent parts that reveal their past industrial, commercial, and residential districts; downtowns, suburbs, and now “exurbs”; specialized arts districts, shopping malls, and recreational areas; parks and greenways, as well as infrastructure overhead and underground. Each evolves with particular economic, cultural, institutional, social, and demographic characteristics. The urban form reflects the values of those people who pass through it, even as the landscape in turn shapes the mentality and ideals of those same people. The result is a rich, complex text of artifacts: houses, museums, schools, churches, factories, and banks; playgrounds, parks, shopping districts, malls, plazas, and public art; sidewalks, alleys, boulevards, sewers, electric and phone lines (or towers), and freeways. Each provides clues to the environmental, economic, cultural, social, and political context in which they were built, to the people who built them. – **Mark Tebeau, Cities in History**

“The city [...] does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antenna of the lightening rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls...”

– **Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities**
The City as Text and Context – Site Assignment
(Adapted from “Investigating a Site in the Boston Region” @ <http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/urban-studies-and-planning/11-016j-the-once-and-future-city-spring-2006/assignments/>)

The city itself provides a text as rich as those you will read for this course. Using old maps, post-cards, prints, souvenirs, and photographs, but primarily your own eyes and mind, you will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from "read" a site of your choosing. This project has four components; the assignments vary in length from two to eight pages, a total of approximately twenty-six pages. The final assignment must be revised and resubmitted.

Assignment 1: Select a Site. Describe your site and reflect on why it interests you. What questions does the place raise for which you hope to find answers? The text should be about 500 words (approximately two typed pages) and accompanied by a hand-drawn map.

Assignment 2: Reading the Site: Artifacts, Layers, Traces, and Trends. Walking around your site, what clues can you find about the past in the present and/or possible future uses? What different kinds of /evidence traces can you find? What period and population of the location’s history do they belong to? How do they connect the past with the present? The objective of this assignment is to appreciate and understand how past inhabitants, events and ways of life have left traces and consequently inform the present. Your text should be equivalent to about 750 words (approximately three typed pages) and accompanied by illustrations.

Assignment 3: Your Site Through/Over Time. Identify and trace changes over time by comparing your site’s character(istics) at several points in time, using different types of sources. What changes do you find? How would you characterize them? Are the changes gradual or do they seem to happen suddenly? Do changes within a time period seem related? How about from one time to another? Can you find patterns in the changes? What might explain the changes you found? Were they merely an outcome of actions by individuals or do they reflect broader forces (social, cultural, political, economic, or natural processes and conditions at local, regional, national, or global scales; policies; events; technological changes)? The text should be equivalent to about 1000 words (approximately four typed pages) and accompanied by illustrations.

Assignment 4: Final Essay. Combine your previous essays and additional materials to produce a final rough draft of approximately 10-15 pages in length. We will read this draft together before you complete a final version.
Old Goriot - Character List

**Mme. de Beauséant** – A socially elite cousin of Eugène’s. A Grand Dame of Paris, she helps to try to and bring Rastignac up the Parisian social ladder.

**Christophe** – The Masion Vauquer’s “handyman” who lives in the attic.

**Comtesse Anastasie de Restaud** – One of Goriot’s daughters whose father helped her marry very well, if not for love. A great beauty.

**Mme. Couture** – The widow of a commissary-general in the service of the Republic, she supports and is raising Victorine Taillefer whose mother was a close relation and died brokenhearted in the widow’s house after her husband disowned Victorine for doubtful parentage.

**Mme. Delphine de Nucingen** – One of Goriot’s daughters who married a wealthy but common banker (Nucingen) and is therefore hugely jealous of her more socially prominent sister.

**Eugène de Rastignac** – A young law student who lives dolefully on the third floor, originally from the country and a poor family. Eugène sense of duty and glimpse of Parisian society instills him with a strong ambition to obtain social success and a débutante love.

**Poiret** – And old scarecrow of a laborer who hardly contributes anything to dinner conversation, and resides on the second floor of Masion Vauquer.

**Mlle. Michonneau** – An elderly spinster whose wasted figure and face still hint at a beautiful youth and scandalous past. Lives on the same floor as Goriot at Mme Vaquer’s boarding house.

**Old Goriot** – A retired vermicelli-maker whose misfortunes have slowly moved him from the first floor of Masion Vauquer to the dismally regarded third floor. Quiet, mysterious, and full of suffering, Goriot (though once prosperous and well respected) has become the butt of all the other lodgers’ jokes.

**Sylvie** – Mme. Vauquer’s portly maid and cook; lives in the attic.

**Vautrin** – A resolute man with a certain hardness, forty years old with a black wig and dyed whiskers who rents rooms on the second floor. His appearance of easy good nature ingratiates him to Mme. Vauquer despite his suspected temper.

**Mme. Vauquer** – A worn and petty widow close to fifty years old who has “seen a great deal of trouble” and now presides over her boarding house, The Masion Vauquer, as the proud warden over her somewhat dilapidated prison. Owns the boarding house in which Goriot resides; she secretly has a sort of attraction to Goriot.

**Victorine Taillefer** – A gentle and caring schoolgirl pained by love for a father who will not recognize her. She lived in Mme Couture’s room at Mme. Vaquer’s boarding house.

**Maxime de Trailles** – has a complicated relationship with Anastasie.

**De Marsay** – Delphine’s lover.