061.396: Modern Paris on Film (Fall 2017)
Th 1:30-3:50
Screenings: We 7:30-10

Description
Paris holds a unique place in the French imagination: celebrated as a city that both reflects the country and stands alone, it has long been a site for reflection on the vicissitudes of national history. We will investigate that history using movies about Paris as sources for the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they were produced and consumed. Pairing these films with analytic secondary sources will help us analyze what some of France’s most important film-makers have said about community, modernization, revolution and immigration, and consider why those movies resonated with audiences. We will consider how such issues shape our perception of city and nation alike.

Course Requirements
This course requires students to engage discussion and a consistent and informed way. Give advance thought to relationship between texts and film, and arrive with questions and interpretive issues to discuss with your fellow students.

Reading. Read texts before the screening, and review afterward. Print out texts from eReserves, mark them up, bring to class. (Hard copy only: no screens during discussion). Keep the following questions in mind. What is a text’s principal argument? How does author support that argument? How does argument illuminate or complicate our understanding of the film? Does it build on other issues we have addressed? What is your opinion of the argument and what evidence do you have for your reading?

Watching. DVDs are on reserve in MSEL to watch outside of scheduled screenings. Watch movies you write about at least twice: once for plot, characters, and themes; again to consider how those elements work together. Take notes as you watch, keeping the following questions in mind. What issues does a film raise beyond plot? How do plot, editing, cinematography, and acting shape your sense of the city? What about space, lighting, or camera angles? Is Paris a character in its own right or simply a backdrop? What relationship do you see between a film and texts assigned with it? What relationships do you see between the film you’re watching and others we’ve discussed?

Discussion. A seminar is collaborative. Participation helps you make sense of new ideas by sharing opinions and the growing body of knowledge on which they are based. Know your materials in advance, be prepared to listen to and engage what others have to say in a thoughtful, civil way. Post discussion points on Blackboard which link film to texts by 10 a.m Thurs.

Attendance: because we work as a collective, attendance is vital. Students are allowed one unexcused absence. Under ordinary circumstances, each additional absence will lower your participation grade by 1/3 (e.g., from B+ to B, etc).

Writing. Two medium-length papers about an assigned film and its accompanying
texts, and a longer paper based on independent research and films not viewed in class. Papers may not just summarize plot but must offer critical analysis of specific visual, performative, aural or thematic dimension of a film, relating those issues to accompanying readings to explain how a film shapes our sense of the past.

Specific writing assignments are:
+ Two 4-5 page papers about how a film and accompanying texts represent Paris. Explain how the film advances its “argument” through plot or themes, cinematography, editing, directing, or acting, and analyze relationship between film and texts assigned with it. (Citations may be parenthetical, in the text, or in footnotes). Depth matters more than breadth, so develop a single issue as fully as possible using specific examples. Email paper as MSWord doc attachment by 6 pm Tuesday, following discussion of film you’re writing about.
+ 8-10 pp. research paper about two films on a theme covered in class. You may elaborate on ideas developed in a mid-length paper, incorporating an additional film and at least five scholarly texts not on syllabus.

No late papers, no incompletes without prior arrangement or a medical excuse.

**Grades**
- Participation 20%
- Blackboard Posts 5%
- 1st short paper 20%
- 2nd short paper 25%
- Final proposal & preliminary bibliography 5%
- Final paper 25%

**Required Texts:** available on-line through eReserves
**Recommended Text:** Tyler Stovall, *France since WWII* (2002)
**Lab Fee:** $40 will be charged to your JHU account.

**JHU POLICIES**

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with Johns Hopkins University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations you may require. Request for accommodations should be made in the first week of the quarter, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services to determine appropriate accommodations. For more info contact Dr. Richard Sanders in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720 or studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Academic Integrity at Johns Hopkins: Students are expected to comply with University regulations for academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to the instructor before an assignment is due and examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam or plagiarizing a paper (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student’s paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also
apply. Guidelines for determining academic dishonesty and procedures followed in a suspected incident of academic dishonesty are detailed on the website. For more information, visit: http://ethics.jhu.edu

Schedule
Th Sep 7 Introduction

National Capital, Commercial Capital
We Sep 13 Jean-Pierre Jeunet, *Le fabuleux destine d’Amélie Poulain / Amélie* (2001) 122 min

Popular Front Paris
We Sep 20 Jean Renoir, *Le crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936) 80 min

Old & New
We Sep 27 François Truffaut, *Les 400 coups / 400 Blows* (1959) 99 min.

We Oct 4 Jacques Tati, *Mon Oncle / My Uncle* (1958) 119 min

Political Tumult in the 60s
We Oct 11 Jean Rouch & Edgar Morin, *Chronique d’un Eté / Chronicle of a Summer* (1961) 85 min
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Movie/Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>We Oct 18</td>
<td>Jean-Luc Godard, <em>Tout va bien / Everything’s Fine</em> (1972) 95 min</td>
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<td>We Oct 25</td>
<td>Agnès Varda, <em>Cleo de 5 à 7 / Cleo from 5 to 7</em> (1962) 90 min</td>
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<td>We Nov 1</td>
<td>Michael Haneke, <em>Caché</em> (2005) 117 min</td>
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<td>We Nov 15</td>
<td>Eric Rohmer, <em>Les Nuits de Pleine Lune / Full Moon in Paris</em> (1985) 102 min</td>
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<td>Nov 20-24</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving Break</strong></td>
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Gentrification & Globalization

We Nov 29  Cedric Klapisch, *Chacun Cherche son Chat / When the Cat’s Away* (1996) 91 min

We Dec 6   Claire Simon *Gare du Nord / Station North* (2013) 119 minutes

Dec 13 Final Papers due. Email as MSWord doc by 6 pm

Guidelines to Coursework

Blackboard Posts
Posts should get excite thought about film & texts before class. They should be no more than a ½ page, highlighting how texts shed light on or complicate the film. Close with a possible discussion question or respond to someone else’s question, suggesting how to reformulate it with explicit reference to assigned readings and film.

Discussion
“A”: regular and sustained contributions to discussion that respond to what others say and are well-informed by assigned texts and references to the films.
“B”: less frequent contributions to discussion with qualities enumerated above
“C”: regular attendance with minimal or no participation lower than “C”: little or no participation with excessive absences

Paper Guidelines
Papers must explicitly discuss films and assigned readings, examining the relationship between them. Keep the following in mind.

Narrow your focus
You cannot say everything there is to be said about your particular film (and its accompanying readings) in a short paper. Focus a single theme or technical aspect and explain how it illuminates your larger interpretive or analytic concerns.
Provide a clear, strong argument

Your essay should not simply summarize a film’s plot and the arguments in the accompanying texts. It should make a an argument that you support with evidence from film and texts.

Begin your essay by stating your argument as clearly as possible. This may require several good declarative sentences. Accordingly, write a rough draft of your introduction when you begin to write and thoroughly revise it after you finish writing and revising your paper. The introduction should be the last thing you revise because we often do not have a perfectly clear sense of what we are arguing until we finish writing. Your introduction should convey your final sense of clarity to your reader.

As a rule, your first (introductory) paragraph and your final (concluding) paragraph should be brief, approximately a half-page and certainly no more than three-quarters of a page in length. Do not take up valuable space at the start of your essay by giving lengthy background information: state your argument and move on. (If the background info is essential, it belongs in the body of the paper. If it is not essential, leave it out altogether).

Organize your essay clearly and effectively

Each paragraph in the body of your essay should contribute to the logical development of your argument. Think in terms of a series of main points. Make sure each paragraph develops just one point, and use topic sentences to make perfectly clear the main point of each paragraph. If a point you want to make is especially complicated (and/or important to your overall argument), you may want to dedicate two consecutive paragraphs to developing it. Otherwise, limit development of each main point to one paragraph. Order the presentation of your main points carefully in order to build your argument logically and systematically. Use clear transition sentences to ensure that each paragraph flows from the previous one.

Demonstrate your main points with relevant examples from sources

To argue persuasively, you must analyze and interpret sources. Avoid lengthy general discussions and straightforward summaries of your sources. Use sources to illustrate the main points of your argument. For film sources, describe key points in the scene that concerns you or quote the dialogue in question. For textual sources, explain the essence of the author’s argument or include a pithy quotation. But do not assume that even the most evocative scene or quotation can make your point for you. Comment on your examples to explain how they advance your argument. To ensure that each paragraph reinforces your analysis, avoid long block quotations when a briefer quotation or your own summary will suffice.

Do not assume too much knowledge

Get in the habit of writing for a general reader. In other words, do not assume that your reader is familiar with the films and texts you’re analyzing. Explain a film’s plot or theme with one or two sentences (three at the absolute most) and identify characters when you first introduce them. For example:
Blade Runner imagines a dystopian future in which cyborgs are physically indistinguishable from human beings. As it follows police agent Rick Deckard on his mission to locate and “retire” rogue cyborgs, the film asks what it means to be human.

The above description does not exhaust the film’s plot or its many themes, but suffices for an examination of how Blade Runner confuses categories of man and machine. The introduction of Deckard lets us know who he is and what role he plays in the film.

When you introduce a text, cite the author’s full name and include the title of the book or article in question, before moving on to the part of the argument that concerns you. For example:

In The Return of Martin Guerre, Natalie Davis argues that peasants had some room to negotiate the material and social constraints that defined their world.

Eliminate typographical and grammatical errors
Your essays should have a bare minimum of typographical and grammatical errors. Numerous mistakes – in particular, sentences needing repair – may well contribute to a significant drop in grade. Among the most common writing mistakes are run-on sentences (sentences that are unnecessarily long or convoluted); unclear references; failure to ensure that subjects, verbs, and objects are in agreement; and sentences with improper punctuation (in particular, commas and semi-colons). Multiple verb tenses are also a common source of confusion. Finally, avoid the passive voice whenever possible.

Most writing problems are relatively easy to solve, above all by consulting a writing manual and/or a writing specialist, and then consciously working to improve those aspects of your writing that are causing you trouble. If you have been alerted to problems with clarity of expression, take drafts of your papers to one of the writing centers for help editing. Correct grammar and syntax are essential to a good paper because we cannot make persuasive arguments unless we express ourselves clearly.

For easy reference on good grammar and syntax, keep a copy of Strunk & White, Elements of Style nearby.

Cite your sources
Cite any direct quotation, paraphrase, ideas or thoughts that are not exclusively your own, including information you’ve gathered from assigned readings, lectures, and films. FAILURE TO CITE PROPERLY IS PLAGIARISM. Full footnotes are not necessary. Simply cite the author and page number of the text you’re using (Davis, p. 47) or the director and time of the film scene in question (Scott, 12:01-13:55). Include a bibliography at the end of the paper.