



## **CIEE Global Institute – Paris**

<b>Course name:</b>	Pensée Contemporaine Française
<b>Course number:</b>	FREN 3101 PAFR
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	French and Critical Studies
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	French
<b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2020

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will attempt to describe the comings and goings of diverse movements in contemporary French thought, from the end of the 1940s to today, with particular accent on the movements following the events of May 1968, which attempt to construct an alternative history of the modern world. In analyzing excerpts from theoretical, literary, and philosophical works, we attempt to bring to life French thought from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of ours. Reflecting on “thought” in terms of invention, art, science, and political strategy, we will be faced with questions regarding the self and the Other, liberty and control, mystification and demystification, technology of life and techniques of definition. We will focus, above all, on the power of language and representation with regard to knowledge seen as “fact.” How can a text construct this brand of knowledge? Can we, rather, portray a text as a machine that simply makes sense of life? To do so, we must question stable boundaries, fixed identities, accepted ideas, power, desire, politics, and ethics. We must also explore potential places where critical thought and artistic experimentation can blossom, here, in Paris. Art, after all, is a living, breathing entity.

Often considered a living museum, Paris is a dynamic city where creative forces meet and exchange, from cinema and fine arts to literature and other forms of intellectual engagement. Like a laboratory of contemporary French thought, this course invites students to experiments with texts, discourses, images, and gestures, feeding an energetic reflection that is sometimes contestable, sometimes paradoxical, and always passionate. Drawing on the arenas of the Parisian intellectual universe – philosophical and academic institutes as places of exposition, projection, and artistic representation – students will acquire the theoretical tools to construct, deconstruct, and demonstrate the inner-workings of these movements in thought, which never cease to be built up and re-demolished.

### **Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to critically review major French intellectual movements from the postwar era to today, such as existentialism, structuralism, deconstruction, French feminism,



post-colonialism, Situationism, and the debates around aesthetics, politics, and the critique of technology.

· Students will define, deepen and contest key terms associated with these movements, contextualizing them in French intellectual history and expressing them in French.

· Students will be able to apply the rhetorical methods of the movements studied in French composition and debate, including such rhetorical approaches as historical dialectics and critical theory methods, deconstruction of binary oppositions, polysemy versus dissemination, determination versus construction, obedience versus emancipation, and the power relations related to the definition of the Other.

· Students will apply the new methods of intellectual inquiry explored by these thinkers, placing them in the context of the history of the French mentality.

· Through response papers, students will also force these terms to encounter each other and describe how these notions impact, influence, or resist each other.

· Students will acquire the advanced means to understand and comment complex notions in French.

### **Course Prerequisites**

4 semesters of college French, or equivalent.

### **Methods of Instruction**

- All texts to read in and out of class are available through the Canvas platform.
- Students will be responsible for 3 text explications during the Block, identifying the life and context of the thinker studied, defending the importance of the passage chosen, and focusing on one term in that passage that merits discussion.
- 3 co-curricular classes at the Musée du Quai Branly, the Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration and the Palais du Tokyo will reveal how this thought is expressed in contemporary French culture.
- Documentary films will be shown with guided comprehension questions to work on aural comprehension and acquisition of critical performative styles in French.
- General workshop environment where students will be required to participate, read and analyze texts in real time.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

Presentation 1: From Existentialism to Deconstruction	10%
Presentation 2: Emancipation and Identity	
15%	
Presentation 3: Aesthetics/Politics/Technology	15%
Response Paper 1, contrasting two terms (1,500 words)	20%



Response Paper 2, contrasting two terms (2,250 words)	20%
Class participation:	20%

### **Course Requirements**

**Important: all course assignments must be turned in on time. While students will not be penalised for submissions up to and including 1 hour late,**

- **Students submitting work from 1 hour and 1 minute late up to and including 24 hours late will be penalised 15% from the assignment;**
- **Student work submitted from 24 hours and 1 minute late onwards will receive a zero (0%) grade.**

#### **Presentations:**

Students will have 3, 10-minute, in-class presentations of notions found in studied texts. The student will define the historical, political, social, philosophical, and/or cultural context of a short passage from the text, target one term in that text, define and drill into it, and then open discussion through questions asked to the whole class.

#### **Response papers:**

Week 3 and Week 5, students will submit a 1500-word response paper and a 2250-word response paper that develop the text explications presented during the Block. Drafts will be worked on in class and reflected on in class discussion.

#### **Reflection:**

Session 12, students will submit a free-form reflection exercise about the critical theory trend that intrigued them most AND that resonated most strongly with their intercultural experience.

#### **Class Participation**

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Please note that pop quizzes will be given occasionally to assess student understanding of the materials covered and overall commitment in the course. Students will also be regularly asked to turn in their personal lists of definitions with citations on examples on Canvas. This exercise, one per each current of thought studied, will ensure students understand the



material and engage with it. Pop quizzes and definition lists are the online component of the weekly participation grade, accounting for 50% of that grade.

### Course Attendance and Punctuality

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences\* may result in a *lower participation grade* for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning and the final course grade will be lowered by 3 percentage points.

\*Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, *excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students will be marked absent.* Attendance policies *also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event\*, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement.*

\*With the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. *No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.*

An absence in a CIEE course will only be considered excused if:

- a doctor's note is provided
- a CIEE staff member verifies that the student was too ill to attend class
- satisfactory evidence is provided of a family emergency

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1	Possible reduction of the weekly participation grade

10 – 20%	2	Written warning; reduction of the final grade by 3%
More than 20%	3	Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion

## Course schedule

### WEEK 1

#### **Session 1.1: The Collapse of Progress/Liberty at War**

Presentation of class.

*La République du silence* by Jean-Paul Sartre.

Introduction to *La Dialectique de la Raison*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. Thèses sur la philosophie de l'histoire," N° IX, Walter Benjamin.

#### **Session 1.2: Structuring the relationship between Same and Other**

Discussion of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Sartre.

Passage from the reading, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, by Simone de Beauvoir.

Introduction to the ethnography of Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques*, and the critique of Jacques Derrida, "La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines" in *L'écriture et la différence*.

### WEEK 2

#### **Session 2.1: Co-curricular** to the Musée du Quai Branly.

Reflections on the Musée du Quai Branly, Lévi-Strauss, and Derrida.

#### **Presentation 1: From Existentialism to Deconstruction**

#### **Session 2.2: Liberating the sign from itself: Deconstruction of language and identity**

Presentation of Deconstruction. "Signature, événement, context," excerpts from *Monolinguisme de l'Autre* by Jacques Derrida.

**Co-curricular** to the "Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration". *Definition of terms*.

### WEEK 3



**Session 3.1: Subject, desire, the Other, the unconscious.**

Definition of terms. Discussion of Derrida, Nancy, and the CNHI.

Presentation of the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan.

“L’aliénation” in *Quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*.

Screening of *Jacques Lacan : la psychanalyse réinventée* and *Conférence de Louvain*.

**Response Paper #1 due.**

**Session 3.2: Subjectivity, surveillance, control**

Discussion of Lacanian psychoanalysis and ideological interpellation of the subject.

Passage from the text by Louis Althusser, “Idéologies et appareils idéologiques d’Etat”.

Excerpts from *Surveiller et punir* by Michel Foucault.

Introduction to Foucault’s biopolitics. “Post-scriptum sur la société du contrôle,” Gilles Deleuze

Reflections on the surveillance of life, liberty, and discourses of power.

**Presentation 2: Emancipation and Identity.**

**WEEK 4**

**Session 4.1: Changing life, transforming the world: Theoretical and practical liberation of May 1968**

Return to Marxist critique, different interpretations, derivatives. Papers on May 1968.

Screening of *La Société du spectacle*, Guy Debord. *Playtime* by Jacques Tati. Reflections on May 1968 and Debord.

**Session 4.2: Subject of sex / Subject of colonization** Discussion of Deleuze, Artaud.

Analysis of *Parties* by Hélène Cixous.

*Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un* by Luce Irigaray.

Discussion of Feminism.

Critique of Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire/masques blancs*.

Discussion of errant creation of Edouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* “Rhizomatic” thought of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *Definition of terms*.

**Session 4.3: Co-curricular outing to the Collège international de Philosophie**

**WEEK 5**

**Session 5.1: Art and its critical capacities: consensus, dissensus, emancipation**

Discussion of postcolonial thought.



Presentation of the text, “Les mésaventures de la pensée critique,” by Jacques Rancière in *Le spectateur émancipé*.

**Response Paper #2 due.**

**Session 5.2: Co-curricular to the Palais de Tokyo**

**Presentation 3: Aesthetics/Politics/Technology.**

## WEEK 6

**Session 6.1: Speed, Memory, Technique, Technology**

Discussion of Rancière and the Palais de Tokyo exhibits. Definition of Terms. Excerpts from Paul Virilio : *Penser la vitesse* and *L'université du désastre*. Introduction to the thought of Bernard Stiegler and *Ars Industrialis*: “Contrôle et culture des individus” and excerpts from *Prendre soin* and *Les Etats du choc*.

**Reflection exercise due.**

**Session 6.2: La fin? Jamais!**

Round table discussions of final work. Attempted summaries of the course's progression.

## Course materials

### **Readings**

de Beauvoir, Simone. *Le deuxième sexe I*. Paris: Folio, 1949.

Cixous, Hélène. *Parties*. Paris: Galilée, 1977.

Debord, Guy. *La société du spectacle*. Paris: Folio, 1967.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Critique et Clinique*. Paris: Seuil, 1993.

Derrida, Jacques. “Structure, signe et jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines,” in *Ecriture et différence*. Paris: Folio, 1967

--. *Le monolinguisme de l'Autre : la prothèse d'origine*. Paris: Galilée, 1995.

Foucault, Michel. *Surveiller et punir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1974.

Irigaray, Luce. *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*. Paris: Minuit, 1977.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Tristes tropiques*. Paris: Folio, 1955.

Rancière, Jacques. *Le spectateur émancipé*. Paris: La Fabrique, 2008.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Situations II*. Paris: Seuil, 1948.

Stiegler, Bernard. *Etats de choc*. Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2012.

## Academic Integrity

CIEE subscribes to standard U.S. norms requiring that students exhibit the highest standards regarding academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism in any course assignment



or exam will not be tolerated and may result in a student failing the course or being expelled from the program. Standards of honesty and norms governing originality of work differ significantly from country to country. We expect students to adhere to both the U.S. American norms and the local norms, and in the case of conflict between the two, the more stringent of the two will prevail.

Three important principles are considered when defining and demanding academic honesty. These are related to *the fundamental tenet that one should not present the work of another person as one's own.*

The first principle is that *final examinations, quizzes and other tests must be done without assistance from another person, without looking at or otherwise consulting the work of another person, and without access to notes, books, or other pertinent information* (unless the professor has explicitly announced that a particular test is to be taken on an “open book” basis).

The second principle applies specifically to course work: *the same written paper may not be submitted in more than one course. Nor may a paper submitted at another educational institution be submitted to satisfy a paper requirement while studying abroad.*

The third principle is that *any use of the work of another person must be documented in any written papers, oral presentations, or other assignments carried out in connection with a course. This usually is done when quoting directly from another's work or including information told to you by another person* (the general rule in U.S. higher education is that if you have to look something up, or if you learned it recently either by reading or hearing something, you have to document it).

There are three levels of escalation establishing the seriousness of the plagiarism in question.

- **Level one plagiarism:** minor or unintentional plagiarism; leading to passable grade/failing grade on the assignment, depending on perspective of lecturer. No opportunity for resubmission.
- **Level two plagiarism:** significant plagiarism, but potentially due to poor referencing rather than intellectual property theft. This leads to a failing grade (potentially zero points) on the assignment. No opportunity for resubmission.
- **Level three plagiarism:** significant plagiarism, requiring investigation by the Center/Resident/Academic Director, and subsequent disciplinary panel.

Faculty will report any suspected circumstances of plagiarism to the



Center/Resident/Academic Director immediately. Faculty can, if they deem it appropriate, require students to submit the Plagiarism Declaration Form (Appendix D) with each assignment as it is submitted.

In any case where Academic Honesty is in question while the student is still onsite at the program, and will impact the grade for the assignment in question, the CIEE Academic Honesty form (Appendix E) will be completed by the Center/Resident/Academic Director, signed by the professor, delivered to the student for signature and added to the student's permanent records. For any Level three violation, or repeated lower level violation, the Center/Resident/Academic Director will inform the student's home institution of the infraction and subsequent penalty.