

Department of Philosophy  
The Colorado College  
Fall 2013 - Block 2

Instructors (contact info on last page):  
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Philosophy 203 – Topics in Philosophy

## **FRENCH PHILOSOPHY IN CONTEXT** **From Existentialism to Globalization**

*Taught in Paris*

### Course Description

This course explores the development of French philosophy from the interwar period to the present. Using the city of Paris as its context, the course examines how dramatic social and political challenges influenced the paths of French philosophical reflection, moving thinkers to question the foundations of knowledge, morals, and politics, leading ultimately to what might be called a “decentered” cosmopolitanism.

Topics covered include existentialism and the dramatic events of the interwar and Second World War periods; feminist and postcolonial theories and the liberation struggles of colonial Indochina, Algeria, and the “Third World” more generally; structuralism and the ideological and practical battles of the Cold War; poststructuralism and the 1968 student and worker uprisings; and contemporary multicultural and cosmopolitan philosophies and the developments associated with globalization and postcolonial immigration.

Taking full advantage of all that Paris has to offer—countless museums, a diverse cultural life, streets marked by historical events, and an ongoing intellectual tradition in which philosophy is expected to have a direct impact on how people live and in which philosophers themselves often become cultural “stars”—this course will survey the intertwining of 20th and 21st century French philosophy with the recent social, political, and cultural history of Paris.

### Course Requirements

*Readings and Context.* This course asks students to engage with an intriguing, but sometimes challenging corpus of texts. Most readings are relatively short, and the longer readings tend to be relatively straightforward. Completing the readings should not be a great problem. Fully engaging with the readings, however, may take some shifting of perspective: why French philosophy has taken its shape has to do with how French people live, how their national history has unfolded, and how they understand themselves. Hence, effective reading will also require openness to a culture that looks very familiar in some ways (modern, Western, highly developed) but that remains very different in other ways.

*Course Meetings, Discussion, and Field Trips.* Most course meetings will consist largely of seminar discussion. Individual students or groups of students may be assigned to lead discussions, conduct projects (perhaps in the streets of Paris?), or make reports periodically. We will also take a number of field trips in order to better understand French mentalities – taking tours at historical sites, visiting museums, or sampling French cuisine. We will be a large group – please make every effort to keep up and be attentive.

Students should expect to attend class meetings consistently and punctually, and discuss the subjects and texts under investigation in a civil manner. Similarly, when in France, but especially when on field trips, students will be expected to present themselves to others in courteous, civil manners, remembering that they may represent to other people both themselves *and* the College (not to mention all Americans, sometimes). Performance in discussions and general comportment will strongly influence the participation grade.

*Graded Assignments.* Students will be divided into groups, and they will write graded response papers every other day. In addition, students may be assigned other graded assignments, or given projects and expected to give reports on those projects. On the final day, all will write reflections papers.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ACTIVITIES

(Most readings are on the course PROWL site. Download them before leaving the U.S.)

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Course Meetings &amp; Readings</i>	<i>Afternoon or Evening Events</i>
<b>Arrival in Paris</b>		
Saturday, Sept. 28	<p>Most students arrive at the Pension Residence du Palais, 78 rue d'Assas, 75006 Paris. Code to enter the pension at night: 3710. See the explanation Dennis sent on how to enter the pension, which is also on PROWL. Greet our host, Nicholas, and his family.</p> <p>Metro stops: Notre-Dames des Champs (line 12) or Vavin (line 4). RER stop (from the Charles De Gaulle / Roissy Airport): Luxembourg. Note that the pension is also sometimes known by old name, Pension Ladagnous.</p> <p><u>Reading this weekend</u>: "Your Host Country 'la France': Birth of a Nation and Modern France at a Glance," in <i>I'm Going to France</i>, pp. 18-30.</p> <p><i>Note</i>: This overview comes from the 2010 version of the official government document distributed to every foreign student coming to France to study at a state university. Read the document with two purposes in mind: 1) getting a brief overview of the main events in French history and of the current economy and society of France; and 2) getting a sense of the "official mentality" found in France.</p>	<p>Jonathan will check in with the students at the pension at 5 p.m.</p> <p>We know that some students will not arrive until Sunday.</p>
Sunday, Sept. 29	<p>Last students arrive on Sunday. Settling in – take a walk around the neighborhood, using the map Dennis sent you. It is also on the PROWL site. Locate ATMs, the Laundromat, grocery stores, and the like, if you didn't do that on Saturday. Check out the Luxembourg Garden. Note: People are not allowed to sit on most of the lawns. You will know which ones you can and cannot sit on, even if you don't read French. (Hint: Don't sit on the empty ones!)</p> <p><u>Reading</u>: Be sure to prepare the readings for Monday morning. They are not long. In general, class will meet from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.</p>	<p><u>Class Dinner</u>: Jonathan and Dennis will meet students in the "cave" in front of the pension's building (inside the main door, not on the street) at 5:40 p.m. We will then walk to the Crêperie Josselin, 67, rue du Montparnasse, for our first class dinner.</p>
<p><u>Breakfast</u>: Breakfast is served daily from 8 to 9 a.m. The breakfast room must be cleared <i>no later than 9 a.m.</i> to allow for its cleaning in preparation for our course meetings at 10 a.m.</p> <p><u>Dinners</u>: Dinners will be served at the pension on Monday through Thursday night at 6:30 p.m. If you do not plan to attend, please tell Nicholas no later than that morning. If you do plan to attend, please be on time.</p>		

### Week 1

Monday, Sept. 30	Gabriel Marcel, "Some Remarks on the Irreligion of Today" (1930), pp. 179-202; and Jean-Paul Sartre, "Paris Under the Occupation" (1944), pp. 136-153.  Papers: None due.	<u>After Class</u> : Lunch at l'As du Fallafel, 34 rue des Rosiers (you pay). Historical walk through the Right Bank of Paris, focusing on Old Regime France (before 1789).
Tuesday, Oct. 1	Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction" and "The Independent Woman," in <i>The Second Sex</i> (1949), pp. 3-17, 721-51.  Papers: L-Z writes.	<u>After Class</u> : Historical walk through the Latin Quarter and Left Bank, focusing on modern France and education.
Wednesday, Oct. 2	Albert Camus, "Preface," "Algeria 1958," and "Indigenous Culture: The New Mediterranean Culture" (1937), in <i>Algerian Chronicles</i> (1958), pp. 23-35, 175-84, 187-195.  Papers: A-K writes.	<u>Afternoon</u> : Free day!
Thursday, Oct. 3	Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," in <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> (1961), pp. 1-62.  Papers: L-Z writes.	<u>Before Class Tour</u> : Meet at 10 am at the pension to leave for a tour of Opera Garnier at 11 am.  <u>Class Meeting</u> : 3 – 5:30 pm at the pension.
Friday, Oct. 4	Roland Barthes, selections from <i>Mythologies</i> (1957): pp. ix-xii, 15-25, 32-4, 41-52, 59-85, 165-71, 187-9, 196-99.  Papers: A-K writes.	<u>Afternoon</u> : Free day!  <u>Class Dinner</u> : At Le Temps des Cerises – La Société Coopérative Ouvrière de Production, 18-20 rue de la Butte aux Cailles. Meet in the cave of the pension at 6:20 to take the metro to the Butte aux Cailles.

### Week 2

Monday, Oct. 7	Jacques Lacan, "The Significance of the Phallus" (1958), in <i>Écrits</i> , pp. 575-584; and Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970), in <i>Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays</i> , pp. 127-86.  Papers: L-M writes on Lacan; O-Z on Althusser (unless you trade).	<u>Morning</u> : Class 9:30 – 12:30.  <u>Afternoon</u> : Meet in the cave at 1:30 to walk to the Pantheon for a visit (done by 3 pm or so).
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Tuesday, Oct. 8	Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (1966), in <i>Writing and Difference</i> , pp. 278-293; and "Declarations of Independence" (1984), in <i>Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001</i> , pp. 46-54.	<u>Afternoon:</u> Meet in the cave at 2 pm to depart for a visit "Behind the Scenes" at the Eiffel Tower, 3-5 pm.
	Papers: A-K writes.	
Wednesday, Oct. 9	Guy Debord, <i>Comments on the Society of the Spectacle</i> (1988), pp. 7-34 and 109-154; and Gilles Lipovetsky, "May '68, or The Rise of Transpolitical Individualism," in Lilla, <i>New French Thought: Political Philosophy</i> , pp. 212-19.	<u>Afternoon:</u>  Read the short excerpt by Patrice Maniglier.  Class visited by Patrice Maniglier, Department of Philosophy, University of Paris X – Nanterre, 3-5 pm in the pension.
	Papers: L-Z writes.  Additional reading: Patrice Maniglier, excerpt from "The Structuralist Legacy," introduction and part I, pp. 57-63, from <i>The History of Continental Philosophy</i> , vol. 7: <i>After Poststructuralism: Transitions and Transformations</i> .	
Thursday, Oct. 10	Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language" (1970), in <i>The Archeology of Knowledge</i> , pp. 215-237.	<u>Class Meeting:</u> 1:30 – 4 pm. The morning is free for catching up, sleeping, visiting sites, and so on.
	Papers: A-K writes. PAPERS DUE AT 11 AM.	
Friday, Oct. 11	Emmanuel Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy" (1984) in <i>The Levinas Reader</i> , pp. 75-86; and "And God Created Woman" (1972), in <i>Nine Talmudic Readings</i> , pp. 161-77.	<u>Afternoon:</u> Free day!  <u>Class Dinner:</u> At Boullion Chartier, 7 rue Faubourg Montmartre. Meet in the cave of the pension in order to depart no later than 5:15.
	Papers: L-Z writes.	
<b>Week 3</b>		
Monday, Oct. 14	Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1975), pp. 875-93; and Luce Irigaray, <i>This Sex Which Is Not One</i> , pp. 23-33.	<u>Afternoon:</u> Meet with Lissa Lincoln, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature & English, American University of Paris, 3:30 – 5 pm.
	Papers: A-K writes.	
Tuesday, Oct. 15	Michel Foucault, selected writings on the Iranian Revolution (1978-1979), in <i>Foucault and the Iranian Revolution</i> , pp. 183-223, 239-41, 25-67.	<u>Afternoon:</u> Free afternoon!
	Papers: L-Z writes.	
Wednesday, Oct. 16	Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Rhizome," <i>A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia</i> , pp. 3-25; and "Immanence: A Life," in <i>Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life</i> (1995), pp. 25-32.	<u>Afternoon:</u> Free afternoon!
	Papers: A-K writes.	

Thursday, 17 Oct.	Sarah Kofman, "The Economy of Respect: Kant and Respect for Women" (1982), in <i>Selected Writings</i> , pp. 187-202; and Derrida, "Fichus: Frankfurt Address" (2001), in <i>Paper Machine</i> , pp. 164-181.  Papers: L-Z writes.	<u>Afternoon</u> : Free afternoon!
Friday, Oct. 18	Jacques Rancière, <i>Hatred of Democracy</i> (2005), pp. 1-97.  Papers: A-K writes.	<u>Dinner</u> : At L'Atlas, 12 Boulevard Saint Germain. Meet in the cave at 5:30 to leave for dinner at 6 p.m.  <u>Evening</u> : Bateaux mouche cruise on the Seine, starting at the Port Bourdonnais. The cruise starts at 8:30 – leave L'Atlas by 7:40 p.m.
<b>Week 4</b>		
Monday, Oct. 21	Catherine Malabou, "Introduction" and "Woman's possibility, philosophy's impossibility," in <i>Changing Difference</i> (2009), pp. 1-4, 90-141; and Alia Al-Saji, "The Racialization of Muslim Veils: A Philosophical Analysis" (2010), pp. 875-902.  Papers: L-Z writes.	<u>Afternoon</u> : Free afternoon!
Tuesday, Oct. 22	Alain Badiou, <i>In Praise of Love</i> (2009), pp. 1-104.  Papers: A-K writes.	<u>Evening</u> : Seminar discussion with Tzuchien Tho (Philosophy, Ecole Normale) and François Cusset (Intellectual History, University of Paris X – Nanterre) in the Library at Shakespeare & Co. at 7:30. Meet in the cave of the pension at 7 p.m. to leave for Shakespeare & Co.
Wednesday, Oct. 23	Final class meeting: discussion of Tuesday's afternoon discussion and the block.  Papers: All write final reflection papers due at the start of class.	<u>Afternoon</u> : Class ends at noon.  <u>Class Dinner</u> : Final dinner at Le Petit Prince, 12 rue de Lanneau, 7 p.m. Meet in the cave of the pension to walk to the restaurant at 6:30 p.m.

## OTHER INFORMATION

Honor Code. Students will be expected to abide by the Honor Code. Among other things, the Honor Code specifies that each student will be responsible for producing all of his or her own work and that he or she will always cite the works or ideas of others used in his or her work. Note that discussing ideas and drafts with others is not a violation of the Honor Code. In fact, as the very idea of a colloquium suggests, it is a good idea to compare one's own ideas and writings with those of others and to ask others for criticisms. Using other people's ideas can also be a good idea – if their ideas are good and a student credits the individuals responsible for developing the ideas.

Disability Accommodations. Any student who believes that she or he is eligible for learning accommodations as the result of a qualified disability should contact the instructors privately. A student who believes that she or he may have a disability that impacts learning, and who has not self-identified to the College's Disabilities Services Office, should please do so immediately. We will make appropriate learning accommodations in accordance with the Disabilities Service Office's instructions. Their office is in the Colket Student Learning Center at 152 Tutt Library. Students may also contact the College's learning consultant, Jan Edwards, at the Learning Center, at 227-8285, or by visiting this site:

<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/disabilityservices/>

Audio and Video Recordings. With the exception of disability accommodations, no audio or visual recordings of class discussions or of class events may be made without the specific consent of those being recorded. All recordings made, including those produced as part of an authorized disability accommodation, may be used only for academic ends associated with this course. Both unauthorized recording and the publication or broadcast of recordings (including authorized ones), without the express consent to their publication or broadcast by those recorded, will be considered violations of the Honor Code.

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