***France Beyond Borders*** as Title of Course/Trip

A 3 or 4 credit course/trip to France, Belgium, and Basque Spain, beginning in 2017 (1 credit earned during second half of spring term and 2-3 credits during May session trip abroad)

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**Academic Components:**

**Course rationale, objectives, intended audience, evaluation, recruitment, and final outcome**

This unique course/trip, initially in conjunction with a 2014 Ronald and Deborah Ratner Distinguished Teaching Award, will accommodate both French majors/minors as well as students in other fields, who do not necessarily speak French. The course/trip will be bi-lingual, and I will expect French-speaking students to become linguistic “buddies” for those who do not speak the language. I also hope to attract students who speak Spanish, Basque, Arabic, Dutch, and other languages. Students who do not speak French will receive credit for French 2501, “Topics in French Literature and Culture in Translation,”[[1]](#footnote-1) whereas French minors/majors will get credit for French 3403, “Topics in French-Speaking Cultures” or French 4401,“Topics in French and Francophone Studies”.[[2]](#footnote-2) Readings and assignments will be in both languages to accommodate all students. In addition to historical readings, media material on current events, music, and film, I will expect students to read literary and cultural works such as the following:

Abd al Malik, *Sufi Rapper*

Dumas, Alexandre, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, (unabridged version: it worked very well with my first-year IA scholars when I taught French 2501 in spring 2102, followed by a study tour to France during spring break)

Guène, Faïza, *Kiffe Kiffe Tomorrow*

Hemingway, Ernest, *A Moveable Feast* (currently one of the best selling books in Paris since the tragic November 13 events) and *The Sun also Rises*

Moussu T e lei Jovents, *Made in la Ciotat* (DVD)

Selections from *The Song of Roland*

Selections from Maalouf, Amin, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*

I would like students to complete the readings before departure. They should also view such films as *Midnight in Paris*, *The Way*, *The Count of Monte Cristo* (the French film), and *The French Connection II*.

For the above reason and for the sake of establishing an *esprit de corps* before trip departure, I would like to offer a one-credit course (meeting once a week) during the second half of spring semester. Students could earn 1 credit then and subsequently either 2 or 3 credits for the trip. They would have to commit to both. I would expect either a term-paper or journal in which they not allow analyze the material we studied, but also project how they intend to “implement” it during their trip. Students receiving credit for French 4401 would have a more complex assignment.

Why France beyond borders? The recent refugee crisis in Europe as well as the *Charlie Hebdo* related assassinations of January 2015 and the more recent violence of November 13 reveal—albeit tragically- how borders (and lack thereof) as well as peripheries play a key role in redefining French and European identities. We will certainly visit Paris—the center and capital--, but we will focus more on cities such as Marseille and Toulouse, where traditional, regional culture comes together with immigrant cultures in innovative ways, thereby casting new light on the Republicanism-multiculturalism conundrum plaguing France today. In 2013, Marseille was the European Cultural capital; in 2016, San Sebastian in Basque Spain is the winner. Linguistic and cultural conflicts have not only plagued France over the centuries (it was only in July 2008 that the French Constitution officially recognized regional languages as part of the French legacy), but also neighboring countries such as Belgium and Spain. We shall thus also venture to the “other side” of the border to explore questions pertaining to language and identity politics. These border crossings will further enable us to move beyond a top-down perspective whereby national identity is myopically defined by the capital. Students will thus also have the possibility of visiting Brussels and the medieval university town of Leuven, as well as San Sebastian and Hemingway’s Pamplona.

The trip portion (either 2 or 3 credits; although the total hours come to 3) will be 18 days (16 abroad). I want all borders to be eliminated from the onset: classroom walls will not exist. Readings, lectures/discussions, encounters with invited speakers, musical performances, etc. will be linked directly to experiential learning and on site experience.

Students will work together in small pods of 4. They will produce multi-media on line blogs or other innovative projects based on their on site experiences. I expect intensive participation on their part. I also hope that we can produce a short film that brings together, in imaginative and cutting-edge ways, our collective experience abroad. It will also be a way to thank the Ratner family for their generosity and their commitment to the Arts and Humanities at Ohio State.

I expect to enroll 20-40 students. Dean Garett Heysel is committed to accompanying me on this trip. Depending on final enrollment, graduate students in French, who currently have very few OSU sponsored resources for going abroad, will also serve as assistants to the RD. Recruiting has never been a problem for me. My courses are always well if not over enrolled, and I have been highly successful in recruiting students for the former CIC and current OSU summer program at Laval University in Quebec, which I direct. When I was resident director for the CIC program (which rotated every two to three years among faculty from the various institutions), I had the largest number of students enrolled. This summer, 19 students are going to Quebec. Over 20 applied. I shall work closely with Study Abroad and Arts and Sciences at recruitment and information sessions, write to students enrolled in French courses, and contact colleagues in other departments. I have served as a resident director for 8 summers in Quebec. I was also the RD for the First Year IA Scholars trip to France in March 2012.

Thanks to the numerous personal and professional contacts I have established over the years, I expect my students to have privileged encounters with writers, musicians, journalists, intellectuals, and political activists, whom the vast majority of French people never meet. When my IA scholars traveled with me in 2012, they appeared on national French television and were interviewed along with the rock group Zebda. One of the interviewees, Brandon Fitzwater, is currently a Fulbright student in Austria.

I certainly also want my students to meet up with the “average” French, Belgian or Basque individual. Their experiences are just as valid and important, and have informed both my research and teaching over the past 40 years. I want my students to come away from this course/trip witha more sensitive, acute, and fine-tuned knowledge of the contemporary events (both good and bad) shaping “French” identity both from within and without.

Students will be responsible for literary, cultural, political and historical readings. They will be exposed to film and popular music. They will visit numerous art, music, and historical museums (the latter pertaining especially to colonialism, immigration, and the Arab presence in France). Lectures and discussions will be with well-known writers, intellectuals, journalists, political activists, musicians, and filmmakers. Students will have private dinner concerts with musicians such as Zebda and Moussu T e lei Jovents, take an Occitan language lesson, go to a soccer match, and attend a Basque film screening in the presence of the director. Students will come away with a unique understanding of how language and culture shape identity politics; how French national identity is being challenged by both local and global concerns; and how French Republicanism is a precarious notion, to say the least, today. What’s “French” Anyways?

This course/trip will benefit French majors in that they will have a unique study abroad experience not matched by any other currently available to them. This trip will allow them to meet famous writers, musicians, journalists etc. in an intimate setting. It will be an experience that students at privileged Ivy League institutions do not have! It is my hope that these students will subsequently feel empowered to engage in independent research and honors theses that require them to have subsequent encounters of this kind.

This course will also benefit French minors who cannot study abroad for more than a month because of their other majors/minors. It will provide them also with a privileged experience.

Finally, this course will enrich the educational experience of other OSU students taking this course to fulfill a GE requirement. I already witnessed this with my IA Scholars students in 2012. Furthermore, these students will bring their unique educational backgrounds in other fields to bear on those of the typical French major or minor.

In 2012, most of my IA scholars students did not speak French. A number of them subsequently became French minors and majors, and two of them went on the 2014 study tour to Senegal with my colleague.

**Logistical Components:**

I will not be using any host institution abroad. Invited speakers, musicians, etc. will provide the meeting sites for us. I shall work with a travel agent/provider, as I did for the IA Scholars 2012 program.  Accommodations will be in hotels and transportation between countries and cities will be by private coach.

In terms of safety and health issues abroad, I will work closely with OIA staff in this regard. I have received invaluable help in the past from Dru and Jeannie Simmons, Louise Yahiaoui, and Grace Johnson. Working in tandem with OIA, I successfully dealt with two emergency crises on the Quebec program and one regarding a Fulbright.

**Proposed trip itinerary**

(18 days—2 days for international travel; 16 abroad)

**Day 1** Flight from Columbus to Marseille

**Day 2** Arrival in Marseille, the oldest, second largest, and most popular city in France, which also happens to be 30% Muslim. Afternoon introductory session to discuss our objectives and readings for the next few days here. **1 hr. Formal Instruction (henceforth FI).** Evening dinner at Algerian or Moroccan restaurant, complete with traditional dancing.

**Day 3** Morning Guided tour of Marseille (e.g. port, Panier area, La Vieille Charité, newly renovated EuroMed area, Canebière, Alcazar, Cours Julien). **3 Hrs. Structured Educational Experience (henceforth SEE)** AfternoonLecture/Discussion by local scholar on Marseille’s Greek and Roman past and how it marks the present-day city. **1 hr. FI** Visit of museums such as Museum of History of Marseille, Maritime museum and/or Museum of Roman Docks. **2 hrs. SEE.** Evening meeting with local university students. **2 hrs. SEE.**

**Day 4** Morningdiscussion on readings pertaining to Muslims in Marseille and Europe, followed by a lecture by Dr. Françoise Lorcerie of the CNRS and IREMAM (Institut de Recherches et d’Etudes sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman). She is an international expert on Muslims in Marseille, France, and Europe, and lectures throughout the world. **2hrs. FI.**

Lunch-private concert -discussion (on local music and identity politics) with blues group Moussu T e lei Jovents in neighboring La Ciotat. **3 hrs. SEE**. Visit La Ciotat and Cinéma Eden of the Lumière Brothers, the world’s oldest operating cinema. **1hr. SEE.** Free evening in Marseille.

**Day 5** Meet to discuss*Count of Montecristo.* **1FI**  Visit to infamous Château d’If. Visit to museum such as MuCEM. **3SEE** Evening event such as Occitan lesson on Cours Julien, OM soccer match, concert at Balthazar, private encounter with rappers. **2SEE**

**Day 6** Gourmet Lunch at Vieille Auberge in Cassis, boat-ride and/or hike to Calanque of En-Vau. Leave for Toulouse in early evening.

**Day 7** Guided tour of Toulouse. **2SEE.** Meet with political activists such as Salah Amokrane of Tactikollectif Association. Lecture-discussion on Toulouse as a melting pot. **1FI, 1SEE** Salah Amokrane was recently an invited speaker at a colloquium “City/Cité: a Transatlantic Encounter” held at the Universities of Chicago and Illinois at Chicago. Evening couscous dinner concert and discussion with rock group, Zebda. **2SEE**

**Day 8** Meet with Claude Sicre of the Fabulous Trobadors, a performer, ethnomusicologist, and cultural advocate for Occitania and cultural pluralism. **1FI, 1SEE** Visit Toulouse-Lautrec museum in Albi and/or Cathar ruins such as Montségur and/or Carcassonne. **3 SEE**

**Day 9** Leave for Roncevaux where famous battle of *Song of Roland* was waged. Visit site and town, discuss selections from *Song of Roland* and *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* by Amin Maalouf. **1FI, 2 SEE** Arrive in San Sebastian in early evening. Pinchos in the old town with locals.

**Day 10** Morning Lecture/discussion with Dr. Miren Azkarate , philologist, writer, politician, and the first woman elected to the Royal Academy of the Basque Language (for both Spain and France) in 1992. She has lectured at universities in the US. **1FI, 1SEE.** Afternoon screening of Basque film such as recent *Flowers*(first time a Spanish entry in Basque was submitted for Oscars in category of best foreign film), in the presence of the director or president of the San Sebastian International Festival at Tabakalera (International Centre for Contemporary Culture). **2SEE.** Free evening.

**Day 11** Morning Lecture and discussion with Jose Ramon Beloki Guerra, Basque politician and journalist, on the Basque political and cultural struggle against Franco Regime and its aftermath. **1FI, 1SEE.**

Leave for and visit Hemingway’s Pamplona in Navarra (see his statue, follow the running of the bulls itinerary minus the bulls!), talk to locals about Hemingway and Pamplona. **2SEE** Discuss Hemingway’s*The Sun Also Rises.***1FI**

**Day 12** Leave for Brussels via flight from Bilbao (visit Guggenheim museum?) or train from Hendaye. Typical Belgian meal in evening and discussion with invited guests. **1FI**

**Day 13** Lecture/discussion by Belgian scholar on language and cultural divide. **1FI** Guided tour of city and visit of one or two museums such as Royal Museum for Central Africa at Tervuren (scheduled to reopen in mid 2017), Magritte Museum, Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Jacques Brel Foundation, Belgian Comic Strip Center, or Jewish Museum. **3SEE** Free Evening.

**Day 14** Guided tour and lecture/discussion in medieval university town of Leuven.

**1SEE,** **1 FI** Evening with Belgian university students in either Leuven or Brussels. Or evening in Bruges. **1SEE**

**Day 15** Leave for Paris.As Americans abroad, we will use the lens of the expatriate to explore the more celebrated side of Paris.With Hemingway’s *A Moveable Feast*and Woody Allen’s*Midnight in Paris***,** students will follow the itinerary of the expatriate in Paris. Visits to sites mentioned in these artistic works. Maybe even a sort of scavenger hunt type project. Compare present-day reality to fiction. **2SEE** Lunch in a famous Latin Quarter restaurant. Meet with individuals (a journalist or writer, Parisians of different ages) to understand why *A Moveable Feast* has once again become a bestseller in France after 13 May. **1FI** Free evening.

**Day 16** Use the events of 13 November and *Charlie Hebdo* to make the transition to French-Muslims. Hopefully have an encounter with either Guène or Abd al Malik. Arrange meetings with an Algerian writer such as Yasmina Khadra at the Algerian Cultural Center or an historian such as Benjamin Stora. **2FI** Guided tours of such sites as l’Institut du Monde Arabe and Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration. **2SEE** Evening Boat tour.

**Day 17** Visit other famous sites such Musée d’Orsay, Louvre, Père Lachaise Cemetery. **2SEE** Free time. Dinner in Montmartre.

**Day 18** Return to US

**Total credit hours earned: 3**

**Formalized instruction 17 (one credit = 12.5)**

**Structured educational Experience 44 (one credit = 25)**

**Total credits 3**

1. GE credits to be determined. French 2501 was originally put under Literature but should also have been included under Cultures and Ideas, along with French 1802, 1803 and 3801. My chair, Professor Jennifer Willging agrees. This course/trip also covers Diversity, Global Studies (like French 1801), Study Abroad, and Visual and Performing Arts. In 2012, IA scholars students petitioned for the various GEs. We have a year to take care of this matter and I will work closely with both my chair, Dean Heysel, and OIA to provide the very best GE options for students. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These are French courses that have already been approved; I taught French 2501 in spring 2102 for the first-year IA Scholars course and subsequent trip to France. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)