TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRANCE

This course will explore central issues in the history of France from the late nineteenth century to the early years of the Fifth Republic. We begin with an examination of the Dreyfus Affair, an extraordinary national convulsion over anti-Semitism and a miscarriage of justice that left a powerful legacy for the rest of the twentieth century. We then turn to the First World War, giving special attention to its effects on the economy, government, social classes, and the relationship between men and women, and between colonial peoples and the French empire. Our focus then shifts to the 1930s, when the country was shaken by the Great Depression, the rise of political extremism, and the struggle to forge a “popular front” against fascism. We then spend several weeks exploring the Second World War, its anticipation, the French defeat of 1940, the Occupation, Resistance, Liberation, and postwar reconstruction. A novel by Simone de Beauvoir provides us with an opportunity to consider how intellectuals in Paris navigated through the turbulent political passage from the Liberation to the early years of the Cold War. The final weeks of the course investigate decolonization and the Algerian War, Gaullism, and the “events” of May 1968. Although the course is organized around a chronological examination of the political history of France, we will stress social, cultural and economic history as well. After all, the century of total wars also brought France its period of most rapid social and economic change. We will investigate issues that call for crossing the usual boundaries between these several kinds of history. We will also repeatedly consider French developments within three wider international contexts: Europe, the French empire, and trans-Atlantic relations.

Because this is mainly a discussion course, its quality depends on everyone preparing the material and participating in class. Two papers are also required. The first will address the reading for one week during the course. This short analytical paper should be five to six pages long. The final paper (due May 4) should be twelve to fifteen pages on a topic of your own choosing. Grading in the course will be as follows:

Class discussion 30%
Short paper 20%
Final paper 50%

Articles and documents for required reading are available on Blackboard. Books for required reading are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore and are on reserve at Bobst Library and in the salle de lecture at the Institute of French Studies. These books include:


**Class Schedule**

**Week 1 (Jan. 17) – Introduction**

Recommended:


Christophe Charle, *Les Elites de la République*.


Sanford Elwitt, *The Making of the Third Republic*.


William Irvine, *The Boulanger Affair Reconsidered*.

**Week 2 (Jan. 24) – The Dreyfus Affair**

Michael Burns, ed., *France and the Dreyfus Affair*.


**Recommended:**

Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus*.

Michael Burns, *Dreyfus: A Family Affair, 1789-1945*.

Week 3 (Jan. 31) – The First World War

Kedward, France and the French, 62-145.
Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, France and the Great War, 1914-1918.

Recommended:

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War.
Leonard V. Smith, Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War One.
Laura Lee Downs, Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914-1939.
Essays by Michelle Perrot and Steven C. Hause in Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars, ed. by Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al.
Françoise Thébaud, La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14.

Week 4 (Feb. 7) – Fascism and the Right

Kedward, France and the French, 149-218.
René Rémond, The Right Wing in France from 1815 to de Gaulle, 273-99.

Recommended:

Philippe Burrin, La Dérive fasciste: Doriot, Déat, Bergery, 1933-1945.
Ralph Schor, L’Opinion française et les étrangers, 1919-1939.
Kevin Passmore, From Liberalism to Fascism: The Right in a French Province, 1928-1930.
Week 5 (Feb. 14) – The Popular Front


Recommended:

Siân Reynolds, *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics.*
Jean Lacouture, *Léon Blum.*
Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s.*

Week 6 (Feb. 21) – Vichy’s National Revolution and Life in Occupied France

Philippe Burrin, *France under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise.*
Philippe Pétain’s speeches of 17 June 1940.

Recommended:

On the defeat of 1940:
Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat*.

Arthur Koestler, *Scum of the Earth*.


Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *La Décadence, 1932-1939*.


Andrew Shennan, *The Fall of France, 1940*.

Carole Fink, *Marc Bloch: A Life in History*.

Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940*.


On the Vichy regime and the Occupation:

Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*.

Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-44*.


Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France During the German Occupation*.


Marc Olivier Baruch, *Servir l’État français: L’Administration en France de 1940 à 1944*.


Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy et l’éternel féminin*.


Henry Roussso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*.

Jean-Pierre Azéma and François Bédarida, eds., *Vichy et les Français*.


**Week 7 (Feb. 28) – France and the Holocaust**

Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy and the Jews*.

Texts of Vichy laws regarding the status of Jews.

**Recommended:**

Week 8 (March 7) – Resistance

Charles De Gaulle’s speeches of 18 June 1940, 6 June 1944, and 25 August 1944.

Optional screening: Marcel Ophul’s film “The Sorrow and the Pity.”

**Recommended:**

Lucie Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*.
Daniel Cordier, *Jean Moulin: La République des catacombs*.

Week 9 (March 21) - Liberation

Charles De Gaulle’s speech of 2 February 1945.

**Recommended:**
Alice Kaplan, The Collaborator: The Trial and Execution of Robert Brasillach.
Marguerite Duras, The War.

**Week 10 (Mar. 28) – From Liberation to Cold War**

Simone de Beauvoir, The Mandarins.
Kedward, France and the French, 349-72.

**Recommended:**

Sylvie Chaperon, Les Années Beauvoir.
Deirdre Bair, Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography.
Gisèle Sapiro, La Guerre des écrivains 1940-1953.
Simone de Beauvoir, America Day by Day.
Frank Costigliola, France and the United States: The Cold Alliance since World War II.
Week 11 (April 4) – The Algerian War and Decolonization

James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria*.

Screening: “The Battle of Algiers,” a film directed by Gillo Pontecorvo

Recommended:

Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*.
Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*.
Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l’oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d’Algérie*.
Miles Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: The Domestic Consequences of International Relations*.

Week 12 (April 11) – Legacies of the Algerian War


Recommended:

Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l’oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d’Algérie*.
**Week 13 (April 18) – The De Gaulle Republic and May ‘68**


**Recommended:**

Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the U.S*.
Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération, 2 volumes*.
Raymond Aron, *The Elusive Revolution*.
Alain Touraine, *The May Movement*.
Kristin Ross, *May ’68 and Its Afterlives*.
Michael Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968*.

**Week 14 (April 25) - Finale**