



Community Engagement in Montpellier

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: : MONT 3886

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 30 WITH INSTRUCTOR; 95 AT ENGAGEMENT SITE

Instructor: Corinne Dumas, MA, French Literature

Course Description

This course will explore the historical, sociological, and political context of the French community but also in relation to Europe and with a comparison with the American system. It will provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their community engagement in the host country environment. Students will engage in charities/French schools and then share their experience in a classroom. They will discuss topics linked to French society at large, approaching diverse subjects such as the youth in French society, the way the education system works in France and how it differs from the US, the French social system, the concept of “laïcité” (secularism) in France, the history of immigration from the 19th Century until today with the new waves of immigrant population, and race and gender issues. Students will have a closer look at French charity organization, NGO, and see how they work here in France. They will also examine leadership values in their country and see how they can adapt and develop them in their new environment.

This course and students’ engagement in the community will deepen their understanding of the host country cultural context and will lead them to critically examine their own worldviews. Topics explored will include ethic and social responsibility, leadership, French social systems, multiculturalism in the French society, place of secularism (laïcité) in the French society, history of immigration, and gender equality

Contact hours include 30 instructional hours plus approximately 95 hours at the assigned engagement site.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and understand French cultural dynamics with comparative focus with the US
- Address challenges that arise in the community using a proactive approach. Understand different values and communication styles that impact workplace dynamics and develop strategies for adapting to these differences.
- Articulate personal skills, strengths, and values within the context of the new environment.
- Analyze and understand different aspects of French society to deepen students' understanding of different social values with comparative focus with US.

Methodology

In-class contact hours include discussion, readings, and sharing students' personal experiences.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the mission or philosophy of the organization and how this works in practice
- Comprehend how the organization fits within the societal systems of your host country
- Understand your own values and identity and how this impacts your interaction at your placement
- Appreciate different cultural values and norms
- Learn from people at your site (reciprocity)
- Build your professional skills

Required Reading / Materials

- "Ex-congressman tells atheist politicians to 'stay in the closet.'" <http://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2015/04>
- "From Revolution to Topless Protest: A Brief History of Feminism in France." Naoise Murphy. <https://www.thebubble.org.uk/culture/history/from-revolution-to-topless-protest-a-brief-history-of-feminism-in-france/>
- "Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong." Jean-Benoît Nadeau and Julie Barlow.
- "France Then and Now: The Immigration Challenge." <http://www.france24.com/en/20150724-france-in-focusimmigration-history-calais-paris-pouilly-en-auxois-law>

- “Our France: Muslims tell their stories. Following the terrorist attacks in Paris, how does it feel to be a Muslim in France? Introduction by Simon Kuper. Financial Times, 25 janvier 2015.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Attendance and class participation	10%
Weekly journals	20%
Mid-term exam	20%
Two short papers of 3 to 4 pages	20%
Final paper	30%
Overall grade	100%

Course Content

Unit 1

- Quick presentation of the class: format, assessment, and exam.
- Discussion of students' sites and projects.
- Associations and NGO in France: Volunteering in French charities: who, what, where and how.
- Discussion on social/working values in France.

Unit 2

- The welfare system in France. How does the social security system work in France? When and how was it created? How is it financed? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the system? What is the support system for someone who loses a job through illness, disability, or for any other reasons?

Unit 3

- Rallye downtown Montpellier. Students will go to the Social Security Center and check how the system works. They will meet at the Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole and then visit an association that welcomes parents who need financial support to feed their babies.

Unit 4

- Unemployment crisis in France. The growing number of unemployed people in France after the “trente glorieuses.” What is the economic situation today? Who is suffering the most from the situation? What are the social and economic realities/inequalities in France today? We will look at the impact of the Euro (from 2002) on the French consumer society: inflation, the “new” poor people in the French society with a raise of poverty, and economic/social inequalities in France.

Unit 5

- Education in France: presentation of the 1881/1882 Jules Ferry’s Laws to introduce our education system. Comparison between the French and American school systems.

Unit 6

- “Laïcité” in the school system and the French society in general. Discussion on the conflict/tensions between the French “laïque” republic and the Islamic religion. Students will read and discuss diverse articles to understand the major differences between France and the United States regarding secularism.

Unit 7

- Mid-term evaluation

Unit 8

- Immigration in France and its impact on French society. History of immigration in France from the French Revolution until today. How has the immigrant population changed after 1945 and how has it impacted the social and political life of France? Those are questions we will think of and discuss.

Unit 9

- Visit of the Mosson area in Montpellier. Visit a center that welcomes new immigrants.

Unit 10

- Immigration in France (part 2). Cultural identity of the inhabitants of Montpellier and the Region (Harkis, PiedsNoirs, Espagnols...).
- The new waves of immigration in Europe today: How does the French politics face this massive immigration wave? What are the new immigration laws implemented by the French government in the last 10 years?

Unit 11

- Movie about clandestine immigration, “Welcome,” followed by a discussion and debate in class.

Unit 12

- Gender issues in the French society: the evolution of the place of women in the history of France. A long struggle for parity in the social and political contemporary France.

Unit 13

- Final projects are due this week. Students will present them in class

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement;

acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).