

Americans in Paris

ENGL 200

Fall 2011



Hemingway, Sylvia Beach and friends in front of Shakespeare and Company, 1928

*“Qui regarde au fond de Paris a le vertige.”—Victor Hugo
[He who looks into the heart of Paris has vertigo.]*

. . . and somehow that vertigo is intoxicating and inspiring. With it comes the promise of history and culture, an abiding cosmopolitanism, a feeling of possibility. Or isn't it pretty to think so? There is also an inescapability of loss and the inevitability of wasting decay.

Paris has inspired the work of more than two centuries of American artists and intellectuals. From Thomas Jefferson to James Baldwin, these figures have chronicled the attraction and conflict between European and American social and cultural values.

This class will examine the relationship between a group of expatriate American writers and the city that inspired them. We will pay particular attention to what Gertrude Stein labeled “the lost generation,” reading works by Dos Passos, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Pound, and others as we attempt to understand how the shared experience of living in Paris, with its feeling of liberation and limitation, shaped some of the most important American literature of the early twentieth century.

Objectives:

I believe teaching should challenge you and show you the significance, the pertinence, and even the joy to be had in ideas. I hope that you will leave this class with both the ability to think and speak in an informed manner about the course material and its broader intellectual context, and also with a renewed enthusiasm for learning.

With this in mind, by the end of the quarter you should. . .

- Understand the cultural context and historical conditions that gave rise to the “lost generation” and its literary output.
- Produce your own artifacts, images, and documents.
- Progress in your communication skills both written and oral.
- Improve your close reading and analytic skills for approaching a diverse range of sources.
- Build writing competence that will serve as a foundation for future academic and professional work.

Class Time

Monday thru Thursday, A) 11:30-12:20 B) 12:30-1:20

Location: A) MEB, 248 B) MOR, 225

Instructor

Dr. William Mitchell

Email: wcmitch@u.washington.edu

Office: Padelford Hall, B-433

Office Hours: Friday, 11:30-2:30 and by appointment.

Required Texts:

John Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*

Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*

Additional readings will be found in a course packet available at the Ave Copy Center, 4141 University Way NE, #3.

Assignments and Grading

A successful final grade in this course will be the result of an ongoing commitment to the material, ideas and people with whom you work. It will require that you complete readings on time, participate in class, and work equitably in collaborative projects. Grades will be determined according to the following breakdown:

Participation

The success of this course will depend largely on your active participation in both class discussions and your work in preparing and presenting group projects. Attendance is crucial but is only the beginning of creating a participatory environment; it is also incumbent that you contribute your utmost. Participation will account for 20% of your grade.

Reading Responses

Each week, you will be responsible for writing a one-page response to questions that ask you to engage with the week's material. These responses are designed to give you the opportunity to begin thinking more critically about the texts and will hopefully help facilitate writing the longer essays. I expect your responses to be thoughtful, well-written, and edited. Reading responses will account for 10% of your grade.

Projects and Papers

Assignments have been designed to engage course material in a variety of projects and papers. The intent is to encourage you to explore course ideas through multiple modes of communication—visual, oral, written. Projects and papers will account for 50% of your grade.

Final

The final will be composed of a meeting with me during the last week of class and a 4-5 page paper due on Monday, December 12. At our meeting, you will be asked to indicate the elements of the class that most piqued your interest and present a working topic for your final paper. The final will account for 20% of your grade.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Readings:

- 9/28: Introduction
- 9/29: Introduction to *Americans in Paris* (reader)

Week 2

Readings:

- 10/3: Letters by Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Abigail Adams (reader)
- 10/4: Emerson, Twain (reader)
- 10/5: Henry James (reader)
- 10/6: TBA

Looking Ahead : begin reading *Three Soldiers* by Dos Passos—Part I and II (pages 1-85)

Assignment: Reading response due Thursday 10/6

Week 3

Readings:

- 10/10: Joyce, Proust (reader)
- 10/11: Eliot (reader)
- 10/12: Pound, H.D. (reader)
- 10/13: Cummings, Williams (reader)

Looking Ahead: read *Three Soldiers*, Part III and IV (pages 85-191)

Assignment : Reading response due Thursday 10/13

Week 4

Readings:

- 10/17-10/20: John Dos Passos, *Three Soldiers*

Assignment: First Analytic Paper due Monday 10/24

Week 5

Readings:

- 10/24: Paper Due
- 10/24-10/27: Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Assignment : Reading response due Thursday 10/27

Week 6

Readings:

- 10/31-11/3: Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Assignment: Second analytic paper due Monday 11/7

Week 7

Readings:

- 11/7: Paper Due
- 11/7-11/10: Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*

Assignment: Reading response due Thursday 11/10

Week 8

Readings:

- 11/14-11/17: *Tender is the Night*

Assignment: Reading response due Thursday 11/17

Week 9

Readings:

- 11/21-11/23: In-class work on group projects.
- 11/24: No class—Happy Thanksgiving.

Week 10

Readings:

- 11/28-12/1: Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*

Assignment: Reading response due Thursday 12/1

Week 11

The final week of class will be devoted to group presentations and student meetings to discuss your final paper. Presentations will take place Monday and Tuesday. Student meetings will be held Wednesday and Thursday.

Final

Your final paper will be due at noon on Monday 12/12. You will turn in your final at my office—Padelford Hall, B-433.