SYLLABUS

REGIONAL CULTURES, LANGUAGES AND IDENTITIES IN FRANCE
Instructor: Armelle Denis
Contact Hrs: 40
Language of Instruction: English

ANGERS, FRANCE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Turning "peasants into Frenchmen," as Weber put it, has been a long and conflictual process, a process still in flux. We will examine the history of assimilation of regional minorities and its cultural and political underpinnings, all the while recognizing that regional cultures in the 21st centuries live and strive through the arts, through popular music especially, through political activism, and we will reflect on cultural identity in a global world. The example of nearby Brittany will illustrate concepts discussed in class.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

The Instructor will:

- Present key facts and concepts necessary for understanding the historical transition into modernity, from an agricultural to a post-industrial France
- Facilitate group discussions of readings
- Create opportunities for students to participate in Breton cultural events in Angers, Nantes and on overnight excursion to Brittany
- Guide students' learning with timely and personal feedback
- Encourage students to reflect on cultural identities in the global world, and by extension question their own cultural identity

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Understand the historical transition into modernity, and the process of cultural assimilation as a corollary of the French Republican model
- Research contemporary French regional cultures
- Practice participant observation at Breton cultural events
- Gain an appreciation for the expression of cultural identity through the arts, music and political activism
- Integrate new insights on cultural identities into an examination of their own identity

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Class will feature short lectures to provide historical context, and group discussions of readings. Small group research projects on regional identities as well as reports on Breton cultural events attended will engage students in a very hands-on fashion. Class will include practical training to participant observation methods, in order to give students the intellectual tools to reflexively analyze their experience of Breton cultural events, which we will strive to attend throughout the term.

METHOD OF EVALUATION/GRADING

1. Active participation and preparation: 10 %
2. Small group research project + presentation on regional cultures: 20 %
3. Reports on Breton cultural events attended: 2 x 15 % = 30 %
4. Midterm exam: 20 %
5. Final paper: 20 %

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1 Introduction to class
Day 2 Pre-Revolutionary France (*L'identité de la France*, Fernand Braudel)
Day 3 1789 and the Republican project (*Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson)
Day 4 Overview of regional cultures + assign small group research projects on regional cultures
Day 5 Read Weber's Chapter 6: A Wealth of Tongues
Day 6 Read Weber's Chapter 7: France, One and Indivisible
Day 7 Small group presentations on regional cultures
Day 8 Small group presentations on regional cultures
Day 9 Movie: *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* + movie discussion
Day 10 **Midterm exam**
Day 11 The Breton language and people (*The Horse of Pride*, Pierre-Jakez Helias)
Day 12 Traditional Breton culture (*The Horse of Pride*, Pierre-Jakez Helias)
Day 13 Traditional Breton culture (*The Horse of Pride*, Pierre-Jakez Helias)
Day 14 **First report on Breton cultural event attended due** + class discussion
Day 15 Romantic reinventions (*L'invention de la Bretagne*, Catherine Bertho)
Day 16 Breton independence / identity movements through the ages
Day 17 The role of Celtic and Breton music and dancing: Alan Stivell, Tri Yann and Fest-noz
Day 18 **Second report on Breton cultural event attended due** + class discussion
Day 19 Class discussion: cultural identity in the global age + editing advice for final paper
Day 20 **Class wrap-up + Final paper due**

COURSE READINGS/TEXTS

Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914 (1976). Eugene Weber, Stanford University Press (excerpts).
The Horse of Pride, Pierre-Jakez Helias (excerpts).
+ Selected articles, among which:
http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/arss_0335-5322_1980_num_35_1_2099
http://www.languesdefranceenchansons.com/site.php

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, New York: Verso, 1991.

Bertho, Catherine. *L'invention de la Bretagne.* Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales, vol. 35, pp. 45-62, 1980.

Braudel, Fernand. *The Identity of France,* 2 vols. New York: Harper and Row, Harper-Collins, 1990, 1992.

Helias, Pierre-Jakez. *The Horse of Pride, Life in a Breton Village.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978.

MacDonald, Sharon, ed. *Inside European Identities, ethnography in Western Europe.* Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997.

McDonald, Maryon. *'We are not French!' Language, Culture and Identity in Brittany.* Routledge, 1989.

Weber, Eugen. Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914. Stanford University Press, 1976.