Identity, Politics, Education, and Culture: African Americans in Paris

Intensive Weeklong Study Abroad at the Paris Research Center

Spring Break 2011. March 6-12.

AFA 4905 (2 Credits)
Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans

This course will explore the African American presence in Paris. Since the mid-1700s scores of African Americans have visited, lived, and worked in France. Students will research the experiences and perceptions of Black Americans and study why and how a sustained pattern of visitation has occurred. Significant attention will be paid to how gender and sexuality were woven into Black experiences Black Parisian life and student assignments will include critical reflection of autobiographical travel writing.

The course will introduce students to three groups of Black Americans who have traveled to Paris: 1) political persons, 2) academics, and 3) culture bearers. Some of the most famous visitors include Sally Hemings (enslaved by Thomas Jefferson), Frederick Douglass, Carter Woodson, Josephine Baker, Anna Julia Cooper, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alaine Locke, Billy Holiday, Duke Ellington, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Martin Luther King Jr., Marian Anderson, Katherine Dunham, Alvin Ailey, Nina Simone, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Miles Davis, Toni Morrison, and Maya Angelou.

A cross-disciplinary approach will facilitate learning about African Americans in Paris. The fields of political science, performing arts, literature, sociology, and history all offer points of entry. Students will approach topics chronologically, but also thematically and geographically to see the various reasons African Americans have continued to engage in Parisian life.

Students are required to complete course readings before the trip. On-site assignments include attending lectures, cultural events, and significant sites such as the Sorbonne University. After the trip, students submit a final paper that brings together their disciplinary interests with political and cultural analyses.

For more information, contact Dr. Stephanie Evans at drevans@ufl.edu
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Class size limited to 15.