Syllabus – Elective Course

Course title:

France, War and Moral Choices: Ethics, Memory and the Arts During World War II

Credits:

6 ECTS credits

Teaching language:

English

Target students:

Undergraduate students from all study areas but particularly those with an interest in history and wartime culture and/or specifically French history/culture (no background knowledge required).

Teacher in charge of the course:

Jessica Martin, Director of Language in Motion and Instructor in French, *Juniata College*

COURSE PRESENTATION

Prerequisite:

Students undertaking this course should normally have successfully completed at least one semester at university or have equivalent experience. They must have some ability to work both individually and as a group, and should be able to communicate easily in English at a standard university level. In other respects, the course is intended to serve a mix of profiles and learning backgrounds for a more diverse international learning experience.

Content:

This course examines a wide range of individual and collective responses to the German occupation of France. In addition to studying acts of resistance, rescue, and survival, students will analyze collaboration, denunciation, participation in persecution, bystander behavior, and other forms of complicity. The purpose of this examination is to understand the historical, social, political, and ethical factors that influenced human choices under extraordinary circumstances. Through critical analysis, students will evaluate the consequences of these actions and consider questions of responsibility, agency, and moral judgment. Topics to be covered will normally include: **Session 1:** Overview Ethics During War **Session 2:** Occupation/Moral Ambiguity **Session 3:** Children and War **Session 4:** Children in Hiding and Survival **Session 5:** Internment **Session 6:** Art in Prison **Session 7:** Les Milles **Session 8:** Resistance and Collaboration **Session 9:** Effroyables Jardins **Session 10:** Adapting Memory **Session 11:** Testimony and Witnesses **Session 12:** Memories and Memorials - Memorial Presentations **Session 13:** Legacies of War

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, the students should be able to:

- Analyze complex ethical dilemmas in texts and visual culture.
- Interpret literature and artwork within the historical context of occupied France.
- Evaluate questions of responsibility, complicity, collaboration, resistance, persecution, and memory, recognizing the diverse and often conflicting choices made by individuals and institutions during wartime.
- Compare how adults and children experienced and interpreted their perspectives on war.
- Critically assess how museums and memorials shape public memory of World War II.

WORKLOAD

French contact hours = 60 minutes (in some countries/institutions, 1 contact hour = 45-50 minutes)

Form	Number of hours	Comments
Face-to-face, in-class, on-site learning	39 hours	13 sessions of 3 hours
Approximate personal work/homework	15 hours	
Student total workload	**54 hours**	

EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Lecture, discussion, presentations.

RESOURCES

All requisite reading materials for the course will be supplied in class. Reference may be made to any of the following:

- Quint, Michel. In Our Strange Gardens. Translated by Barbara Bray, The Berkley Publishing Group, 2001.
- Primary documents from occupied France.
- Propaganda posters.
- Artwork created in internment camps.
- Survivor testimonies.
- Memorials and museum exhibits.
- Selected documentary and film excerpts.

ASSESSMENT

Form	Number	Comments
Continuous assessment (60%)	10 As needed 1	Reflections Quizzes Memorial Presentation
Final reflection (20%)	1	Final reflection covering all parts of the course
Other (Participation) (20%	1	Attendance, participation, and contribution to group discussion.

This syllabus is based on information available at the time of publication (November 2026). Changes may occur.

For updated information about course content, please contact us: lilleprograms@univ-catholille.fr