



IFE course syllabus

Course title

Cultural and Artistic Dynamics in Marseille¹ Today: Cultural policies, artistic scenes, actors and audiences

COURSE TAUGHT BY

Constance Moréteau is a research coordinator at Iméra, the Institute for Advanced Studies (IEA) of the University of Aix-Marseille, where she is in charge of development for the “Arts & Sciences” research program.

In 2013, Constance defended a thesis in contemporary art history entitled *The artist and reading: the book in artistic installations and exhibition devices in Europe and the United States, from 1960 to the present*, which has led to several articles in scientific and artistic journals.

She was a fellow at the INHA (National Institute of Art History) for the program *Social History of Art, Artistic History of the Social World*, at the Terra Summer Residency and at the Getty Research Institute. She continued her research with the program *Dialectical Images, Imaginary Museums, Virtual Museums*, part of the research program (labex) *Past in the Present* at the Université Paris Ouest, where she coordinated the symposium *The Transfigured Cathedral. Views, myths, conflicts* (Rouen, 2014). With Neil McWilliam and Johanne Lamoureux, she edited *Social Histories of Art. A Critical Anthology* (Les Presses du Réel, 2016).

She was also professor of art history and research coordinator at the EBABX (Bordeaux School of Fine Arts), and research fellow and director of academic programs at the Terra Foundation for American Art in Paris.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the actors, geography and spaces of artistic creation and cultural programming in Marseille, via a back-and-forth look at local, regional, national and international levels. The course also examines interplay between inherited traditions and contemporary dynamics. In addition to deepening students' knowledge of art, creation and public policy in Marseille and France, the course illustrates the social, economic and political dynamics of the Marseille basin through case studies and reflections on these themes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

With a strong identity based on its local contexts, the Marseille arts scene has nonetheless enjoyed a striking international and national reputation since the 1970s, distinguishing itself from the Parisian scene. Key features include a large number of artists, the second-largest number of theaters in France, and a rich network of non-profit organizations in various fields (visual arts, theater, street arts, music, etc.), led by the artists themselves. Marseille's status as a primarily Mediterranean city, a “city of refuge” and a former port open to the world and to French colonies, facing Algiers, has undoubtedly had an impact on the cultural perception of the city and on the cultural projects undertaken. At the same time the arts scene is confronted with a well-entrenched imaginary of Marseille, fed by clichés and fantasies conveyed by the media, which needs to be deconstructed. Although Marseille had a rich history of cultural policies and initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s, the city lagged far behind in terms of cultural infrastructure. This was offset by its designation as European City of Culture in 2013, which led to the construction of important sites (the most famous of which is the Mucem, the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations). Subsequently, these sites have been reevaluated in light of new missions including hosting international events.

¹ In this document, the name of the city is spelled in the French way, without the final s.

A cultural crossroads for millennia, Marseille can be read as a palimpsest of practices and places, ranging from tourism and outside influences to the cultural initiatives of local residents reclaiming their city. In addition to offering a synthetic analysis of enduring trends such as the urban matrix, a social and anthropological approach to culture, and postcolonial challenges, this course will also explore pioneering experiments such as the Friche de la Belle de Mai, which opened thirty years ago, or an emerging project such as the Citadelle de Marseille, which is reinventing the way the city looks at its heritage and the making of history with new conceptions from the public.

Students are urged to pay particular attention to how themes from this course reappear in the material of the other two courses comprising the preparatory session. The three courses of the session have been designed in a collegial effort to build a thematic ensemble that enables students to grasp the city of Marseille in its complexity, as observed from different disciplinary viewpoints, drawing on case studies for each theme.

This course meets approximately 32 hours, including mandatory site visits.

OUTCOMES

1 In addition to the fundamental outcomes associated with the aims of the course, as described above (“Purpose of the course”), this course is designed to enable students to develop the following “applied outcomes”:

- add a cultural dimension to students’ understanding of France and Marseille - emphasized throughout the preparatory session - as quintessentially European: small, polyglot, culturally rich and diverse, with culture being one of the pillars of society and linked to politics;
- become familiar with Marseille local culture as unique in itself, and dispel received ideas about the city and its area;
- become familiar with contemporary European arts and creativity in one of its liveliest centers;
- develop skills in cultural analysis;
- become familiar with major local artists, past and contemporary;
- acquire French-language vocabulary in cultural subjects;
- develop oral skills of presentation, debate and exchange, in French;
- master the use of French for the specific purpose of being able to engage professionally with the issues of the day and to produce useful texts in a work setting;
- learn the use of European methodology for structuring argumentation and marshaling relevant information.

2 Contribution to outcomes of an integrated program of study

The IFE semester is a fully integrated whole, academically. An important set of outcomes of this and every course comprising an IFE preparatory session is the repertory of skills and knowledge acquired in order to succeed in the next phase of the semester. Students as they enter the internship phase will know how - in French - to make oral presentations, write dissertations, organize material according to a standard methodology, comprehend oral material, take notes in a meeting, understand the work of their host organization in its societal context generally, and specifically in the complex environment that is Marseille. The result is a student-intern’s readiness to take fuller advantage of the field experience opportunity including as a research terrain thus enhancing the final academic exercise, the 30-page guided independent field research paper (qv), the keystone of the IFE integrated semester.

3 Outcomes in the context of a program of experiential learning

Outcomes are essentially seized learning opportunities. Experiential learning outcomes result from the opportunity to study a subject both in situ as well as in words and in theory. At IFE, cultural and linguistic otherness enhances both factors of the experiential education equation, yielding the final, fundamental intended outcomes of comparative knowledge strengthening a student’s grasp on a particular subject and discipline, along with robust language skills, and the knowledge of the world and of oneself that comes from having learned to operate effectively with and in otherness.

PEDAGOGICAL METHODS

- 1 Lecture-seminars whereby each two-hour class meeting is devoted to a specific theme, including lecture presentation of new material reinforced by in-class tools such as power-points, videos and readings (including some materials to be reviewed by students in preparation for class).

Small class size allows for questions and some discussion.

- 2 Discussion or “workshop” sessions (*Travaux Pratiques*, a standard part of European university pedagogy), designed to assist students in assimilating the information and knowledge transmitted during the lecture-seminar sessions and applying it to current events and issues.

Typical exercises include:

- a review of national press on specific subjects linking course material with current events.
- short student oral presentations on selected subject.
- a detailed draft outline as if for a dissertation on a topic of current debate.

- 3 In addition to the lecture visits scheduled as part of the course, other site visits, encounters with civil society actors and similar activities complement the teacher’s classroom instruction.

Scheduled visits include, for example:

- a guided visit of the Mucem, The Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations.
- shows at local theaters (La Criée, Théâtre du Merlan, Théâtre de l’Oeuvre, Ballet national de Marseille, etc.).
- a day-trip to Arles (LUMA Foundation, Actes Sud publishing, etc.)

These activities are prepared in advance and debriefed and commented afterwards, in workshop sessions. Material presented during these activities is part of the body of material on which students may be tested.

COURSE OUTLINE

- 1 Cultural geography of Marseille, and its imaginary cityscapes: from the Velodrome to the Alhambra Theater.
- 2 Highlights in the recognition of Marseille’s cultural scene, from the 1980s to the present day.
- 3 History and current realities of a project to decentralize contemporary creation - *Visit of the FRAC Sud (Regional fund for contemporary art) and meeting with its teams.*
- 4 A case study: Le Mucem, a social museum striking a delicate balance between European and Mediterranean cultures.
- 5 Marseille and urban cultures / 1: Hip-hop and street-art.
- 6 Marseille and urban cultures / 2: *Visit of La Friche, a pioneering example of a cultural third place.*
- 7 Where cultural/environmental heritage conservation and social practices intersect.
- 8 Marseille and (post)colonial culture: colonial legacies and the decolonizing manual.
- 9 Creating a new history of Marseille, and the Marseille of tomorrow - *Visit of the Citadelle de Marseille and meeting with its teams.*
- 10 Cultural Law in Marseille.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dominik Barbier, Sophie Bassi, François Bazzolin, Vincent Bioulès (dir.) *Marseille Artistes associés 1977-2007*, Archibooks, 2007.
- François Déalle Facquez & Emilie Seto, *Marseille / Éclatés. Une ville transformée par ses imaginaires*, éd. Sur-Mesure, 2024.
- Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Marseille et son projet culturel : la ville, l’Europe et la Méditerranée*, L’Observatoire, 2008/2 (N° 34), p. 28-30. [Online - <https://www.cairn.info/revue-l-observatoire-2008-2-page-28.htm>]
- Thierry Fabre & Anissa Bouayed, *Le Noir et le bleu. Un rêve méditerranéen* (exhibition catalog), Textuel/Mucem, 2013.
- Alessandro Gallicchio (dir), *Rue d’Alger* (exhibition catalog), Editions MF, 2020.

- Sylvia Girel. *Marseille. Contribution à une histoire sociale des arts visuels 1960-2000*. 2000. [Online - <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03368448/document>)]
- Boris Grésillon, *La reconversion d'un espace productif au cœur d'une métropole: l'exemple de la Friche de la Belle de Mai à Marseille*, Rives méditerranéennes [Online] URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/rives/3977>
- Marc Ingram & Kathryn Kleppinger (dir), *The Marseille Mosaic: a mediterranean city at the crossroads of cultures*, Berghahn books, 2023.
- Julien Valnet, M.A.R.S, *Histoires et légendes du hip-hop à Marseille*, Wildproject, 2013.
- *Guide du Marseille décolonial* (collective work), Syllepse, 2022.

GRADING METHODS

- There are two in-class written examinations:
 - a one-hour examination mid-way through the preparatory session comprising multiple-choice and short-answer questions (20% of the final grade).
 - a two-hour final examination taking the form of a *dissertation*, or long essay in which the student – on the subject given for the examination – first constructs a specific question to be examined and then proceeds to do so in a formal, well-structured manner, drawing on and thereby demonstrating a certain master of course material (30% of final grade).
- **A sample examination subject for this course:** *Artists' collectives in Marseille: An alternative model for artistic creation and distribution*.
- Class preparation and participation in the lecture-seminar sessions are taken into account in assessing the grade for this part of the course. Grades for the various exercises of the workshop section, taking into account active participation in all class sessions and course-related visits and activities, are averaged to assess a grade for these aspects of the course (50% of final grade).
- **A note on grading:** IFE teachers use a standard grading system based on a scale of 20. The final grade is also transposed into an American letter grade according to a scale of equivalence, and both grades are displayed. The grade assessed for written work reflects the degree of acquisition of the information and knowledge presented during the course as well as how well the extent to which the methodology is followed. Since the language of instruction and examination is not the student's own language, the quality of the written expression only enters into account in cases of noteworthy progress or, on the contrary, repeated and avoidable errors and carelessness.

Those who grade IFE students' work are guided by the principle that this course – in its several parts – is not intended to train specialists in French cultural affairs or Art history. Therefore, evaluation of student work pays particular attention to knowledge gained during the six weeks of the preparatory session, demonstrated curiosity and a student's motivation to apply this knowledge to their experience and to gaining new perspectives, including on their home culture and society.

- **Grading scale:**

A+	18 - 20/20	B+	14/20	C+	10/20
A	16 - 17/20	B	13/20	C	9/20
A-	15/20	B-	11 - 12/20	C-	8/20

EQUIVALENT IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY COURSE OFFERINGS

This course is comparable to courses offered in Francophone Studies, Mediterranean Studies, or Art History.