SO270/FR317
CONTEMPORARY FRENCH SOCIETY

Toulouse, France

Program Fee: $3,300

For more information and application, contact:

Prof. Gail Murphy-Geiss
gmurphygeiss@ColoradoCollege.edu
Some Topics/Activities

AGRICULTURE: We will visit a farm in a nearby village to learn about the importance of the land and local products, and we will have a meal at the farm.

ART: We will visit a Hip-Hop school for a workshop. We will also have the opportunity to visit a number of museums, depending on the exhibit schedule that block. The Contemporary Art Museum is one great option.

COMMERCE: We will visit a regular and an organic supermarket. We will meet the manager at "Grandeur Nature" organic supermarket to discuss the role, position, and challenges of the organic food market in France. Then, we will meet with a manager from a large chain supermarket (Carrefour) to discuss the increase in demand for "organic" foods and how they manage a multinational capitalist business in a culture that values small shops and farmers’ markets.

DEMOGRAPHICS: France is VERY different than the U.S. in their understandings of gender, race and class. Those realities will be seen (and not seen) every day and discussed throughout the course.

EDUCATION: We will visit a French elementary school to observe classes and meet with the principal. We will also have a professor from one of the Grande Écoles speak to the class about his experience teaching in the system.

FOOD: We will eat in local restaurants in Toulouse and the surrounding area, learning about important elements in French cuisine (baguettes, wine, cheese, sausage, pastries, etc.). We will also cook our own meals, using produce from a farmers’ market near our apartments. Easter will occur while we are there, so the chocolate shops will be selling ornate Easter candies.

HEALTH CARE: We will hear from a guest speaker who is an expert on the French health care system, and who knows of its benefits first hand. It is likely that at least one student will get sick, so we learn about the health care services (doctors and pharmacies) in that way as well.

IMMIGRATION: We will visit La Mirail neighborhood that was initiated by renowned architect Candilis in the 1960’s. It never reached the mixed income, community-focused ideal of Candilis, but instead turned into a low-income immigrant neighborhood. We will also visit with a non-profit organization focused on serving North African immigrants to learn about their work. A guest speaker will share his experience as an immigrant to France.

LEISURE: We will visit a local club to learn how to play Pétanque, a very popular activity in the south of France. We will also randonnée through nearby towns to see more rural life, as well as some of the historical remnants of medieval France (castles, cathedrals, museums, etc.). We may attend a soccer or rugby game, depending on the home game schedule that block. We will also participate in a “game night” at a local board game club, another very popular activity among the French.

POLITICS: It is likely that there will be protests and/or strikes while we are in France. We will be able to observe these activities as well as discuss French politics, both popular and governmental.

RELIGION: Holy Week for Christians falls during the block, so we will be able to observe some of the festivities held at various churches that week. We will meet with an Imam. We will discuss at length the “Headscarf Law” and the larger question of the “separation of church and state” in France, seen differently in France than in the U.S.

Living in Toulouse

APARTMENTS: Aparthotel accommodations (double occupancy) including a small kitchen, private bathroom, linens, Wi-Fi, and cleaning service once a week

MEALS: We will share a welcome luncheon, a farewell dinner, meals together while on some outings, and each person will receive a meal per diem for all other meals. A refund from Bon Appetit is available to students on the meal plan.

TRANSPORTATION: Each person will receive a month-long bus/metro pass for the city of Toulouse. Any additional bus or train travel needed for required outings will be provided. The local shared bike system is also easy to use and very inexpensive. Flights and/or trains to and from Toulouse are NOT included. Students will arrive on the Sunday before the block starts and leave on the Thursday after it is over. Many students spend spring break in Europe, and some have used Venture Grants to add an independent study element during that time (Paris and Tunisia are two examples from the past).