

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

FFYS 1000 26 / Spring 2026

Identity Crisis in Contemporary France

MWF 1:40pm-2:50pm FAN 170

CRN 71441

Dr. Mélanie Giraud

UH 3944 / X3095 / Melanie.Giraud@lmu.edu

Office hours: MW in-person 3:15-5:15pm

Writing Instructor: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines France's identity crisis considering recent and current debates on 20th century French History and national identity. The troubled legacies of key events in modern French history, such as the Great War and its destructive effects on postwar French society; Vichy and French participation in the Holocaust; the Algerian War, decolonization, and postcolonial nostalgia, will be examined through the debates and controversies they have generated in France since the 1990s. Drawing on diverse forms of cultural expression, subjects to be explored include commemorative events and activities, trials for crimes against humanity, France's controversial "memory laws," systemic racism, immigration, and their lasting and current impact on French culture and society. The course fulfills the First Year Seminar requirement, addressing theme areas of Culture, Art and Society, and Ethics and Justice.

WEEKLY WRITING WORKSHOP: Our writing instructor (TBA) will meet with you every Friday to support your growth as a writer throughout the semester. In these engaging workshops, you will explore strategies for structure, clarity, and revision that strengthen both your academic and creative writing. Each session is designed to help you think critically, write with greater precision, and express your ideas with confidence. This workshop series is an opportunity to challenge yourself, experiment with language, and grow as both a thinker and a writer.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, successful students will have gained a deeper understanding of:

- The lasting impact on French culture and society of France's history in the 20th century.
- The complex relationship between history and memory regarding national identity.
- Diverse forms of cultural expressions of identity in contemporary France. Students will also:
- Understand and appreciate the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education.
- Engage critically and reflectively in scholarly discourse.
- Learn to read critically and carefully.
- Exercise critical thinking in oral discussion and writing.
- Be able to evaluate sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources).
- Acquire research skills including use of the library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online.

WORK REQUIRED: Daily class participation & attendance; daily homework; weekly reading assignments; short essays, oral presentations, guided research paper

REQUIRED TEXTS: (available for purchase at LMU bookstore)

- Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932)
- Georges Perec, *W or The Memory of Childhood* (1975)
- Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder* (1997)

REQUIRED FILMS: (some streaming links request a modest rental fee)

Spring 2026 Course Description

COURSE TITLE: First-Year Seminar 1000.23 Childhood in International Cinema

COURSE SECTION/DAYS: Tu 4.30-7.50

INSTRUCTOR: Aine O’Healy

Office: UNH 3945

Email: aine.ohealy@lmu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Childhood in International Cinema

This seminar introduces students to critical writing through an exploration of international cinema. Our particular focus is the representation of childhood in approximately twelve feature films produced around the world since the 1940s. To engage critically with these films, drawn from different national contexts and historical periods, we apply the tools of audiovisual analysis to identify the symbolic function of the figure of the child on screen. The body of work we examine is organized into groups of two or three films linked by a common theme (childhood in wartime; childhood and disability; dilemmas of the transgender child; border-crossing children; and so on). We thus explore how the construction of children in cinema intersects with discourses of nation formation and with the representation of gender, sexuality, national identities, and social class. The assigned readings, drawn for the most part from cinema studies, will guide our explorations, allowing us to place the filmic analyses in a broader context that encompasses issues of historical memory, globalization, social conflict and cultural diversity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successfully completing this course

- Students will understand and appreciate the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education,
- Students will be able to engage critically and reflectively in scholarly discourse.
- Students will interpret audiovisual images with appropriate critical tools.
- Students will understand the capacity of cinema to encode cultural and ideological values.
- Students will be able to evaluate research sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources).
- Students will acquire research skills including use of library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online.

WORK REQUIRED

Weekly reading assignments; short essays; final research paper; formal oral presentation.

TEXTS

All assigned readings are available on Brightspace.