

The Camus Investigation: Bridging Past & Present

Discipline <i>Academic field</i>	Cultural, intellectual and political history
Enseignant <i>Teacher</i>	Marie-Pierre ULLOA
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Niveau de formation <i>Academic level</i>	Ph.D.
Volume horaire <i>Hours</i>	20
Langue <i>Language</i>	English

Description du cours / *Course outline*

Albert Camus (1913–1960) stands as a quintessential example of the *intellectuel engagé*—the French public intellectual deeply involved in the moral and political debates of his time. Born into a humble French family in colonial Algeria, Camus rose to global prominence, ultimately receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957. His life and work spanned the vibrant Mediterranean world and the intellectual circles of Paris, marked by a commitment to justice and often controversial stances. Through a combination of readings, films, conversations with experts, and site visits, this course will delve into the many dimensions of Camus’s enduring legacy and the urgent contemporary relevance of his work.

Objectifs pédagogiques du cours / *Course objectives*

This course seeks to better understand Camus’s work and ever-lasting impact on Francophone and World literature and politics through a cross-disciplinary analysis of a diverse range of texts written by Camus as well as others reflecting the latest production on his work and its relevance in contemporary context. Our readings will provide vivid insights into this foundational camusian body of work across societies and cultures. To learn how this “fascination” for Camus and for his work occurs, students will engage the narratives on multiple levels— literary, visual, social, philosophical, cultural, and political. Readings from Albert Camus, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Edwidge Danticat, Assia Djebar, Kamel Daoud, Vincent Duclert, Mouloud Feraoun, Alice Kaplan, Edward Said, A.B. Yehoshua.

Compétences acquises / Learning outcomes

The course is intended :

To explore the wide-ranging contributions of Camus during the colonial and post-colonial era within a « glocal » political context.

To delve into the many dimensions of Camus's enduring legacy and the urgent contemporary relevance of his work.

To foster analytical and communication skills: public speaking, written analysis, close reading, and critical thinking.

Plan de cours par séance / Course content for each session

***Week 1**

Introduction & contextualization. Reading Camus in the 21st Century in Provence ; Ta-Nehisi Coates, "how to read Camus like a boss", *The Atlantic*, December 17th, 2013.

***Week 2**

Camus and Colonial Algeria ; *The Moorish House*, *Nuptials*

***Week 3**

Camus the journalist, *Algerian Chronicles*

***Week 4**

Becoming Camus: *The Stranger*

***Week 5**

Translating *The Stranger* / *The Outsider* **with guest speaker Prof. Alice Kaplan (zoom)** (Yale University), *Looking for the Stranger*, 2018

***Week 6**

Beyond *The Stranger*: Camus & the Algerian War of Independence ; *The Guest*, Joshua Cole, film: *Loin des Hommes*, David Oelhoffen, 2014

***Week 7:**

Post-colonial readings of *The Stranger* ; Assia Djebar, Edward Said, MP Ulloa, "Camus in America: an interview with Alice Kaplan & Tobias Wolff", Books & Ideas, 2016.

***Week 8**

The Stranger: the view from Oran ; Kamel Daoud, The Meursault Investigation

***Week 9**

Camus in the courtroom **with special guest speaker Prof. Mugambi Jouet (zoom)**(University of Southern California), author of "A Lost Chapter in Death Penalty History: Furman v. Georgia, Albert Camus, and the Normative Challenge to Capital Punishment", 2022

*** Week 10**

Conclusion: from the Nobel Prize in Literature (december 1957) to the final public meeting with students in Aix-en-Provence (december 1959) ; Stockholm's speech, François Meyer in *La Semaine d'Aix*, 1961.

Class visit to Lourmarin (Camus's grave & archives).

Références bibliographiques / Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES : Albert Camus, *The Moorish house*, *Nuptials (excerpts)*, *Algerian Chronicles (excerpts)*, *The Stranger*, *The Guest*, *Reflections on the Guillotine (excerpts)*, *Nobel Prize Speech in Stockholm*, *Actuelles IV (excerpts)*. Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

David Carrol, *Camus the Algerian, Colonialism, Terrorism, Justice*, Columbia UP, 2007.

Edwidge Danticat, *Créer dangereusement*, Grasset, 2012.

Assia Djebar, *Algerian White. A Narrative*, Seven Stories Press, 2003.

Vincent Duclert, *Albert Camus: des pays de liberté*, Stock, 2020.

Hughes, Edward J. *The Cambridge Companion to Camus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Alice Kaplan (ed.), *Algerian Chronicles*, Harvard University Press, 2013.

Alice Kaplan, *Looking for the Stranger, Albert Camus and the Life of a Literary Classic*, Chicago University Press, Gallimard, 2016.

Leona Rittner, W. Scott Haine, and Jeffrey H. Jackson Eds., *The Thinking Space: The Café as a Cultural Institution in Paris, Italy and Vienna*, Ashgate, 2013.

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Knopf, 1994.

Benjamin Stora, Jean-Baptiste Périet, *Camus brûlant*, Stock, 2013.

Marie-Pierre Ulloa, Francis Jeanson, *A Dissident Intellectual from the French Resistance to the Algerian War*, Stanford University Press, 2008.

Mini CV de l'enseignant / *Mini CV of the teacher*

Marie-Pierre Ulloa has been a lecturer at Stanford University since 2012. She specializes in the cultural and intellectual history of the Francophone world in a transnational context, exploring in particular the interplay between France, North-Africa, and the United States of America. A graduate of Sciences Po Paris and of EHESS, she is the author of two monographies, *Le Nouveau Rêve Américain: Du Maghreb à la Californie* (*The New American Dream: From North Africa to California*, CNRS, 2019), and of *Francis Jeanson, a Dissident Intellectual from the French Resistance to the Algerian War* (SUP, 2008, also published in French and in Arabic). Recent publications include:

“ La traversée Marseille-Alger de Rodolfo Alvarez. Hiver 1959” In Constance de Gourcy – Saïd Belguidoum, *La Méditerranée traversée : récits et figures sensibles de la mobilité*, Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2025.

« A la recherche des archives exilées : entretien avec Benjamin Stora », *Expressions maghrébines*, vol. 21, no. 2, hiver 2022.

“Nice, baie des Anges : c’est pourtant pas le Maghreb. Archiver le motif maghrébin dans l’œuvre de Maryline Desbiolles”, *Expressions maghrébines*, vol. 21, no. 2, hiver 2022.

Chevalier de l’ordre des Arts et des Lettres.