France and the U.S. have a habit of looking at one another as anti-models when it comes to discussions of assimilation and difference, “race,” identity, community and diversity. In this course, we explore this comparison as a productive means for re-considering these terms. Why is the notion of “ethnic community” so problematic in France? And why do Americans insist on the “homogeneity” of the French nation, even as, at various points throughout modern French history, France has received more immigrants to its shores than the United States? Through readings, film screenings, and site visits we explore the movements and encounters that have made Paris a rich, and sometimes controversial, site of cultural exchange. Topics include contemporary polemics on questions such as headscarves, the banlieue, the new Paris museums of immigration and “primitive” art, affirmative action and discrimination positive, historic expressions of exoticism, négritude, and anti-colonialism. Occasional case studies drawn from the American context help provide a comparative framework for these ideas. Conducted in English.

Assignments
The course is organized as a seminar. Students are expected to have done the reading and assignments for each class and to participate in class discussion. Assigned texts are available on reserve and for sale at Shakespeare & Co. (see below); readings marked “course reader” are available in a Reader for sale at the NYU in France library; films and recommended readings are available on reserve.

Formal requirements:
- Class participation (class participation & directed reading questions); 15%
- Directed reading questions. Students are to prepare responses to questions on designated readings. Directed reading questions are due in class the day the reading is due.
- Two review essays (5-7 pages), due Feb. 24th and April 1st; 20% each
- Mid-term exam, March 10; 20%
- Final exam* May 12; 25%

Required books, for sale at Shakespeare & Co., 37 rue de la Bûcherie, Paris 5°

* Students may write a research paper (12-15 pages) on a topic of their choosing in lieu of the final exam, in consultation with the professor.
Recommended texts, on reserve at NYU in France library:
Pontecorvo, Gillo La Bataille d'Alger (1966), on reserve
Thorsen, Karen James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket (documentary film)

Course schedule
Week 1 – Multicultural France, a contradiction in terms?
2/1: Introduction

Week 2 – Or has France always been “multicultural”?

Week 3 – 1900-World War II: Paris at the Crossroads
2/19: Special class: Visit Cité Nationale de l'Histoire d'Immigration

Week 4 – Senghor/Césaire: Speaking Back

Week 5 – Dissonant voices

**Week 6**
3/8: Film (to watch outside of class): Gillo Pontecorvo *La Bataille d’Alger* (1966), on reserve
3/10: Mid-term exam

**Week 7 – Post-War: la banlieue**
3/17: Reading: Gaspard, chs. 3 & conclusion, pp. 101-177.

**Week 8**
3/22: Film screening: *Vivre au Paradis* (excerpts)  

**Week 9 – ‘Race’ and social class: thinking through “exclusion”**

**Second review essay due.**

**Week 10 – ‘Difference’ and universality: the ‘foulard affairs’**
4/5: HOLIDAY – NYU Center closed
4/9: visit the Paris Mosque & La Goutte d’Or

**Week 11 – Considering ‘culture’: the Musée de Quai Branly**
Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
(Students to visit Quai Branly museum on their own).
4/14: Price cont.

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 12 – The debate over ethnic statistics: the Franco-American debate revisited**


**Week 13 – Conclusions**

5/10: Review

5/12: Final exam