

PARIS AND WAR: FROM HISTORY TO MEMORY

Professor: **Guillaume PIKETTY**
Session: **June 2025**
Language of instruction: **English**
Number of hours of class: **24h**



Objective of the Course

Over time and in various contexts, Paris and its suburbs have been impacted by the warlike and the resistance phenomena. They are still impacted today by their memories via architecture, cemeteries, monuments, memorials, paintings, and photographs. This seminar intends to address and to decipher some of these narratives, representations and uses of conflicts and of resistance in the Parisian area, since the beginning of the 19th century, by individuals, by organized groups and by people in power.



Summary

After an introductory session devoted to the main concepts surrounding the study of the warlike and resistance phenomena and of the coming out of war processes, we will consider a series of themes and their practical illustrations in Paris and its nearby suburbs. Geography and architecture, art and ornamentation, realms of memory (Pierre Nora) and commemorations will be at the core of our work. To do so, four sessions will consist in visits of specific places: monuments, memorials, museums, cemetery, etc. One onsite session will be devoted to the annual commemoration by the French President of the Republic of the General de Gaulle's Call of June 18th, 1940.



Organization of the course

Session 1 (June 4): 3 hours.

Lecture and discussion:

- Warlike phenomenon – Coming out of war processes – Memory(ies).
- Resistance, repression and death – Moral economy of gratitude.
- Louis XIV, Napoleon I, Charles de Gaulle: “Great Men”, deeds and representations – The Hôtel national des Invalides and its history.

- Preparation for the visit to the Mont-Valérien Memorial and Museum.
- Preparation for the commemoration of General de Gaulle's Call of 18 June 1940.
- Discussion about Marita Sturken's article. It will have been provided in advance by the professor and thus will have to be carefully read by the students **before the session**.

Meeting: in our usual seminar room at Sciences Po.

Session 2 (June 6): 3 hours.

Visit: Hôtel national des Invalides. We will visit in turn the Museum of the Order of the Liberation and Napoleon I's Mausoleum.

Meeting: to be confirmed.

Session 3 (June 11): 4 hours.

Visit: Mont-Valérien Memorial and Museum.

Meeting: to be confirmed.

Session 4 (June 13): 3 hours.

Lecture and discussion:

- Honour, heroism and glory – “Night and fog” and impossible memories?
- Preparation for the visits to the Memorial to the martyrs of Deportation and to the Panthéon.
- Preparation for the visit to the Père Lachaise Cemetery.

Meeting: in our usual seminar room at Sciences Po.

Session 5 (June 18): 5 hours.

Commemoration on the Mont-Valérien of General de Gaulle's Call of 18 June 1940 (onsite).

Meeting: to be confirmed.

Session 6 (June 20): 3 hours.

Visits: Memorial to the martyrs of Deportation and Panthéon.

Meeting: to be confirmed.

Session 7 (June 23): 3 hours.

Visit: Père Lachaise Cemetery.

Meeting: to be confirmed.



Bibliography

Mandatory reading

Marita Sturken, “The Wall, the Screen and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial”, *Representations*, 35, summer, 1991, p. 118-142.

Suggested complementary readings

Colin Jones, *Paris. Biography of a City* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), chapters 7 to 12.

David Drake, *Paris at War 1939-1944* (Cambridge (MA): The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015).

Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (London: Granta Books, 2004).

Sudhir Hazareesingh, *In the Shadow of the General: Modern France and the Myth of de Gaulle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Hélène Lewandowski, *La face cachée de la Commune*, Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 2024.

David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Modern France: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).



Requirements for validation

Part of the assessment will be based on attendance and participation in class.

Final assessment (to be submitted at the end of June): one 1,200-word critical essay about one of our visits or about the commemoration of General de Gaulle's Call of 18 June 1940 in connection with some of the notions that will have been addressed throughout the seminar.

Guidelines will be provided in class.



Professor's Biography

Guillaume PIKETTY is a Full Professor in Contemporary History at Sciences Po (Paris). He works on the social and cultural history of the Second World War in France and in Europe, and, more broadly, on the warlike phenomenon and the resistance phenomenon since the beginning of the American Civil War. He places a particular emphasis on the links between war, senses, sensitivities, emotions and intimacy.