

FRANCE study abroad program, fall 2022

Program director: Ana Fonseca Conboy, Associate Professor of French, CSBSJU

Experiencing Contemporary French Culture through the Five Senses (CSD:S, EXP, GLO, [RAVEN - Pending])

Course Description: Study abroad is a transformative experience for students. As such, it is an appropriate setting for metacognition, as it serves as a conduit for self-reflection and self-awareness, and for learning about cultural and social difference in the host culture. The hope is that students returning from study abroad will have the tools necessary to navigate a world of different perspectives, and to find their common vocation to serve in that world by ways of mutual respect, understanding, inclusion and honoring neighbor and self. This course, part of a curriculum of the present moment, is designed to facilitate that process. The objective of the course is for students to gain a better understanding of the contemporary French culture and society, its intricacies, and systems of power, through an exploration of the concept of mindfulness, its connection to the five (and beyond) senses and resulting practices. The discussion-based course will focus on the idea of transformation, be it of the surroundings, or of self. Discussion will be informed by an array of scholarly articles, literary sources and film. It will use resources from various spiritual traditions (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu) to supplement and enhance the concept and practice of mindfulness. Finally, it will incorporate multiple hands-on experiences in the field, through local or national excursions. Excursions and course content will complement each other and provide for student learning and engagement through in-class discussions, field debriefings, and opportunities for journaling. Excursions and project work will challenge students to test the classroom theory in real life settings. The course uses a social/cultural anthropological approach, and each student will be an active participant observer. Students will engage as participant observers and in the here and now, with the eye of the traveler; be asked to be aware, attentive, in wonder with their surroundings and to engage with them with their whole mind and body; refine and cultivate the use of their senses; and cultivate the ability to be present in the moment. Regardless of the experience abroad, students will return to campus different from how they left. The course is conducted in English.