



Exiles and Outsiders

Migrants, expatriates, drifters, refugees, outcasts, and cosmopolitans: those who are uprooted from their homeland offer an oblique and peripheral perspective on the cultural geography of a place. This module will take as its starting point the notion of the “exile” or the “outsider” in the city and explore the place(s) and forms of non-hegemonic expressions and experience to the history and culture of Paris and other cities. Engaging with the plurality of idioms and artistic traditions that have converged in the city throughout the centuries, it will focus particularly on modern and contemporary poetry and fiction.

The course material will cover Parisian avant-gardes in the first part, and typical works of interest range from Guy Debord’s situationnisme to Samuel Beckett’s early fiction and some Russian-French experimentation, extending to Vladimir Nabokov. The second part will develop the intersections between queer and gendered perspectives on outsider/exilic experiences through work by writers such as Jean Genet (Palestine/Paris), Gertrude Stein and Anne Garréta.

Module aims

- To consider why literary material may be of particular significance in articulating of the changing shape of urban experience from specifically “outsider” perspectives
- To consider the perspectives of cultural geography, with focus given to the contested nature of public space, urban revolts and “rights to the city”

Module structure

Teaching will be organised through 11 two-hour sessions. Students will be asked to carry out weekly site visits and will be set preparatory reading in advance of each seminar. Assessment will be based on one extended essay.