



Georgia Tech · Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts  
School of Literature,  
Media, and Communication



## Syllabus for LMC 3206 – Fall 2025

### *Communication and Culture: Gateway to France, Europe, and Beyond*

#### **Instructor Information**

##### **Instructor**

Dr. Jennifer Orth-Veillon

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**Office hours:** by appointment

**Office:** 227

#### **General Information**

##### **Description**

*"Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterizes a society or a group. It includes creative expressions, community practices and material or built forms."*

—from *Our Creative Diversity: The UN World Commission on Culture and Development Report*

According to this UN report, understanding different cultures involves the exploration its various modes of communicative practices. With Gallo-Roman ruins, art museums, sweeping cathedrals, winding water ways, mysterious passages, and the ghosts of three recent major wars haunting the streets, this course offers an interesting, dynamic conversation between culture and communication that may be compelling to diversity of artistic, historical, and scientific sensibilities. We will develop

this conversation through travel in France and Europe, exploring different ways communication has functioned in cultures, languages, and historical periods. Studying culture via the lens of communication provides exciting reflection on travel by connecting with foreign places through both the collective consciousness and our unique, personal perspectives. We will learn that communication in all cultures is neither neutral nor objective. But this doesn't mean that communication is fiction. It is the vital backbone to the way cultures operate throughout time. You will be asked to make comparisons between your cultural experiences and observations with ones made in France. We will come to understand, for example, that war destroys lives but also familiarity and tradition. However, in the wake of peace, creation abounds. It all depends on how this experience gets communicated. New landscapes, design, art, history, and ways of thinking reflect the shifts in consciousness after war.

This course takes advantage of the FYSA study abroad experience in the geographical location of Georgia Tech's campus in Europe to explore the concepts and practices of mindful learning and intercultural communication. Engaging in active and experiential learning will help students make the most of starting the college experience abroad. The course seeks to facilitate the development of intercultural sensitivity and sharpen critical thinking skills as a strong foundation for cross-cultural competence, collaboration amidst diversity and global leadership. In addition, it will help you sharpen your eye for cultural details, hone your intercultural communication competency, and cultivate your individual voice through creative and analytical assignments.

These core goals of the class align well with GT's new strategic plan outlined here: <https://strategicplan.gatech.edu/focus/global>

### **Context: Why Metz?**

The city of Metz and the "Grand Est" region with its over two-thousand-year history provides a rich backdrop to examine the legacies of the Roman empire that dramatically shaped Europe's development. In addition to its Gallo-Roman heritage, Metz was an independent republic before it became part of France and later would become the epicenter of the rivalry, power struggle and shifting borders between France and Germany. The area is steeped in the history of three major wars—the Franco-Prussian war and the First and Second World Wars that finally culminated in the peace and reconciliation that gave birth to the European project and continues to shape the European Union today. This historical framing introduces students to the meaning of 'place' for situating concepts of identity, nationalism, and borders-- central for a critical and well-informed understanding of the processes of globalization shaping our world today.

European integration in many ways presents a microcosm for understanding contemporary global politics, particularly the challenges of preserving cultural diversity and defending national interests while constructing the institutions and policies necessary for the globalizing, interdependent world we inhabit. The study of the three wars and the ways in which they influenced the creation of the European Union (EU) today serves as a model of society in general. It especially highlights the values one society defends within an international system and as such offers an intellectual laboratory for examining the societal debates and contested histories that are so resonant today.

The role that France has played in global history cannot be underestimated and as such will provide a broad frame of intellectual and comparative reference for activating mindful learning concepts. From its Gallo-Roman roots to the Enlightenment, its role in the war of American Independence, to the reverberations of the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars, from the Franco-Prussian War to the two world wars, up through her colonial past, and present leadership role in the EU, France has made a dramatic impact on the world! Moreover, France's vast artistic and cultural heritage, intellectual and philosophical influences as well as major contributions to science and innovation mean that a focus on France and the French will provide for an endlessly rich springboard for inspired discussions, cross-cultural comparison and challenging debates throughout the semester!

### **Content: What to Expect in This Class**

Through a mix of field trips and site visits, lectures, readings, and discussions, students will gain an understanding of the significance of the region and the centrality of France and French-German relations to the construction of the post-war European project and to global politics today. The primary goal of the course is to situate the socio-cultural and political contexts within which students are living to enhance their intercultural communication as they travel throughout France and across Europe and to activate and apply mindful learning practices for personal growth and academic development. It's only one course, but it will whet the appetite for deeper exploration of French and European history and culture in the global context and set the stage for continuous, life-long mindful learning, successful intercultural communication, and mindful travel!

### **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

- Understand basic concepts of intercultural sensitivity, worldview structures and mindful learning
- Situate Metz, France and the Grand Est region and Europe in broad historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts
- Develop and sharpen critical thinking skills and apply them to concepts and debates around identity, globalization, and notions of globalism and global citizenship
- Attain confidence and skills for independent and mindful travel
- Understand and analyze socio-cultural and political developments and current societal debates in France and Europe and be capable of considering these phenomena in cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross-national contexts

### **Course Requirements & Grading**

#### **COURSE**

#### **ASSESSMENT**

- Travel Journal: 20%
- Short travel quizzes : 10%
- Individual culture and multimedia communication assignment : 10%
- Group culture and multimedia communication presentation: 15%
- Group film project cultural heritage days: 10%
- Participation and attendance: 20%
- Class travel blog: 15%

- TOTAL: 100%

## **Grading Scale**

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100% Excellent (4 quality points per credit hour)
B	80-89% Good (3 quality points per credit hour)
C	70-79% Satisfactory (2 quality points per credit hour)
D	60-69% Passing (1 quality point per credit hour)
F	0-59% Failure (0 quality points per credit hour)

See <http://registrar.gatech.edu/info/grading-system> for more information about the grading system at Georgia Tech.

## **Description of Graded Components**

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Students will keep a travel journal and will write regularly. These writings will serve as the basis for class discussion, workshops, and assignment. The journals will be checked and evaluated several times over the semester. They will be turned in along with the periodic essays that will be due.

Recommended journal: MOLESKINE or another cheaper journal with hard cover. Travel journals can be purchased at Carrefour, bookstores, “librairies” and stationary stores “papeteries.” You can also just use a regular notebook, but the travel journal is a place of portable free expression - take it everywhere and tape, glue, attach, or draw in it as you would like.

Students will complete one individual assignment, one group assignment/presentation, the cultural heritage days film project, and the class blog project. All assignments will involve travel experience and will reflect the themes and forms studied. Some of the journal entries serve as kind of a rough draft for these assignments.

The final project will culminate in a multimedia class travel blog that we will work on throughout the semester. Students will polish their travel journal entries to get them ready for publishing on the blog.

All assignments represent more than a mere recollection of visits and travels and are intended to encourage creativity, teamwork and mindful learning, capturing the experiences as well as providing an understanding and interpretation of the culture (s) engaged with throughout the semester. An emphasis for all projects should be placed on the following elements related to culture and communication: (1) development and articulation of your worldview, (2) reflections on how the study abroad and FYSA experience enhanced your self-understanding, (3) concrete examples of how travel, study and learning abroad clarified your intellectual and career aspirations.

**PARTICIPATION:** Attendance in class and on weekend trips is mandatory unless otherwise specified, and roll will be taken. As this is primarily an active learning course with accompanying weekend site-visits and excursions, punctuality, engaged participation and attentiveness during the class and the trips are necessary to attain a good grade for the attendance portion of the final grade. Excused absences must be justified in writing to the instructor by the GTE administration.

### **Participation and Classroom Conduct**

Good participation entails not only speaking and sharing your thoughts on a regular basis, but also being considerate and respecting the views of others. To earn high points in the participation part of the final grade, students will have demonstrated their awareness of the different functions of classroom comments by:

1. varying their discussion strategies,
2. considering what they say before they say it,
3. taking intellectual risks, and
4. always respecting the feelings of peers by not interrupting classmates while speaking and acknowledging interesting ideas.

**READINGS:** There is no required textbook for this course. Suggested background texts as well as mandatory readings (articles, excerpts from books, official documents) and short films and Ted Talks or podcasts will be posted on Canvas.

**RUBRICS AND DETAILED ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:** For each assignment, you will receive a detailed assignment description well in advance of the deadline, which will include the grading rubric. I aim to return your assignments graded within one week of the due date. Delays may be longer with long travel weekends.

### **Course Materials**

#### **Course Texts and Materials**

Suggested background texts as well as mandatory readings (articles, excerpts from books, official documents and short films and Ted Talks or podcasts will be posted on Canvas.

#### **Course Website and Other Classroom Management Tools**

Course Canvas Site and Course Instagram Account

### **Course Expectations & Guidelines**

#### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty

for violations. This includes using AI to complete any portion of your work. Your work is your own. AI is not your work.

## **ChaptGPT/AI**

This class will follow the LMC writing program guidelines concerning AI:

This course is about growing in your ability to write, communicate, and think critically. Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, DALL-E 2, and others present great opportunities for learning and for communicating. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the course requirements for you.

In this course, using generative AI tools in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is allowed as long as the guidelines are met.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, when using generative AI tools in the work of this course, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, this means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed (see “Transparency” below) and any AI-generated content appropriately cited (see “Documentation” below). This also means you must ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.
- **Transparency:** Any generative AI tools you use in the work of the course should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This work includes not only when you use content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when you use a generative AI tool in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes).
- **Documentation:** You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people.

Using generative AI tools in the course without adhering to these principles may be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

***If overuse of AI is suspected on an assignment, you will be asked to redo the assignment using your own work.***

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## **Collaboration & Group Work**

Aside from group projects, all work must be your own. Work created by AI is not considered your work. If any portion of a group project is suspected of being completed by someone or something other than your group, all group members will be investigated and reported. Your written work will be checked with plagiarism software. Suspected cases of plagiarism/unacknowledged AI use will result in reporting to the Office of Student Integrity.

## **Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams**

All extensions must be pre-approved before the due date by the instructor and, if deemed necessary by the instructor, justified by the Gatech administration. Missing class does not automatically grant you an extension on an assignment due date.

## **Travel Restrictions**

When you are authorized to travel independently overnight after the Paris trip, you may go anywhere in Europe. GTE does not authorize trips anywhere else including Turkey, Northern Africa (Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria), and reserves the right to not authorize travel to other places if the need arises.

## **Policy on Missed Required Travel**

You are required to attend ALL required travel excursions. Missing a required travel excursion for an unexcused reason will result in being reported to the Office of Student Integrity for “failure to comply.” You are not authorized to travel independently overnight until after the Paris trip. You may travel independently in small groups for day trips only until then. Not complying is serious and will remain on your Georgia Tech record for the remainder of your time at the institution. This means that this offense will show up whenever you apply for a fellowship, internship, or other opportunity at Gatech.

## **Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom and on Guided Visits**

Use of portable technology (cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) during class time is not permitted except for class-specific activities, which must be approved by the instructor. However, please remember that your success in this class will hinge in part on your attention to in-class discussion and content: please refrain from using your device during class except at designated times, and do your best to focus on the task at hand. Otherwise, please leave your laptop in your bag, turn off your cell phone, and resist the urge to text your mom.

During guided visits, cell phone use for texting, surfing the internet, or calling is not permitted. You may take notes and photos, but please refrain from posting them to social media accounts until after the visit is over.

## **Additional Course Policies**

**Eating:** no eating or drinking except water in the classroom. No gum chewing.

**Hats:** wearing baseball caps or other hats are not permitted during class in the classroom or on guided visits. Hats are permitted outside during guided visits for protection from sun, rain, snow, or cold.

**Contacting the instructor by email:** Outside of traveling on the weekends, the instructor will respond to all emails within the business workday (9am-6pm). If you send an email after 6pm or over the weekend, do not expect a response until the following business day. Please follow the instructions given to you by the GTE administration for contacting me by phone during travel times.

## **Campus Resources, Physical and Mental Health Resources for Students**

GTE staff and faculty are here to help guide you to the right outlet for your mental health concerns. Remember, mental health is health! The sooner you treat the issue, the sooner you will feel better. Don't hesitate to reach out.

Please refer to guide given by GTE. These will also be posted to Canvas. When in doubt, contact Paul Voss: paul.voss@georgiatech-metz.fr

## **Information Related to Covid-19**

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Institute guidelines, information, and updates related to Covid-19. GTE will keep you informed via email and text if the situation evolves.

## **Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions**

Classes may not be recorded by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is pursuant to an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

GTE supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society.

## **Teaching philosophy**

The belief that learning must be natural, collective, and discussion-based is at the heart of my teaching philosophy. I do not consider myself the autocrat of this experience, but as a fellow traveler who acts as a facilitator and leader rather than a master. My goal is for students to develop, through



an inquiry of creative texts, images, and technologies, the capacity for individual expression through a collaborative process. As such, they acquire a greater understanding of both diversity and universality among their peers, in their own communities, and in the world. As a teacher, there is no greater joy for me than to see students become confident individuals in class and in their production of creative materials.

**Course schedule and itinerary: Texts, films, and other material will be added well before first class date**

**August 21 Week 1:** Introduction to Culture and Communication: Exploring Metz, Gateway to Europe:

**August 23-24 Mandatory Weekend Travel:** Visit Metz! Mirabelle festival, river dinner cruise, city tour, Musée Gravelotte, Jouy-aux-Arches

- Course overview and expectations
- Defining culture and communication

**August 28 Week 2:** The Romans and Their Ruins: Theoretical Approaches to Intercultural Communication

**August 29-August 31 Mandatory Weekend Travel:** Trier, Germany (overnight), Luxembourg City, Luxembourg, and

- Cultural dimensions
- Interpretive and critical perspectives

**September 4 Week 3:** Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Across Cultures: Between Memory and History: Asking ‘Sacred’ Questions About Past and Present in France

**September 5-7 Mandatory Weekend Travel:** Château de Marlbrouck, French, German, and American WWI sites

- Language, translation, and meaning
- Non-verbal cues and cultural variations

**September 11 Week 4: WWII and the Duty to Remember:** Identity, Ethics, and Intercultural Communication

**September 12-14 Mandatory Overnight Weekend Travel:** Ft. Hackenberg, Natzweiler-Struthof Concentration Camp, the city of Colmar, and ropes course

- Personal, social, and cultural identity
- Stereotypes and prejudice
- Ethical considerations in cross-cultural interactions
- Ethical dilemmas and decision-making

**September 18 Week 5:** The Aftermath of Peace and Putting it Together: The European Union: *Cultural Adaptation and Competence*

**September 19-21 Mandatory Weekend Travel:** Strasbourg, European Parliament, Scy Chazelles, Robert Schuman House, Journées de Patrimoine

**September 25 Week 6:** Paris, City of Light

**September 26-28 Mandatory Overnight Weekend Travel to Paris:** Meet up with Oxford FYSA for Seine boat tour, museums, restaurants, sites, parks, tours

**October 2 Week 7:** Barriers to Intercultural Communication

- Acculturation and assimilation
- Developing intercultural competence

**Weekend independent group travel**

**October 9 Week 8:** Lyon, City of LightS!

**October 10-12 Mandatory Overnight Weekend Travel to Lyon:** Cinema museum, city tours, restaurants, capital of gastronomy

**October 16 Week 9:** Media, Globalization, and Culture

- The role of media in cultural representation
- Digital communication and globalization

**October 23 Week 10:** Intercultural Communication in Professional Settings

- Business, healthcare, and education
- Case studies and role-playing

**October 27 Week 11 FALL BREAK**

**November 6 Week 12 :** Final Projects/Presentations

**November 13 Week 13** Final Projects/Presentations

**November 20 Week 14** Final Projects/Presentations

**November 27 Week 15** Final Projects/Presentations, Class Evaluations, Wrap Up

**Mandatory Final Dinner: Tuesday, December 2, 7:30-9:30 pm**