

## FRENCH 365-FRENCH FILM NOIR

Crosslists: Comp330: Engl330: FDMA 330



This course will examine French “film noir.” The idea of French “film noir,” may to some degree be an oxymoron as it was coined in France by French critic Nino Frank in 1946 to specifically to address the new *American* films coming out of Hollywood. Nevertheless, there would be subsequent noir trend in French movies that emerged after WWII. We will be exploring diachronically this French appropriation and adaptation of noir while bearing in mind the contradictions that might exist in the very idea of “noir” in a French context.

Many features of American and French noir do in fact overlap or feed into each other. Accordingly, we will address critical assessments of American and French noir and their respective representations of evolving attitudes towards mass commodity cultures; the changing role of women; the place and role of the foreigner; violence; the city; and movement, to name a few of the tropes and themes that play a significant role in French and American iterations of the genre.

What is unique to France is of course a series of specificities linked to language, local and regional social relations, etc. Just as important to the genre’s adaptation are the critical historical events that marked France in the Twentieth century: WWI and WWII; the rise and fall of the French colonial empire; the movement from an agrarian economy to industrialization; the increasing liberation of sexual mores after the war; the expansion of American cultural hegemony across Europe. These various points will be the backdrop

for virtually all the films we will see in this class and will define in unique terms, what makes them French—and what makes them noir.