

FR346-15 Occupation: Everyday Life in Vichy, France 1940-1944

26/27

Department

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

David Lees

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module examines the everyday lived experiences of the French people under the Vichy regime and the German Occupation of France in the Second World War. We explore a range of perspectives, from minority groups through to women sex workers and from railway men and women through to children playing games in the school playground.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

- To examine the everyday experiences of French people during the Occupation of France in World War II
- To examine the ways in which everyday lived experiences enable us to better understand the Vichy regime under Marshal Pétain
- To investigate several key themes around everyday experiences in order to examine how life during World War II in France was much more nuanced and complex than a simple dichotomy between 'resistance' and 'collaboration'

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1. Introduction to everyday life in Vichy France

Introduction to the key ideas, theories and concepts on the module including broad theories of the 'everyday' in historiography in general. Overview of historical and political context of France in this period. Some textual analysis of journal entries (Jean Guéhenno) as a means of accessing the everyday in France in this period

Week 2. Food

An examination of how the French ate during the Occupation of France in World War II. Food was a preoccupation for many French people – so how did they record what they ate, how they ate and what they hoped to eat? How did food feature as a theme in source material, e.g. documentary film, diary entries and radio programmes? Why was food so important?

Week 3. Play

How did the French spend their leisure time during the Occupation? Was there anything to do? Why did the cinema prove such an attractive option? And why were board games vital to daily life? How did children spend their play time? And how did this reflect common practices before the Occupation?

Week 4. Work

Work was in short supply for much of the Occupation. Yet in some areas, especially rural parts of the country, there was a shortage of farm labourers. How did French people spend their working hours? What was the importance of work to the nation? And how did theories of work expressed by the Vichy regime reflect the practice of work during the period in light of Franco-German collaboration? How—if at all—did women work during the Occupation?

Week 5. School

What was the role of education in daily life during the Occupation? Was there much continuity between school life before and during the Occupation? Why was education so important to the Vichy authorities—and did they ever achieve what they wanted to achieve in the French education system?

Week 6. Reading Week

Week 7. Evacuation

The experience of evacuation is well-known and well-documented in the British context. But how did child evacuees experience life during the Occupation in France? Why did France appear so poorly-prepared to evacuate children from the Occupied Zone to the south? How did children experience the move between the familiarity of home and the strange, often rural, setting of their temporary homes?

Week 8. Captivity

With over 1.5 million Prisoners of War, including Colonial Prisoners of War, the experience of captivity was a common one for many French men and their families. How did these men (and some women) document their daily experiences of captivity? How did the experiences of Colonial

Prisoners of War differ from their 'French' counterparts? What was the impact of these experiences on wider life (especially for families) during the Occupation years?

Week 9. Religion

Religion was a contentious issue during the Occupation. While Protestants and Catholics were permitted to continue to practice their religious beliefs without fear of oppression—and indeed the Vichy authorities committed to increasing funding for Catholic schools—being Jewish was perceived to be alien to French identity. How then did Jewish men, women and children experience the Occupation? What was the difference between being a French-born Jew and a foreign-born Jew? Did all Jewish people know that they were Jewish in the first place? And how did the experiences for Jews in France differ to their Algerian counterparts—and to Muslims across the French Empire? What was the role of Christians in helping others, including Jews? To aid discussion this week and to enable all aspects of the theme to be discussed, students will be asked to prepare some work on specific textual extracts in groups before the lecture and seminar.

Week 10. Disability, sexuality and gender

What was life like for disabled people during the Occupation? How were gay, lesbian and transgender people treated? How did they interact with the ordinances of the Vichy regime? Were women's experiences of the Occupation radically different from men? And why did women, above all, emerge from the Occupation as the scapegoats of collaboration and of the Vichy years

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Examine primary and secondary (scholarly) sources to explore the lived experiences of the French people under Occupation
- Distinguish the reasons for variations in lived experiences of French people under Vichy
- Communicate reasons for under-explored aspects of lived experiences of the French under Occupation
- Synthesise the complexities of narratives of the Second World War in France and the francophone world

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

International

All modules delivered in SMLC are necessarily international. Students engage with themes and ideas from a culture other than that of the UK and employ their linguistic skills in the analysis of primary materials from a non-Anglophone context. Students will also be encouraged to draw on the experiences of visiting exchange students in the classroom and will frequently engage with theoretical and critical frameworks from across the world.

Subject specific skills

This module will develop students' linguistic skills through engaging with primary materials in the target language. It will build students' capacity to engage with aspects of French culture through analysis of this primary material and through seminar discussion aimed at deeper critical thinking. In particular, students' awareness of everyday life in Vichy from 1940-44 will be enhanced through lectures and seminars which engage in scholarship in the field.

Transferable skills

All SMLC culture modules demand critical and analytical engagement with artefacts from target-language cultures. In the course of independent study, class work and assessment students will develop the following skills: written and oral communication, creative and critical thinking, problem solving and analysis, time management and organisation, independent research in both English and their target language(s), intercultural understanding and the ability to mediate between languages and cultures, ICT literacy in both English and the target language(s), personal responsibility and the exercise of initiative.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private study includes reading secondary work in the field, responding to pre-seminar questions and worksheets and engaging with primary sources.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Essay	100%		Yes (extension)
3000-3500 word essay based on choice of questions (revised in line with harmonisation of assessment in SMLC)			
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in the course of the module in a number of ways. Feedback should be understood to be both formal and informal and is not restricted to feedback on formal written work. Oral feedback will be provided by the module tutor in the course of seminar discussion. This may include feedback on points raised in small group work or in the course of individual presentations or larger group discussion.

Written feedback will be provided on formal assessment using the standard SMLC Assessed Work feedback form appropriate to the assessment. Feedback is intended to enable continuous improvement throughout the module and written feedback is generally the final stage of this feedback process. Feedback will always demonstrate areas of success and areas for future development, which can be applied to future assessment. Feedback will be both discipline-specific and focussed on key transferrable skills, enabling students to apply this feedback to their future professional lives. Feedback will be fair and reasonable and will be linked to the SMLC marking scheme appropriate to the module.

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 4 of UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 4 of UHAA-V3R1 Undergraduate History of Art and French