Course Title: Paris Transforming
Course Code: CLS 75
Instructor: Leonard Pitt

Grade options and Requirements:

No Grade Requested (NGR): This is the default option. No work is required.

Credit/ No Credit: Just show up for class.

Letter Grade: Write a two-page paper on what surprised you most about Paris that you did not know before. This is due in the week following the end of the course.

Preliminary Weekly Outline

**Week 1. Ile de la Cité.**

This, the birthplace of Paris two thousand years ago, was nearly wiped clean by Haussmann in the 1860s and 70s. We'll walk pre-Haussmann streets to compare the old with the new and ponder both the success of the city he built as well as the price of the progress he brought.

**Week 2. The Left Bank - from the Middles Ages to modernity.**

Haussmann's iconic Boulevards Saint-Germain and Saint-Michel broke through a labyrinth of small medieval streets to give us Paris, the great walking city we all know and love. See the old and the new and ask, what did we lose, what did we gain?

**Week 3. How We Almost Lost the Marais.**

Originally a posh quarter for 17th century French aristocracy, by the mid-20th century the Marais had deteriorated into a grimy slum shunned by the Parisian public. In a fit of rationality, city urbanists of the 1950s decided that the only solution was to demolish the quarter and rebuild in the modern aesthetic of the day. More enlightened individuals stepped forward to save this historic district for posterity. See images and hear stories of this dramatic history that will surprise, shock, and delight you.

**Week 4. Reason and Rage - the histrionics of Paris urban design.**
Much of the layout and design of Paris came about, not through a process of reason and deliberation, but rather because of raw emotion and irrational states of mind. e.g., Place des Vosges, the Louvre, Palais Royal and more. We'll visit these places to uncover the drama behind their creation and will see how this continues to play out in modern Paris today.


1. Paris, Once Upon a Time is a rhapsodic journey through early 20th century Paris via vintage postcards from my own collection. The images show us a Paris that no longer exists: monied Paris, working class Paris, the iconic cabarets and nightclubs, the streets and boulevards unencumbered by automobiles. The messages written by Americans to loved ones back home evoke the American experience of Paris at the turn of the century. Charm and history are delivered in equal parts. 2. Paris, Where Have You Gone? is a view, at turns exalting, at turns disturbing, of a Paris adapting to changing concepts of modernity. Transformation in the 19th century gave the world a supreme urban experience. Peel back the veneer of today's Paris and we find a city hardly known, a city unsure of its place in the world, desperately trying to define itself by other cultural standards that are out of synch with its nature and that risk disfiguring its beauty. Important questions are raised about the intersection of human experience and the built environment, how did they get it so right for so long, and why can't they get it right today?