



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Paris-Munich Program, Winter 2026-27

FILM 399 / HON 300 Topics: Greed, Glamour, and *Goût* in Film and Text

Instructor: Dr. Randi Polk

Email: Randi.polk@eku.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: During your time in Munich and Paris, you will discover stories each of these cities offer through the study of icons and stories, their connection to the present, and how they reveal parts of the historical and cultural context of these diverse European cities. Students will study facts, figures, food, fashion, and more via film and text to construct their own realities of the present.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will identify key differences between European (specifically French and German) and American habits and culture.
2. Students will explore and document unique features about shopping for food and other items in Munich and Paris as well as eating habits and other facts related to gastronomy.
3. Students will discuss key historical moments that shape the cultures of each city (i.e. the Holocaust, the French Revolution, etc.) as well as the artistic landscape that portrays them.
4. Students will present research on selected topics related to the cultures of Munich and Paris and how they are similar to/different from the stories about them, both visual and textual.
5. Students will document and present their own experiences engaging with people and processes from both cities.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

Daily discussions and excursions will stem from a fact, figure, or other item to tell the story of people and places in each location. Students will discuss food, architecture, history, literature, music, fashion, and other arts as well as historical and cultural contexts for each topic. Students will also see how people and places share connections.

Helpful apps:

MVV-App: public transport in Munich.

Bonjour RATP: public transport in Paris.

On the plane or before you arrive, you might opt to find out more about how the city of Munich is divided up and which spots you want to make sure you see during free time. Check out this [website](#).

December 27: Arrive in Munich, public transportation to Aloft hotel. Meet in the lobby for area orientation and head for a picnic at Viktualienmarkt. As you explore the area, what are some things you notice about the presentation of food, the price, the quality, etc.? [video](#)

Note: It is often the case that you will need to check your luggage at the hotel and won't be able to check in your room until later in the day. Most international flights arrive early, and hotels don't always have time to prepare all the rooms for groups that arrive early in the day.

Short meeting in hotel lobby to discuss dinner etiquette, grocery shopping, and assignments.

Dinner on your own (in groups).

Dec. 28: Excursion: morning: visit a German grocery store (take notes and photos! What differences do you see from American grocery stores?) [Video](#)

11 am meet at the Rathaus in the Marienplatz to see the famous Glockenspiel

-afternoon: small groups visit museums for site reports (e.g., Bavarian National Museum, Deutsches Museum, Residenz München, Alte and Neue Pinakothek) (take notes and photos)

-5:30 pm meet in hotel lobby to walk to our welcome dinner at a traditional Bavarian restaurant, the Hofbrauhaus (check out this [article](#) on Bavarian cuisine)

Dec. 29: Day-Trip excursion: [Füssen and Neuschwanstein Castle](#)

Dec. 30: Excursion: 8:45 am: walking tour of Nazi Munich

Lunch at a local Turkish Döner (for more on the Turkish population in Germany, check out this [website](#)). Read about the differences in [fast food: Germany v. US](#)

Film: Kebab Connection

-Visit [Dachau concentration camp](#):

Visit the memorial site (Take time to walk through the halls explaining the history of the Holocaust and of this camp. Take notes on what you see, as you will be asked to reflect on this experience in a journal entry. Taking photos is fine, but please be respectful of the solemn nature of this site; group photos and selfies are not recommended). Return to Munich on your own in groups of at least 3 [camp closes 17:00]

Meeting in hotel lobby to discuss progress on story boards/ blogs/ websites/ albums

Dec. 31 (Subject to change depending on if we do an excursion)

Münchner Stadtmuseum/ Deutsches Museum

Fashion Designers and the department store experience

Video: [Life and Death of Karl Lagerfeld](#)

Discuss [Karl Lagerfeld](#)* and his Paris connection, Adidas, Puma, Hugo Boss

Galeria, Ludwig Beck vs. [Fast Fashion](#) (C&A, Zara, etc.)

*[Chanel collaborator](#)

Film: Coco avant Chanel

Jan. 01 travel to Paris

Paris is, of course, a large city. However, as you navigate her streets, you will notice that some areas have distinct identities. Paris is shaped much like a snail (seriously, no pun intended for the escargots) and divided into 20 arrondissements. These are administrative districts and have their own town hall. For more on this, check out this [website](#).

Film: Paris, je t'aime

On the train, check your Bonjour RATP app and try to see what route we will take to the hotel with the métro.

Also, check out this [documentary](#) to prepare for your morning visit to the memorial de la Shoah.

Films for student presentations: [list](#)

Orientation to area around hotel

Excursion (optional) Eiffel tower and Arc de Triomphe; Champs Elysees

Discuss French symbols and institutions: <https://www.elysee.fr/en/>

Marianne, Palais de l'Elysée and more

Jan. 02

[Belly of Paris](#)

Morning: Visit memorial de la Shoah; place des Vosges, Victor Hugo house, MEP

Afternoon: Musée Carnavalet, Centre Beaubourg/ Fontaine Stravinsky, Musée Picasso

Les Halles, Stohrer bakery

Discuss food markets and the [evolution of Les Halles](#) and the creation of [Rungis](#).

Meet at Notre Dame (discuss connection to Victor Hugo and history of the edifice)

Walk through the left bank and Latin Quarter (Sorbonne, Pantheon, etc.)

Emile Zola's [Belly of Paris](#), excerpt

Jan. 03

Film: Queen Margot, Marie Antoinette, Ridicule

Morning: Monarchy from Tuileries Palace, Louvre Palace, St. Bartholomew's day massacre, Louis XIV to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, Place de la Bastille, Conciergerie
Afternoon: Haussmann, Galeries Lafayette, Opéra

Tentative: Movie Night

Jan. 04

Morning: Au bon marché (connection to the Eiffel Tower) / La grande épicerie

Visit fast fashion store on your own

Emile Zola's [The Ladies' Paradise](#); The Paradise series

Free afternoon

Jan. 05

[Montmartre](#): Artists and lovers

Film: Amélie

[Website](#)

Free afternoon

Dec 26 (Saturday) - Jan 06 (Wednesday)

5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement: (If applicable, i.e. if you feel that your KIIS course will fulfill/satisfy a Gen. Ed. requirement at your institution— more likely a possibility if you are teaching a non-Topics course— please list briefly the way your KIIS course will fulfill the Gen. Ed. requirements. If this section is not applicable to your course, you may delete this section (#5) from your syllabus.)
This course can satisfy GEN Ed 3B at EKU as FCC 210.

6. Required Readings and Materials: Your instructor will provide films, articles, short essays, and other readings.

7. Graded Assignments:

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A

80 – 89 B

70 – 79 C

60 – 69 D

Below 60 E (F)

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KIIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

Assignments:

Participation, On-site presentations: 50 points

Daily connections and facts discussions with worksheets: 50 points

Daily blog/story board/documentary/ short: 250 points

Final Reflection Essay: 150 points

For each day you are traveling, you will create a blog/journal/ short of your day. Your daily story should include ALL of the following:

- 1) Food pictures with captions explaining the context and your impressions.
- 2) A monument or other site of interest and your impression as well as a brief description of the historical/ cultural relevance.
- 3) A word you learned in German or French and the context.
- 4) A reflection of the day including differences between France and Germany and/ or those places and how they differ from the US.
- 5) If possible, try to choose a *fil conducteur*, or a unifying theme/ thread.

8. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can "hallucinate" (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- Grammar and Style Checking: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

9. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

10. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

11. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with

dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.