

# **Sarah Lawrence College in Paris**

---

*Handbook Spring 2020*

*French Cultural Studies Program*



## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	3
Introduction .....	1
Program Calendar Spring 2020 .....	2
Passport .....	3
Visa.....	3
Financial Aid.....	3
Money.....	3
Shipping .....	3
Clothes.....	4
Travel and Arrival .....	5
Getting Into Paris .....	5
Arrival in Paris .....	7
Academics .....	8
Overview .....	8
Orientation.....	8
Academic Program .....	8
Conference Work .....	11
Academic Calendar, Rules and Regulations .....	12
Facilities .....	14
Computers .....	14
Libraries and Books .....	14
A Few Points to Keep in Mind.....	16
Living in Paris .....	17
“Culture Shock” .....	17
Housing .....	17
Cultural Activities and Excursions.....	18
Daily Life .....	19
Food.....	19
Health .....	19
Financial Matters.....	20
Identity Papers.....	21
Security.....	21
Telephone .....	22
Transportation .....	22
Travel: Student Discounts .....	23
Working in France.....	23
Some Tips for Survival .....	24
A word about your budget.....	25
Reid Hall .....	26
Don’t Forget .....	27
Bibliography.....	28

## Introduction

By now you may be both excited and anxious about what to do – and when to do it – in order to end up in the right place at the right time. This handbook has been designed to help you with your preparations for Paris. You will find advice for settling in, academic policies and descriptions, and a lot of useful information that we've pulled together from a number of different sources. **Be sure to bring this handbook with you!**

Find time to read about France and French culture prior to your departure. The better prepared you are for 'culture shock,' the easier your adjustment will be. **Do not overlook this aspect of your trip.** You may currently be more concerned about the logistics of traveling than about reflecting on cultural differences. Being aware that these differences exist and giving them some thought will greatly facilitate your integration into French society. In this handbook, you will find a section entitled '*Publications about Paris, Parisians, the French and Americans.*' We have featured a selection of books that should be not only useful, but also entertaining.

We hope that this book will answer most of your questions between now and your arrival in Paris. However, if it does not, please feel free to contact Monique Middleton, the Director of Sarah Lawrence College in Paris or Prema Samuel, Associate Dean of International and Exchange Programs. Please note that the Paris office will be closed from December 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 to January 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.

Bon Voyage!

Prema Samuel, Associate Dean  
Office of Global Education  
Sarah Lawrence College  
1 Mead Way  
Bronxville, NY 10708-5999  
Tel: 914-395-2305  
Email: [psamuel@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:psamuel@sarahlawrence.edu)

Monique Middleton  
Director  
Sarah Lawrence College in Paris  
Reid Hall, 4 rue de Chevreuse  
75006 Paris, France  
Tel: 011-33-1-43-22-14-36  
Email: [mmiddleton@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:mmiddleton@sarahlawrence.edu)

## Program Calendar Spring 2020

### Spring 2020 Semester

*For second semester-only students:*

Friday January 3<sup>rd</sup>                      General Meeting begins at 10:30am at Reid Hall.  
Attendance is mandatory

Friday January 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday              Second semester orientation  
January 12<sup>th</sup>

*For all students (year-long and second semester):*

Monday January 13<sup>th</sup>                      First day of classes

Sunday February 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunday              Reading Period\*  
March 1<sup>st</sup>

Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup> – Sunday April              Spring Break\*  
19<sup>th</sup>

Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> (evening)              End of the second semester at Sarah Lawrence\*

\* Classes in dance and studio arts follow the SLC calendar. **Students registered at Sciences Po should be aware that this institution's calendar varies from the SLC calendar.** Students taking courses at Sciences Po should verify specific dates before purchasing vacation or return tickets.

## Prior to Arrival

You will need to bring the following with you in a purse or other carry-on luggage:

### Passport

You must have a valid passport to enter France. You should make at least one photocopy in case you lose your original passport. Carry the photocopy separately from the passport itself.

### Visa

- Before you can apply for your visa, you must first register with Campus France. Their website is <http://usa.campusfrance.org>. **Please do this as soon as possible as appointments at the consulate must be scheduled far in advance – do NOT underestimate the time required to complete this process.** You must register online. Once your application has been approved, Campus France will send an email to let you know that the process is complete and that you can apply for your visa. You must have a valid student visa to study in France. This visa is obtained at a French consulate in the United States. We will provide you with all the documentation necessary to obtain this visa. However, you must check with the Consulate in your jurisdiction to make sure that you have everything they require. Concerning formalities to be completed *after* your arrival in France, see the section on the “Titre de séjour (French Residency Permit)”, p. 21.

### Financial Aid

If students receive financial aid from their college, they should see the financial aid office prior to departure and to be sure of the amount of money they are receiving, from which source(s), in how many installments, and when these installments will arrive.

### Money

Convert approximately \$150 to \$200 into Euros before you depart to have on hand for taxi, food, etc.

### Shipping

#### *Prior to Departure*

Unfortunately, it is not possible to ship any of your belongings to our offices before you arrive in Paris. There is no storage space at Reid Hall.

**Take your medication and electronic equipment with you in your carry-on bag, along with the prescription and bill of sale. These packages may be subject to high fees at customs when not properly documented.**

When packing, remember that you will probably return with more things than you initially brought over. **Pack light.** Do not bring more than you can carry by yourself.

**Carry with you the official letter stating that you will be a student in the Sarah Lawrence program for the year or semester (provided by our offices).**

### ***Once in Paris***

If you need to send items to Paris after your arrival (i.e. clothes, books, etc.), shipping by air is the most secure option. Media rate remains risky at best and only applies to books, sheet music, dvds and cds.

**If you must have valuables shipped later on (camera, laptop, medication), make sure to have the original bill of sale or medical prescription sent to you separately and to put a photocopy of the original in the package. You must fill out labels indicating the package's value. Be sure to have the sender indicate on the mailing label that the contents are personal property. Remember that, in the case of electronic equipment, you will probably have to pay a customs fee. Given the disappointment and difficulties past students have experienced, we strongly urge you to avoid shipping valuable items!**

Generally, if you are having anything shipped, remember to ask the shipping company what taxes you will have to pay to retrieve your goods at your point of destination.

**Any package with a stated value exceeding 45€ will be stopped at the port of entry and taxed. In order to obtain it, you will have to pay expensive charges. This process can take up to a month.** Please make sure your family and friends know this.

### **Clothes**

Winter in Paris may be cold and is generally wet. Clothes in Paris can be expensive. Pack layers to fight the winter dampness!! Bring the necessary items while remembering that you must bring them back, along with everything purchased in Paris. Student dress is not as casual as it is in the United States. **French students do not wear sweatpants, pajama pants or gym clothes to class. Remember that Paris is a city, not a college campus.**

## Travel and Arrival

Reid Hall is located at 4, rue de Chevreuse, in the 6th *arrondissement*. The closest metro stops are *Vavin* (line 4), *Notre Dame des Champs* (line 12) and *Raspail* (line 4 and 6). RER stop *Port Royal* (line B) is also very close and will be convenient for students coming from the *Cité Universitaire* as it is on the same line.

Here are a youth hostel and a hotel conveniently located near Reid Hall:

BVJ Quartier Latin  
44, rue des Bernardins 75005  
Tel : 011-33-1-43-29-34-80  
19 - 29€  
<https://www.bvjhostelparis.com/>

Hôtel Sunny  
48, bd de Port Royal 75005  
Tel : 011-33-1-43-31-79-86  
86-135€  
<http://www.hotelsunny.com>

All students are responsible for their own flight arrangements. STA Travel is a student travel service, which can offer discounted fares. Information on flights, as well as the ISIC (International Student Identity Card), can be found at [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com). They can also be reached at 1-800-781-4040. Another student travel site is [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com) (1-800-272-9676). Using the student travel sites we have mentioned includes the added benefit of usually being able to change return dates with little or no penalty. However, one should always verify the possible penalties for changing a ticket prior to booking.

## Getting Into Paris

### A few tips

- By far the easiest and most convenient way for a tired traveler with baggage to get to the city center is by taxi. However, this is also the most expensive option. You will need to decide what your number one priority is: comfort or cost. Be advised that public transportation in Paris can be crowded and always has stairs!
- For an interactive map of all public transportation in Paris, go to [www.ratp.fr](http://www.ratp.fr)
- A note on the RER: when transferring from the RER to the metro or vice versa, you will use the same ticket multiple times. Do not lose it! To enter and exit the RER system, you will have to insert your ticket into the automated doors and retrieve it so that the door will open.

From the airports:

### Orly

Orly Airport, 17 km south of the city, is used by charters and many continental flights.

**Orly Val** will take you directly to Paris on the RER line B to *Cité Universitaire*, where the student dormitory is located. It will also take you to *Port Royal* which is close to Reid Hall. Trains run from 6 am until 11:30 pm, every 5-8 minutes. Ticket price is approximately 12€. See [www.oryval.com](http://www.oryval.com) for more information.

The **Orly Bus** will take you to *Denfert-Rochereau* every 10-20 minutes from 6am until 12 midnight and costs about 9€. The travel time is approximately 30 minutes. See [www.aeroporly.paris](http://www.aeroporly.paris)

**Air France buses** run to *Montparnasse* (metro stop *Montparnasse-Bienvenue*) and *Invalides* (metro stop *Invalides*) at least every 30 minutes from 5 am until 11:30 pm and cost approximately 12€. See [www.lebusdirect.com](http://www.lebusdirect.com) for more information.



Daytime taxi fare is 40€, plus a 10 percent tip. You may feel it is well worth the expense, especially if you are unfamiliar with Paris and have a lot of luggage. Be aware that taxis charge extra for each bag (2€ or 2,50€).

### **Roissy-Charles de Gaulle**

Most transatlantic flights land at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport, 23 km northeast of Paris. The cheapest and easiest way to get into the city from Roissy-Charles de Gaulle is by rail.

Roissy Rail – The **RER line B** will take you to central Paris (*Gare du Nord, Châtelet, St-Michel, Port Royal* (Reid Hall), *Denfert-Rochereau* and *Cité Universitaire* (student dormitories)). The train runs every 6-15 minutes from 5 am until 12 midnight. Travel time is approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on your destination. Cost is approximately 10,50€. If you are going to transfer to the metro, be sure to get off the RER at a stop that serves both the RER and metro (*Gare du Nord, Châtelet, Denfert-Rochereau*, for instance.) and keep your ticket as you will need to use it to transfer!

The **Roissy Bus** will take you from Charles de Gaulle to *Opéra*. This service runs every 15-20 minutes from 6 am until midnight. Travel time is approximately 60-75 minutes and costs approximately 12€.

See <https://www.ratp.fr/visite-paris/francais/aeroport-de-roissy-charles-de-gaulle-cdg> for more information on the RER B or the Roissy Bus.

Air France buses run from Charles de Gaulle Airport to :

Etoile (metro stop *Charles de Gaulle-Etoile*), Gare de Lyon (metro stop *Gare de Lyon*) and Montparnasse (metro stop *Montparnasse-Bienvenue*, near Reid Hall) every 30 minutes from approximately 6am until 10:30pm. Travel time is approximately 70 minutes, depending on your destination, and costs about 18€. See [www.lebusdirect.com](http://www.lebusdirect.com) for more information.

Taxis take at least 50 minutes to the center of Paris and cost 50€ (plus a 10 percent tip).

## **Arrival in Paris**

Please inform the Paris office and your host family of your arrival date at least 2 weeks in advance. Please make sure to submit your flight information to the Bronxville and Paris offices prior to departure.

**Upon arrival, check in with the Sarah Lawrence office in Paris by phone or by email:**

Tel: 011-33-1-43-22-14-36 (or 01-43-22-14-36 when dialing from a French phone)

Email: [nallen@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:nallen@sarahlawrence.edu) (Natalie Allen, Assistant to the Director)

If you are planning on traveling in Europe or France prior to the orientation period, please remember that you cannot leave your luggage at Reid Hall while traveling.

## Academics

That education should not be separate from life is one of Sarah Lawrence’s foremost philosophies. Indeed, learning and living often become one for Sarah Lawrence students in Paris. They frequently discover that “education” means more than just academic encounters with professors. The students not only live and experience another culture and way of life, but also learn to cope with a day-to-day existence that is different from that which they have known most of their lives. In short, they often gain new insight and perspective on themselves and, invariably, on their own country.

### **Overview**

The French Cultural Studies Program is designed for students with intermediate proficiency in the French language. Students follow a fixed program of study, with one elective in the arts or the social sciences, and are required to live in homestays. Class size is small and students meet with their professors individually in conference work (referred to in French as “accompagnement pédagogique”). SLC Paris professors are very conscious of students’ progress and work and, as in Bronxville, evaluate them on the basis of their level, their work and class participation.

### **Orientation**

Upon arrival in Paris, students will participate in a ten-day orientation period designed to help them adjust to life in France and provide information on academic, cultural and practical matters.

Orientation will include a weeklong trip to Tours (Loire Valley), where students will take an intensive language course and participate in cultural activities and excursions in the region.

**All meetings, courses, and activities during the orientation period are mandatory.**

### **Academic Program**

The curriculum for the French Cultural Studies Program is as follows:

<b>French Language</b> (4 credits, in French)	<b>Intermediate French III</b>
<b>French Cultural Studies Seminar</b> (4 credits, in English)	<b>Paris Underground</b>
<b>Art History Seminar</b> (4 credits, in English)	<b>From Realism to Surrealism: Paris and the Birth of Modern Art</b>
<b>Elective</b> (4 credits, in French or English)	<p><b>Students may choose one elective in the following disciplines:</b></p> <p><b><u>ARTS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance (in English and French)</li> <li>• Studio Arts: Drawing and Painting, Sculpture/Ceramics, or Photography (in French)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture course at Sciences Po (in English – <b>IMPORTANT:</b> early registration required – see next page!)</li> </ul>

### ***Course Selection in the Arts***

When students have selected their arts course in Paris, they must inform the Program Director so that those courses can receive final approval.

**Students cannot audit arts classes.**

**No conference work is organized for these classes.**

Students are generally responsible for the cost of materials for the art elective. Students who already have basic art supplies are encouraged to bring them as they can be expensive in France. **Students who have already taken visual arts classes and wish to continue doing so in Paris should bring a portfolio of their work.**

### ***Sciences Po***

Students may enroll in one lecture course in English per semester. Sciences Po offers classes in economics, history, international relations, law, and political science.

The Sciences Po course structure generally includes the following:

- a two to three-hour weekly lecture
- a methodology conference organized by the Institute (one-and-a-half hour to two-hour class)
- weekly conference work organized by Sarah Lawrence (one hour per week, see p.11)

**Registration at Sciences Po is a five-part process:**

- 1) Students are nominated to Sciences Po by Sarah Lawrence (New York office). Any student interested in attending Sciences Po must contact Prema Samuel by October 12<sup>th</sup> at the latest to receive information on the enrollment procedure.**
- 2) After nomination, students must complete an online application.**
- 3) Sciences Po informs the students of its decision. Students must confirm their acceptance online in order to be able to register for classes later on.** Students should access their online Sciences Po account (ENTG) and activate their email addresses by visiting the following website: <https://scolarite.sciences-po.fr/>
- 4) Online Administrative Registration** should be completed by the student following Sciences Po's guidelines: <http://formation.sciences-po.fr/en/contenu/registering-at-sciences-po>

**IMPORTANT:** In "Step 2" of the online administrative registration process, students must select "**I am an exchange student.**" **Students are exempted from tuition fees.** Students should inform Natalie Allen in the Paris office ([nallen@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:nallen@sarahlawrence.edu)) when they have completed their administrative registration.

It is equally important to remember that **the major you should specify on the online application form is the discipline you are interested in studying at Sciences Po**, even if this is not your major at your home university in the US.

- 5) Online course registration** is completed by the student. Students will receive information directly from Sciences Po concerning the procedure to follow (date and time of registration, etc.). **It is imperative that students respect the date and exact**

**time of course registration** in order to have a chance at obtaining their selected courses. The Paris Program office will send students an informational letter to help them through this process.

Please feel free to contact the Paris office if you have any questions concerning registration. Please note that the Paris Program office is closed between December 20, 2019 and January 1, 2020.

Students enrolling at Sciences Po should respect the institution's calendar as well as the calendar for the Sarah Lawrence program. **Conference attendance at Sciences Po is mandatory.** Two absences in a semester-long conference, four absences in a year-long conference, **will automatically result in a total loss of credit** for the course. **Auditing is not permitted.**

**Grading at Sciences Po:** grades and evaluations are provided by both the Sciences Po professor and the SLC conference professor. The latter works closely with the student to prepare Science Po's various assignments as the school has its own methodology and is a very demanding institution.

## Conference Work

**The purpose of conference work is twofold.**

**Firstly**, it enhances the student's understanding of the course. The professor can be sure that the material is understood, and that it is situated in a general context that is both rich and accurate. The professor can guide the students in research necessary for classwork and provide them with information on constructing arguments, organizing thoughts, and presenting knowledge in both written and spoken form. While these last elements are also essential in the U.S., the professor can give true insight into the ways in which French requirements may differ from what students have learned at home.

**Secondly**, conference work encourages independent research similar to a conference at Sarah Lawrence College. However, most professors are particularly concerned with the points outlined above, and they may feel there is less time to base the conference work solely on research.

Sarah Lawrence students should anticipate conference work of a very different nature from what they may have had in Bronxville. Students should not underestimate the impact of the cultural and linguistic elements. They should expect the difference to be proportional to their level of French. The difficulty of organizing and expressing thoughts with precision and clarity in another language, both orally and **in writing**, should not be underestimated. **There is also a significant difference in the approach to education** – what students are expected to learn and be responsible for knowing within the context of a particular course.

Students and professors decide together on the scheduling of the **conference work** as soon as the course selection is made. This schedule should be respected for the duration of the semester. **Attendance is mandatory.** If a student cannot attend his/her session, he/she must inform the professor at least 24-hours prior to the meeting time.

**There are two types of conference work:**

- The **Sarah Lawrence language courses and seminar conferences** take place on a one-to-one basis every other week for half an hour.
- The **Sciences Po conferences** (i.e. the conference connected with a course taken at Sciences Po) may be held with one or 2 students and are held weekly for one hour. **It is the student's responsibility to make sure he or she knows what is expected of him or her at Sciences Po and to communicate it to both the SLC tutor and to the Program Director when the SLC conference work is organized.**

## Academic Calendar, Rules and Regulations

### *Academic Calendar*

Students whose program is composed of SLC courses and electives in dance or studio arts are required to attend through **May 9<sup>th</sup>**. **Students taking classes at Sciences Po should be aware that this institution's calendar varies from the SLC Program calendar (see p. 2).** Bear this in mind when purchasing your return ticket.

### *Academic Work*

Students will generally have to write two to three papers per semester for each class, for a total of approximately 20-25 pages. Although papers are spread out as evenly as possible throughout the semester, the workload may seem light at the beginning of the semester, which allows students time to define their research projects. More work therefore should be expected toward the end of term.

**Papers should be submitted on time. French professors may be extremely strict on this question and will not accept last-minute excuses. Failure to comply may result in a loss of credit.**

### *Academic Credit*

**Sixteen Sarah Lawrence credits**, the equivalent of a **full Sarah Lawrence College semester course load**, are awarded for the successful completion of all three courses. Students receive written evaluations and letter grades for each course at the end of each semester. They will also be required to write course evaluations at the end of each semester.

**Guest students:** Students will normally receive full credit from their home institution based on a full Sarah Lawrence load of 16 credits per semester. Prior to departure, however, they should see their advisor to verify what requirements they may have to fulfill, and in what disciplines their home institution will grant credit. They are then responsible for planning their academic work in Paris based on these requirements and/or restrictions.

**Attendance to all classes, seminars and conference work is mandatory. All absences must have a valid excuse (medical prescription, documented family emergency, etc.). Tardiness is not tolerated. Repeated tardiness and any unexcused absence may result in an immediate and irreversible lower grade or loss of credit.**

**All students must be enrolled as full-time students. Overloading is not permitted.**

**No incomplete grades are granted in the Paris program.** In exceptional cases, if final papers cannot be submitted on time, the matter must be discussed in advance, first with the Program Director and later with the professor. The Director must be consulted first, as the Bronxville office must grant permission for any extension. Failure to submit all your papers at the end of the term without prior permission from the Director may result in a permanent loss of credit. No other warning will be issued on this question.

**Any student who leaves before the end of either semester without having previously received permission from the Director will lose credit.**

All student evaluations and grades are reviewed by the Committee on Student Work at Sarah Lawrence College. If concerns are raised in these evaluations, or if the grade falls below a (C), the student will receive a letter from the Dean of Studies at Sarah Lawrence College. This letter will also be shared with the student's advisor, and his or her parents. In the case of a guest student, the letter will be shared with his or her parents and the study abroad advisor at the home institution.



## Facilities

### *Computers*

Students should bring their laptop computers with them to Paris. Reid Hall is Wi-Fi-equipped. Students will have access to a printer. The Paris office also recommends that students bring a flash drive.

When going through customs, students may be required to demonstrate that the computer is for personal use. **They should carry a bill of sale and proof that they will be studying in Paris for the semester (letter of admission to SLC in Paris).**

### *Libraries and Books*

The **Sarah Lawrence Program offices** offer a small collection of books directly related to students' coursework. **Reid Hall** also houses a small library that students may find useful and convenient. Students should also plan to take advantage of the numerous libraries available to them in Paris, for example:

- **Bibliothèque publique d'information (BPI) at the Georges Pompidou Art Museum**  
<https://www.bpi.fr/la-bibliotheque>
- **Sainte-Geneviève library: both a public and a university library with extensive collections**  
<http://www-bsg.univ-paris1.fr/>
- **Municipal libraries:** <http://www.paris.fr/bibliotheques>  
there are municipal libraries in each Parisian district. Membership to these libraries is simple and free of cost with identification (passport). Unlike other libraries, you may borrow books from all of the municipal libraries for renewable periods of three weeks. Students will receive a complete list of municipal libraries during orientation. These libraries contain a good selection of books, a large choice of magazines and newspapers, CDs and DVDs. If you choose to purchase an annual subscription, you may borrow an unlimited number of CDs and DVDs.

Students will receive more detailed information about libraries as well as online academic resources in Paris.

**Purchasing books:** Paris has numerous bookstores. Here are several addresses you may find useful:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Tschann      | 125, boulevard du Montparnasse (around the corner from Reid Hall):<br><a href="http://www.tschann.fr/">http://www.tschann.fr/</a><br>Recommended for students who need to order specific books for their classes   |
| Gibert Jeune | The eight <i>Gibert Jeune</i> bookstores, located on the boulevard Saint-Michel, (Latin Quarter) are widely used by Parisian students and professors:<br><a href="http://www.gibertjeune.fr/page/public/index.php">http://www.gibertjeune.fr/page/public/index.php</a> |
| FNAC         | Large chain store that sells books and electronics. The FNAC closest to Reid Hall is located at 136, rue de Rennes.<br><a href="http://www.fnac.com">http://www.fnac.com</a>   |

## A Few Points to Keep in Mind

- Be sure that you are aware of the calendar for the SLC Program, Sciences Po (if applicable) as well as any other important dates — and that you apprise your parents and friends. **Your presence is expected at the date and time specified for the first meeting of orientation**, as is attendance to all classes and academic appointments regardless of their proximity to an impending vacation.
- Guest students should consult with their own faculty/administrative advisors to make sure that their planned course of study in Paris will meet the academic requirements of their own institutions. Students who have to fulfill specific requirements during their semester/year in Paris should clearly indicate them on their course selection form, if they have not already done so in their applications. Course selection forms should be submitted to the Bronxville office by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Failure to do so may result in the impossibility of fulfilling the requirements.
- All students should keep in touch during the semester with their advisor or don. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that any change in a pre-approved course of study is approved by the home institution.
- Students should keep their home institution's Study Abroad Office informed of their activities, interests, and concerns.
- Course evaluations must be handed in for each course each semester. All students must submit this material.
- Failure to submit all your papers at the end of each term without prior permission from the Director **and** the professor may result in a permanent loss of credit. No other warning will be issued on this question.

## Living in Paris

The following pages contain a range of information to prepare students for life in Paris. You will find financial information; advice on housing and meals; information on where to go for fun; cultural information; medical information; and various information on French sizes, weather, and more. Some sections will be discussed in greater detail upon arrival in Paris, but this should get you started.

### “Culture Shock”

It is important to mention the initial difficulty you may have in adapting to life in Paris, a city that may seem overwhelming. Some students find that their idyllic pre-departure image of “life in Paris” crumbles when beset by the challenges they experience after arrival. Students may feel some frustration while adjusting to daily life in a new country, foreign education methods, language barriers, and living independently. These frustrations are perfectly normal. They are the first step toward a more nuanced, tolerant and richer perspective. One of the roles of the Director and the staff is to accompany students through this adjustment period.

### Housing

**All students in the French Cultural Studies Program are required to live in homestays administered by *Host Families in Paris*.**

**Students should return the housing questionnaire to *Host Families in Paris* before November 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Living with a host family overseas is a special opportunity and can be an intensely rewarding experience. However, students need to be prepared for a period of challenging intercultural adjustment. The family has a different way of life (and a different set of rules) from what you are accustomed to at home or on campus. It will likely take you some time to feel “at home” in this new environment. The housing coordinator attempts to match students and hosts who will be compatible and makes sure that particular privileges and/or conditions of stay (shared meals, laundry, etc.) are agreed upon in advance. The extent and quality of the relationship between the host and the student will vary depending on personalities and lifestyles as well as personal investment.

A typical French homestay may include living with a single person, a couple who may or may not have children, a widow/widower, a retired couple, or a single parent with children. All students receive a European breakfast each morning. Students select the number of dinners they wish to share with their host according to their preferences. Students will have a single room and access to the host’s bathroom, which they will generally share with other host family members. Students will also have access to a television, a washing machine, kitchen privileges, internet and sometimes a phone, but may not have unlimited access to them at all times. Students should be aware that utilities costs are higher in France than in the US; hosts will most likely be energy conscious and appreciate students who are mindful in their use of electricity, heat and water. **Overnight guests are not permitted in homestays.** Students should never invite daytime guests without their host’s permission, including when the host is absent. In general, mutual trust and open communication are essential for a successful relationship.

Upon your arrival in Paris, you will sign a written agreement with your host family to ensure that all parties clearly understand the conditions of the homestay.

## Cultural Activities and Excursions

SLC considers theater, film, and art exhibits to be an essential part of the university experience in France. These activities allow students to participate in a number of events that are relevant to the understanding of France and the diversity of its population.

In order to facilitate student integration into French society, the Program offers many opportunities, including:

- Gatherings throughout the year with French university students
- A wide variety of visits in and outside of Paris
- Information on volunteer work in the student's area of interest

Students may also benefit from the discounts granted to all students in theaters, cinemas, concert halls, and exhibits upon presentation of their French student I.D. card. Discount tickets for plays and concerts may also be purchased at the *Centre Régional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires (CROUS)*, 39, avenue Georges Bernanos, 75005.

### Excursions in and outside of Paris

A number of excursions are organized outside of Paris. Recent destinations have included Provence, Normandy, and Burgundy. Some of these excursions are led by the Program faculty and are closely tied to coursework.

A number of visits in Paris and its surrounding suburbs complement the visits organized in the French provinces. Recent visits include the Versailles Palace and its gardens, Chartres and its cathedral, the Saint-Denis Basilica, and Giverny.

### Museums

Each year, the SLC faculty takes students on guided tours of museums, including the Louvre, Pompidou, Orsay, Cluny, Rodin, and the Picasso museums.

Most museums and exhibits are open every day except Tuesday, but students should check one of the weekly entertainment guides which appear in Paris such as *L'Officiel des Spectacles*. *L'Officiel des Spectacles* can be consulted in the SLC office.

The permanent collections of museums run by the city of Paris are always free (see: <http://parismusees.paris.fr/fr>). Others such as the Louvre or the Orsay are free the first Sunday of the month. Talk to the Paris staff for details.

### Sundays in Paris

Paris can seem like a quiet town on Sundays. Many businesses are closed (restaurants, clothing stores, supermarkets) and the streets may be empty. If you arrive on a weekend, here are some suggestions for making the most of a Parisian Sunday:

- Some grocery stores are open till 1pm (consult the opening hours posted on stores in your neighborhood), as are a few outdoor markets (ex: boulevard Richard Lenoir, Place Monge)
- Enjoy one of the city's many lovely parks and gardens – open daily

- Visit a museum, monument or church.
- Go to the movies. They are always open.
- For those who feel the need to shop, some neighborhoods thrive on Sundays:  
the Jewish neighborhood in the Marais, metro *St-Paul*  
the outdoor shops of Bercy Village, metro *Cour St-Emilion*  
the shopping center underneath the Louvre, metro *Palais Royal*

Note: Some pharmacies are open on Sundays. The list of these establishments should be posted in the window of your neighborhood pharmacy.

## Daily Life

### Food

There is no cafeteria at Reid Hall. A list of university restaurants (*Resto-U*), open-air markets, and reasonable restaurants will be distributed during orientation.

### Health

**Medical Insurance:** All students will be covered while abroad by a medical insurance policy administered by GeoBlue. **Please note, however, that students still need to have their own medical insurance through the Sarah Lawrence plan or through their parents. This is to ensure they have adequate health insurance before they leave the US and upon their return.** You will receive information on the Sarah Lawrence plan from our Student Accounts Office. This information can also be accessed at [www.slc.edu/studentaccounts](http://www.slc.edu/studentaccounts).

Be prepared to pay cash for medical services, as most French doctors and hospitals will not allow patients to pay directly through their American insurance plans. It will be up to you to seek reimbursement through your insurance company following your visit. Students who wish to avoid advancing medical fees should consult the list of GeoBlue network providers online and schedule their appointments directly through GeoBlue so they may benefit from direct payment. Students will receive more information on medical care during orientation.

**Illness:** All pharmacists in France have medical training and can be consulted for advice on simple illnesses. Pack a thermometer: French thermometers are in Celsius.

#### For serious and urgent matters:

- **Emergency phone numbers in France :**
  - 15: Emergency Medical Services
  - 18: Firefighters
  - 112: European Emergency Number
  - Police: 2 possibilities:
    - 17: matters needing immediate intervention
    - 3430: matters that do not need immediate intervention (Paris police stations)
- Urgences médicales de Paris: tel. 01 53 94 94 94 / <https://www.ump.fr> (house calls 24/7)
- S.O.S. Médecins : tel. 01 47 07 77 77
- Anti-Poison Center: tel. 01 40 05 48 48
- The American Hospital (63, bd Victor Hugo, Neuilly-sur-Seine, tel. 01.46.41.25.25). Doctors generally speak English. Students should bring their GeoBlue insurance cards with them in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

- Institut Arthur Vernes (36, rue d'Assas, 75006, tel. 01.44.39.53.00). Very close to Reid Hall and takes walk-ins.

A complete list of information will be given to you during orientation in Paris.

**Mental health:** A counseling service is available for students. The Paris office also provides a list of English speaking mental health professionals in Paris.

**If you are on medication, make sure to bring your prescription with you. Bring a full supply of medication with you if possible, as shipping prescription drugs can be complicated.**

**French law does not tolerate the possession or use of any controlled substances. The law is strictly enforced.**

## ***Financial Matters***

***Let your bank and credit card companies know that you will be abroad.***

**ATMs:** There are ATMs all over Paris. Check with your bank regarding card use abroad and "hidden" charges for overseas withdrawals. **Please note that ATMs dispense euros in France!**

**Credit cards:** Clarify what services each of your cards can provide and where you can access such services: purchasing goods in a store, cash advances from ATM machines, etc. Find out if there are any additional fees or charges attached to using the card overseas.

**There is generally a limit to how much one can withdraw from an ATM per day and per week.**

**Tuition coverage:** Tuition covers all academic expenses except materials for the studio arts, rental of musical instruments and rental of rehearsal space and practice rooms. Refer to your Sarah Lawrence bill for policies on payment and refunds in the event you need to withdraw from the Program.

**Expenses:** Refer to the cost sheet for an estimation of monthly expenses. Be prepared for fluctuations in the exchange rate.

**Changing money:** You should arrive in Paris with euros or exchange some money at the airport. Most French banks do not change money or travelers checks. This has to be done in change offices. It is much easier not to have to look for them immediately upon arrival.

**Banking:** Students staying for the full academic year may choose to open a bank account in Paris. The Paris office assists students with the initial administrative formalities. Opening a bank account will allow students to receive a debit card and make or receive wire transfers. Semester-only students will not be able to open a bank account in Paris.

## ***Identity Papers***

**Important:** Students should remember that their passport is their only international identification, and that they are required by French law to carry it with them at all times. It should be presented to authorities upon request. This can happen at any time in France and is strictly routine. Please note that a photocopy has no legal validity.

**If your passport is stolen,** report the theft to the police and to the American Embassy immediately and notify the Program Director or staff.

### **American Embassy in Paris**

2, avenue Gabriel

75382 Paris Cedex 08

Telephone: +33 (0)1 43 12 22 22

<http://france.usembassy.gov/pass-lost.html>

### **The titre de séjour (French Residency permit)**

**All students who have been issued a French student visa** must confirm their arrival in France using the online platform designated by immigration services. The Sarah Lawrence office in Paris will assist students in completing the necessary formalities during orientation. Students are required by the French government to pay a one-time residency tax of 60 euros (2019 rate).

**IMPORTANT:** Students who do not complete these formalities within 3 months after their arrival in France may be denied re-entry into the Schengen Area.

**Note:** Students who have been issued a temporary long stay visa by a French Consulate do not need to apply for a residency permit and are exempted from all additional administrative formalities after their arrival in France. However, the temporary long stay visa does not allow students to work or renew their visa in France.

## ***Security***

In light of the current international context, the Program advises students to remain vigilant and follow certain recommendations:

- Registering with the US Department of State's "Smart Traveler Program": <https://step.state.gov/step/> before departure.
- **Keeping a charged cellphone with them at all the times** and informing the staff immediately of changes to their contact information.
- Making sure they are aware of **French emergency phone numbers** (see p. 19)
- Notifying Program staff if they leave Paris, even for a weekend. Students will receive information about how to fill out and submit the travel sheet during orientation.
- Reading local media (for example *Le Monde* newspaper, available in the SLC Program offices) and staying informed about current events.
- Being highly attentive to their surroundings while circulating in and outside of Paris, generally using discretion and good judgement.

The Reid Hall building is secured with an entry code. Students will receive the code prior to orientation.



## **Telephone**

**All students are required to obtain a personal cell phone with a French number upon arrival and communicate the number to the Paris Program office so they can be reached in case of emergency.**

There are two options:

1. "Unlock" your American phone before departure and bring it to Paris so that you can replace your American SIM card with a French one
2. Purchase a French phone and SIM card.

The Sarah Lawrence program offices will assist students in purchasing a French cellphone and/or SIM card on the first day of orientation.

If you have questions about cellphones, please contact Katy Welles in the Paris office ([kwelles@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:kwelles@sarahlawrence.edu)).

## **Transportation**

Public transportation is well organized and easy to use in Paris. Students can calculate their itineraries in advance by using the following website: <http://ratp.fr/>.

Subway: The "métro" and R.E.R. (suburban trains) are the most convenient and simplest means of transportation in Paris. The subway runs from 5:30 am to 12:30 am daily and until 1:30 am on Fridays, Saturdays and evenings proceeding bank holidays.

Buses: Many buses run until midnight, although some run only until 8:30 pm. Some do not run on Sundays or holidays. Night buses run at one-hour intervals between midnight and 5:00 am.

Tickets: The same tickets are used for the bus and the metro. You can go anywhere in Paris on the subway with one ticket (1,90€). You may also use the same ticket to transfer from one bus line to another, but it must be within the hour. Books of tickets can be bought in the subway and at most tobacco shops, and individual tickets can be bought on the bus (2€). It is cheaper to buy a book of 10 tickets (a "carnet") for 14,90€ than to buy individual tickets.

Pass Navigo: You can charge this travel card on a weekly or monthly basis, an excellent deal if you ride buses or metros more than twice a day. It allows unlimited travel by bus and subway in Paris and in the Ile de France region. **The Program will provide you with a Pass Navigo that is ready to be charged.** It is your responsibility to charge it. A refill costs about 22,80€ for a week, about 75,20€ for a month. Students staying the full year will receive information about applying for a student discount pass (*Imagine R*) during orientation.

Taxis: Parisians do not hail taxis. Customers must wait at a taxi stand until a taxi comes. In certain areas, there is always a line of cabs waiting for customers. However, if it is raining or rush hour, it is wiser and much less expensive to take the metro. One can call a taxi at 01.47.39.47.39, for example, or any of the numerous taxi companies in Paris, but the rate is more expensive. The night rate (from 11:00 pm to 6:00 am) is twice the daytime rate. The tip is 10 percent.

Trains: There are seven major train stations in Paris, each covering different parts of France and Europe.

Gare d'Austerlitz: Southwest France  
Gare de l'Est: Eastern France and Germany  
Gare de Lyon: South and Southwest France, Italy, Switzerland  
Gare Montparnasse: Western France  
Gare du Nord: Northern France, Belgium, and Great Britain  
Gare St-Lazare: Western France, parts of Normandy and the Northern coast for Channel crossings  
Gare de Bercy: Southeastern France and Italy

For reservations from all seven stations and other train information: call 3635 (7am to 10pm) or consult the SNCF website (<https://www.oui.sncf/>)

### ***Travel: Student Discounts***

As a student, you have many options for discounted travel throughout France and Europe.

Students planning on traveling extensively in Europe, for example before or after the semester, may be interested in the following rail passes:

The "Eurail Pass" (for non-European citizens or residents): [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)

The Interrail pass (for European citizens and residents): [www.interrail.eu](http://www.interrail.eu)

The Carte "Jeune" for young people aged 12-27 guarantees discounted fares on train tickets within France and between France and a number of European countries:

<https://www.oui.sncf/train/carte-abonnement-train/jeune>

If you are planning to do a lot of traveling, you might want to obtain a Youth Hostel membership card : [www.hiusa.org](http://www.hiusa.org)

For information about the many student flight options organized in Europe, contact: STA Travel – 1-800-781-4040 ([www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com)).

### ***Working in France***

Students who have been issued a regular student visa are permitted by the French government to work part time. Students with a "temporary long stay visa" are not permitted to work in France. Employers must declare the hiring of non-European students to the French government at least 2 business days before the student starts working.

## Some Tips for Survival

Leave all your small appliances at home. They will not work in France, even with an adapter. The exceptions are appliances like hairdryers and razors that are specifically suited to international voltage; in this case, you will need only a plug adapter.

To find the most current conversion rate between dollars and euros, visit the **Universal Currency Converter** at <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>.

**Tipping:** A service charge is included in the bill at all cafes and restaurants. It is considered good manners to leave a 5 to 10 percent tip on the table (more at expensive restaurants). Tipping on various occasions - taxis, for instance - is 10 percent. In France, you may tip the usher who seats you in movie houses and private theaters: 50 cents in cinemas, a euro at private theaters.

**Lost and Found:** The center for articles lost in public places in Paris ("Service des Objets Trouvés") is located at 36, rue des Morillons, 75015 (métro Convention). For information on how to use this service, consult their website:

<http://www.prefecturedepolice.interieur.gouv.fr/Demarches/Particulier/Autres-demarches/Le-service-des-objets-trouves>

**Voltage in France:** 240 V

**Temperatures:** To convert Celsius degrees into Fahrenheit degrees, multiply the Celsius figure by 1.8 and then add 32. For example, when it is 20 degrees Celsius outside, this corresponds to 68 Fahrenheit. The Fahrenheit body temperature of 98.6 is equal to 37 degrees Celsius.

**Climate:** Average monthly temperatures (in Fahrenheit) for Paris are:

January 42/33	February 45/33	March 52/36	April 60/40
May 67/47	June 73/52	July 76/55	August 75/55
September 80/58	October 69/44	November 50/30	December 37/19

## A word about your budget

It is no secret that Paris can be an expensive city. Here are some tips from former students to help you avoid overspending:

- Make a budget and stick to it.
- Take out a specific amount of money each week and no more.
- Grocery shop! Shop for produce at outdoor markets where it is cheaper, and use local supermarkets (Carrefour, Franprix, Intermarché...). Don't forget to make a shopping list to avoid impulse buys!
- Eat local. Avoid American products as they are expensive in France.
- Only take with you the cash you are willing to spend in one evening – when it's done, you're done!
- Take advantage of the Program activities. They are free!
- If you get tired of cooking, do what the French students do and try a student restaurant ("Resto U").
- Resist the urge to overspend when you first arrive. It's rewarding to travel outside of Paris with your saved-up money!
- Scout out the many cheap and/or free activities available in Paris – the Program staff can give you many ideas! Here are just a few to get you started:

museums operated by the city of Paris (always free)

parks, gardens, cemeteries and churches (always free)

special movie festivals (3 euros per ticket)

street festivals and free exhibits: La Nuit Blanche, La Techno Parade,  
free photo exhibits in the Luxembourg Gardens, flea markets,  
traditional food markets, etc.

## **Reid Hall**

The Paris Program's headquarters are located at Reid Hall, a university center shared with other American, French and British university programs and home to the Columbia University European Global Studies Center. The Center houses conferences for international scholars throughout the year. Programs share classroom space, a library, and common rooms. The Sarah Lawrence Program offices include an additional library and a computer room specifically reserved for SLC students. Reid Hall's grounds include a large inner courtyard and garden.

Built in the 18th century, Reid Hall was originally a private residence. The building was later transformed into a porcelain factory, and subsequently a famous Protestant school for young French and foreign students. In 1893, Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, the wife of an American plenipotentiary minister, established a residence for American women who came to study music and the arts in Paris. After World War I, Mrs. Reid invited a group of American university women to organize Reid Hall into an academic center. Since July 1964, Reid Hall has been administered by Columbia University and continues to serve as a Franco-American center devoted to intellectual and cultural exchange.

## **Don't Forget**

- Passport
- Student visa. Do not leave the United States without it unless you are a citizen of a country in the European Economic Union. You will not be able to obtain a visa outside the U.S.
- Letter from Sarah Lawrence certifying your participation in our program.
- Proof of health insurance.
- To notify the Bronxville office of your departure and date of your arrival and/or any subsequent changes.
- Laptop with wireless internet capabilities.

## **Bibliography**

### ***Publications about Paris, Parisians, the French and Americans***

#### **Books**

Baudry, Pascal. *Français & Américains : l'autre rive*. Paris : Village Mondial, 2003.

Carroll, Raymonde. *Evidences invisibles. Américains et Français au quotidien*. Paris: Seine, 1987.

Forbes, Jill and Michael Kelly. *French Cultural Studies. An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Kaplan, Alice. *Dreaming in French: The Paris Years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag & Angela Davis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Huston, Nancy. *Nord perdu*. Paris: Actes Sud, 1999.

Mizubayashi, Akira. *Une Langue venue d'ailleurs*. Paris : Gallimard, 2011.

Ross, Kristen. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

Stanger, Ted. *Sacrés Français! Un Américain nous regarde*. Paris : Gallimard : Folio, 2003.

Stovall, Tyler. *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

#### **Films and Television**

Allen, Woody. *Midnight in Paris*, 2011.

Delpy, Julie. *2 Days in New York*, 2007.

Delpy, Julie. *2 Days in Paris*, 2011.

France Télévisions. *Fais pas çà, fais pas çà!* Saison 1, 2007.

Klapisch, Cédric. *Chacun cherche son chat*, 1995.

Klapisch, Cédric. *L'Auberge Espagnole*, 2001.

**All these books and DVDs are available in the SLC Program Offices**