

## CALL FOR PAPERS

22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Graduate Student Conference  
Department of French & Francophone Studies  
October 12 & 13, 2017  
<http://uclaffsconference2017.weebly.com/>



*La France est un empire*. Dir. Emmanuel Bourcier and Jean d'Agraves. Ciné Reportages, 1938.

### **Que sais-je?: Rethinking Learning and Knowledge**

In Montaigne's *Essais*, he famously asks "*Que sais-je?*", demonstrating skepticism toward his own knowledge and capacity to reason. The popular educational book series, *Que sais-je?*, which owes its name to Montaigne's query, ironically appropriates an utterance of skepticism to grant the general reading public the ability to learn from a vast breadth of knowledge. This shift from claims of skepticism to those of authority raises the question: how *do* we come to know things? And are we necessarily aware of the processes that govern and shape not only *what*, but *how* we learn?

Throughout French and Francophone history, the acquisition and reconsideration of knowledge have been at the forefront of cultural change. For instance, modes of learning and transmission from antiquity to the Middle Ages were inherent in the concepts of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii*, which helped to mold French cultural and intellectual identity. Humanists of the Renaissance looked back at Hellenistic and Roman models of aesthetics to inform their work. The colonial period saw the wide dissemination of French cultural productions via educational reforms proposed by Jules Ferry. Talk of French universalism and republicanism saturates the contemporary moment, and these values shape popular views on national identity.

Indeed, forms of knowledge acquisition can both question and reinforce dominant cultural discourses and structures of power. Therefore, questioning *les dispositifs*—to borrow from Foucault—of learning and teaching is equally important. Enlightenment thinkers challenged and disrupted long standing social, political, and philosophical paradigms. Decolonization movements and revolutions fought back against colonial education, which had upheld French republican ideals. Diasporic movements, such as Négritude, present us with non-Eurocentric perspectives. The growing number of contemporary publications that approach questions of representation offer articulations of diverse experiences that demand a reevaluation of notions of French universalism. These moments question previously held paradigms of knowledge.

In the era of open access, the MOOC, instantaneous answers, “fake news”, and the live streaming of just about anything—from classrooms to crimes, *que sais-je?* How do we know what we know? How do we define knowledge? What is the relationship between learning and knowledge? How do we now, and how have we in the past, distinguished between “received ideas” and “knowledge”? Do today’s shifting sites and models of learning help us to reevaluate older methods?

For the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Graduate Student Conference of the UCLA Department of French and Francophone Studies, we welcome presentations that explore these issues in French and Francophone cultural productions across a variety of time periods and disciplines.

**Possible conference topics may include but are not limited to:**

- The influence of media and media representations
- Literary and philosophical movements
- France’s colonial civilizing mission
- Travel narratives
- Transitions of political authority and power
- Multiculturalism, creolization, and *métissage*
- Translation and transmission
- The construction, reinforcement, and performance of identities
- Pedagogy – theory, praxis, and its representations

Please send an abstract (300 words or fewer) in English or French along with your paper title, affiliation, and contact information to [uclafrenchgradconf2017@gmail.com](mailto:uclafrenchgradconf2017@gmail.com). Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes in length.

**Our deadline for submissions is July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**