

## **Southern France : A Historical Journey through the French Resistance in the Vercors**

June 3rd - June 15th

French 095 (for non-majors/non-minors)

French 195 (for Minors & Majors)

**Instructors :** Marielle Macias Aunave (Romance Languages & Linguistics)  
Emmanuel Tissot



### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Join us in a journey through wartime history in the Vercors region of southern France. Improve your languages skills in this immersive summer study abroad program.

The Vercors is a range of mountains and plateaus between the Drôme and Isère river valleys in the Rhône Alpes region of France. The name "Vercors" comes from the "*Vertacomicorii*" a celtic tribe living in this area when it was invaded by the Romans during the first century BCE.

During World War II, the French Resistance used these mountains as a natural geographic fort: *une forteresse naturelle de la Résistance*. In July 21, 1944, some 3,500 resistance fighters originating from all over France were attacked by 15,000 German troops who had made their way on roads, over passes in the cliffs, and from the air. In all, 600 resistance fighters and 200 civilians including women and children were killed. The killing of civilians was especially horrible in the village of Vassieux, where S.S. troops killed all the inhabitants and destroyed their houses.

A major component of the course will be studying the history of WWII in the Vercors region during the Resistance. We will read relevant books from diverse perspectives : one from the point of view of English allies fighting in the Vercors ; and based on the account of French Resistance men and women from Marc Serratrice 's book *Avoir 20 ans au maquis du vercors*. Students will be required to attend 6 pre-trip meetings. In preparation for these meetings students will also be required to read the texts listed in the syllabus, write reaction papers based on the readings, and discuss topics with their peers. A post-trip meeting will also be scheduled where students will present aspects of their experience in the Vercors to their peers. I will also suggest that students keep a travel journal during their trip to maintain a written record of their personal experience of the Vercors region.

## **Itinerary**

June 3 : Students arrive In Lyon Airport and will travel by bus (1 hour) to Grenoble. From Grenoble, Emmanuel Tissot and Marielle Aunave will drive you to our lodging in Autrans (45 mins).

June 4: We will retrace the incursion of German troops in the northern part of the Vercors : St Nizier, Croix Lichou, Lans, carrière Converso, Col de la Croix Perrin. In the afternoon, we will hike to the summit of le Bec de l'Aigle (Eagle's Beak) (1hour). We will examine the unique geological features of the Vercors range.

<http://www.lansenvercors.com/grotte-des-eymards-speleologie.html>

June 5: We will hike to the resistance hideout, la Cabanne de Gève, and through le Pas de la Clé (Key Pass). On the way there, we will stop at the crash site of a Royal Air Force Halifax bomber.

<https://refugedegeve.com/>

June 6: From Valchevrière, we will hike to the plateau of St Julien, through the pass of Sambue, across the prairie, through a number of important sites of combat during the takeover of the southern Vercors.

<http://www.villarddelans.com/ete/site-historique-de-valchevriere.html> - .Wcl4hNOGQPQ

June 7 : Hike to the Bourne Gorges, the Goule Noire bridge, the Valon des Ecouges, and the Malaval (site of a civilian massacre).

<http://en.villarddelans.com/summer/les-gorges-de-la-bourne.html> - .WcmBz9OGOPQ

June 8 : We will visit the villages of St. Martin en Vercors, La Chapelle en Vercors, the Hôtel Belon, and the Cave of la Luire.

<http://www.villarddelans.com/ete/grotte-de-la-luire.html> - .WcmHG9OGOPQ

June 9 : We will visit the village of Vassieux, the Museum of the Resistance, and the landing of German gliders during the invasion.

<http://www.ladrome.fr/nos-actions/culture/musee-de-la-resistance/lexposition-permanente>

June 10 : Hike to the Ville Pass from la Grande Cabane.

June 11 : Hike to the Aiguille Pass (One way : a 90 minute car ride and a 2 hour walk)

[https://www.alpes-photos.com/fiche\\_pas\\_aiguille.htm](https://www.alpes-photos.com/fiche_pas_aiguille.htm)

June 12

Visit the Léoncel Abbey, Bataille Pass, and the Ambel Plateau.

<http://www.ladrometourisme.com/noesit/!/fiche/visite-de-l-abbaye-de-leoncel-802018/>

June 13: Visit Saint-Agnan en Vercors and the school of Rose Jarrand (see book *Résistants à Dix ans*).

June 14 : Return to Grenoble, Visit of the Museum of the Resistance and Deportation, and the Museum of the Mountain Troops.

Free time to visit Grenoble and the surroundings.

June 15 : Departure from Lyon Airport.