“Like an odalisque upon a shimmering bronze divan, the proud city lies amid warm, vine-clad hills in the serpentine valley of the Seine.” Friedrich Engels (1899)

“The widening of the streets, it was said, was necessitated by the crinoline.” Walter Benjamin (n.d.)

This seminar will closely examine Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century as it was represented in both visual and textual sources. We will study the city and its depictions as they are haunted by the traces of revolution, manifest topographical and architectural shifts, and inscribed by the dramatic social and cultural change that characterize the Paris that emerged in the late nineteenth century as modern spectacle.

Using various art historical, architectural, and urban theories, we will consider representations of Paris particularly in relation to such issues and constructs as: modernity, gender, racial and ethnic identity, class, shopping, the domestic interior, café culture, flânerie, leisure culture, disease, agoraphobia, colonialism, memory/memorials, trauma, loss, and universal exhibitions.