

Sarah Lawrence - Paris

Handbook Fall 2026

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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 handbook will answer most of your questions between now and your arrival in Paris. However, if it does not, please feel free to contact Natalie Allen, Director of the Paris Program, or Prema Samuel, Associate Dean of Global Education. Please note that the Paris office will be closed from July 18th to August 16th 2026.

Bon Voyage!

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Program Calendar 2026 – 2027

Fall 2026 Semester	
Tuesday September 1 st - Sunday September 13 th	Orientation
Monday September 14 th	First day of SLC in-house courses*
Monday October 26 th – Sunday November 1 st	Fall Break*
Friday December 18 th	End of the first semester (SLC in-house courses)*

Spring 2027 Semester – Dates TBC	
Wednesday January 6 th – Sunday January 17 th	Orientation (spring semester-only students)
Monday January 18 th	First day of SLC in-house courses*
One week in February (dates to be confirmed)	Winter Break*
One week in April (dates to be confirmed)	Spring Break*
Friday May 14 th	End of the second semester (SLC in-house courses)*

*	<p>Classes in dance, drawing/painting, photography, & sculpture follow the Sarah Lawrence Paris calendar.</p> <p>Students who are enrolled in courses at French universities, filmmaking, music, theatre schools, or in other specialized programs should be aware that their calendars differ from the SLC Program calendar. Students should verify specific dates before purchasing vacation or return tickets.</p>
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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. Please scan your passport and upload a copy in PDF form onto Terradotta as soon as possible, as this document will be required for a number of online administrative formalities both before and after your arrival in France.

Visa

- **You must have a valid student visa to study in France**, unless you are a citizen of the European Union.

Before you can apply for your visa, you must first complete a **Pre-Consular Application with Campus France. Please do this as soon as possible.** Visa appointments must be scheduled far in advance – do NOT underestimate the time required to complete this process.

Students should carefully follow the instructions for **study abroad students** available on the following website : <https://www.usa.campusfrance.org/application-overview>.

You may also find the following tutorial helpful :

<https://youtu.be/Vn5d6SK6s3g?si=UUoCk8MXiMDkrmSD>

The Global Education Office will also provide students with a sample application, as well as detailed instructions.

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. Starting on April 18th 2025, **students will need to make a visa appointment at a “TLScontact” Center in the United States** (<https://www.tlscontact.com/en/>). We will provide you with all the documentation necessary to obtain this visa. However, you must check with the TLScontact Center 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.

To note: *As of April 2025, the United Kingdom requires travelers to obtain an “Electronic Travel Authorisation” (ETA) to enter the country. Students who have a connecting flight in the UK should check with their airline to verify if this will be required in their case. See :* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>

Starting in late 2026 the EU will also require short term visitors to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (European Travel Information and Authorisation System - ETIAS) to enter 30 European countries. See : <https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/about-etias/what-is-etias>

Financial Aid

If students receive financial aid from their college, they should contact the financial aid office to make any and all necessary arrangements prior to departure.

Money

Almost all businesses in France accept payment by debit card/credit card, provided that they have a chip. However, it is a good idea to convert approximately \$100 into euros before you depart to have on hand "just in case."

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 is generally cold and rainy. 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.**

Getting Into Paris

Most transatlantic flights land at Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (23 km northeast of Paris), though some land at Orly Airport (17 km south of Paris). To help you prepare for your arrival, here is some useful information about different options :

TAXIS:

By far the most convenient and comfortable way for a tired traveler with baggage to get to the city center is by taxi. Taxi fare between Parisian airports and the city is regulated. For a list of fixed prices and other useful information, see:

- Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport : <https://www.parisaeroport.fr/en/passengers/access/paris-charles-de-gaulle/taxi>
- Orly Airport : <https://www.parisaeroport.fr/en/passengers/access/paris-orly/taxi>

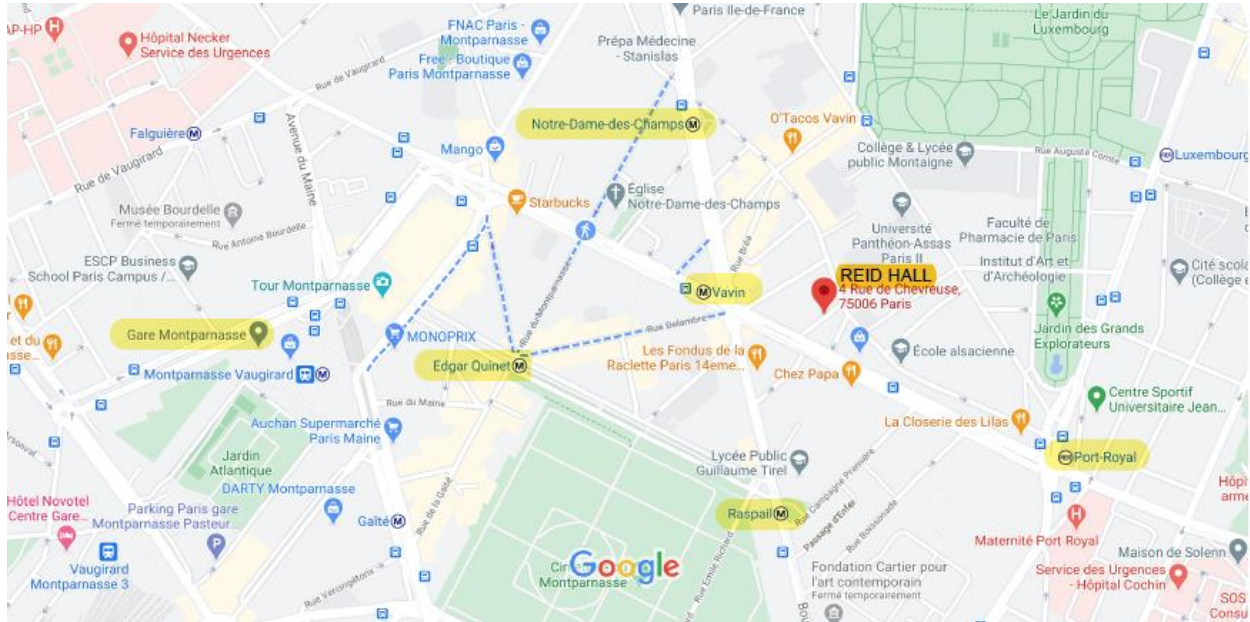
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

Public transportation can be an efficient and inexpensive option for travel to and from Parisian airports. However, please keep in mind that public transportation in Paris is crowded and always has stairs!

- **From the Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport:**
 - **RER line B** (rail): direct access to Paris, especially practical when travelling to the *Cité Universitaire*. Make sure to keep your ticket as you will need it to exit or to transfer to the metro !
- **From the Orly Airport:**
 - **Metro line 14** : provides a fast and direct connection between Orly Airport and central Paris (roughly 30 minutes) Line 14 is well-connected with other major lines, including connections to major hubs like Gare Saint-Lazare, Châtelet and Gare de Lyon.
 - **Orly Val** will take you to the **RER line B** (Anthony station), which will allow you to travel directly into Paris and notably to the *Cité Universitaire*. Make sure to keep your RER ticket as you will need it to exit or to transfer to the metro! See www.oryval.com for more information.
- For a summary of public transportation options in English, see: <https://www.ratp.fr/en/visiting-paris/transport-operating-hours-airport-links>
- For further information about the Parisian public transportation system, see: <https://www.ratp.fr>

Getting to the SLC Paris Program Offices

The Sarah Lawrence Paris Program offices at Reid Hall are 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* (lines 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.



Public transportation stations are marked in yellow.

Hotels located near the SLC Paris Program Offices (for family and friends)

Here are several hotels conveniently located near Reid Hall:

Hôtel A La Villa des Artistes
9, rue de la Grande Chaumière
75006 Paris
<https://www.villa-artistes.com/en>

Hôtel des Bains
33 Rue Delambre
75014 Paris
<https://www.hdbparis.com/fr>

Hôtel Louison
105 Rue de Vaugirard
75006 PARIS
<https://en.louison-hotel.com>

For information on youth hostels in Paris, see : <https://www.bvjhostelparis.com/en/>

Academics

That education should not be separate from life is one of Sarah Lawrence's foremost philosophies. In Paris, learning and living often become one, as students immerse themselves in another language and culture, and learn to adapt to a day-to-day existence that is different from that which they have known most of their lives. In turn, students often gain new insight and perspective on themselves and on their own country.

Overview

The Paris Program is designed for students with intermediate or advanced proficiency in the French language. French language courses and seminars are offered at Reid Hall, and students also have the opportunity to study at a variety of French universities and art schools, depending on their French language level, their academic background and goals. As in Bronxville, students in the Paris Program benefit from one-on-one instruction and guidance during conference work (see p.12).

To assist students in navigating the wide variety of available options and in adapting to academic expectations in France, individualized advising is provided both prior to arrival and throughout their stay in Paris. As enrollment at certain partner institutions requires early registration, exams and/or audition, it is important that students clearly indicate their interests and objectives to the Program Director during their first individual pre-departure meeting, so that all possible assistance can be provided.

Orientation

Upon arrival in Paris, students will participate in a 2-week orientation period designed to help them adjust to life in France, discover the city and prepare for the semester. Students take intensive French language courses, attend conferences on French history, culture and pedagogy with Program faculty, and participate in cultural activities and excursions. They also receive information on practical matters related to their lives outside the classroom (housing, health and safety, administrative formalities...).

During orientation, students will meet individually with the Director to discuss their academic programs and finalize any necessary preparations.

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

Academic Program

A full course load consists of four courses per semester, and will include the following:

French Language Course	Mandatory – 4 credits Students take a language course during orientation to determine their level.
Sarah Lawrence Seminar	Mandatory – 4 credits Students must choose at least one Sarah Lawrence seminar in the humanities or social sciences.
Two electives:	any combination of Sarah Lawrence seminars, and/or courses at partner institutions: students may choose two 4-credit courses or, (pending prior approval), an 8-credit intensive program.

SLC Seminars and Language Courses

All Sarah Lawrence language classes and seminars are taught in French and held at Reid Hall. French classes meet twice a week, while seminars meet once a week. Seminars are generally offered in art history, film history, literature, and sociology. All courses – and most particularly art history courses – also require students to participate in class visits to museums and other places of interest. All Sarah Lawrence language courses and seminars include conference work (see p. 12).

Courses at French Universities

Students in the Paris Program may take one or two courses per semester at one of SLC's French partner universities. This option provides students with an excellent opportunity to integrate themselves into the French academic system and gain access to a wide variety of courses in the humanities and the social sciences. Available options depend on students' level of proficiency in the French language and their academic background. Students who wish to register for classes in French at Parisian universities must demonstrate a "[B2](#)" (advanced/independent) language level before their arrival in Paris, based on previous coursework (in general, completion of a 5th semester-level course of college French is required). Students enrolled in French university courses will also benefit from individual support and guidance during weekly conference sessions organized by the Program (see p. 12).

- **Sorbonne Université** (courses in French only): art history & archeology; French language/linguistics; French and comparative literature; history; musicology; philosophy
- **Université Paris Cité** (courses in French only*): arts and letters; economics; film studies; geography and planning; history; law; linguistics; literature; sociology; psychology

** One exception : students specializing in Anglophone literature and civilizations may enroll in courses in the anglophone studies department at the Université Paris Cité.*

- **Sciences Po** (courses in English or in French depending on students' level): a very limited number of spaces are reserved for students specializing in international relations and political science.
 - **OPTION CURRENTLY SUSPENDED**
 - Applicants specializing in international relations and political science should contact the program director directly to discuss alternative options.

Students interested in enrolling in French universities should indicate this interest to the Program Director during their first pre-departure advising meeting to receive information on available courses, as well as the required language certificates and/or early registration process.

Courses in the Arts

Paris' cultural history and dynamic artistic life provide an ideal context for the pursuit of study in the visual and performing arts. The SLC Paris Program works with partner institutions to offer courses in the following disciplines:

- **Visual Arts : drawing/painting, sculpture, photography**
Courses in the visual arts are taken at various studios and ateliers located throughout Paris. No previous experience is required, but students who have experience should provide a portfolio (this is a requirement for advanced drawing/painting courses).
- **Performing Arts: dance, music, theatre**
Courses in the performing arts are taken at various conservatories and studios located throughout Paris. Previous experience in the chosen discipline is expected and audition is generally required for music and theatre courses.
All students interested in studying music should contact **John Yannelli**, Director of the Sarah Lawrence Music Program, for advising: yannelli@sarahlawrence.edu. **Please note that music and theatre options are full-year only.**

A single course in the performing arts is composed of **3 or 4 smaller elements, called components.**

- A **dance** course includes components in history, choreography, and technique courses.
- A **music** course includes components in theory or history, individual instruction and group instruction (chamber music, orchestra, etc.).
- A **theatre** course includes components in analysis/theory, acting, and movement or voice.

It is not possible to take just one or two components and receive credit for them.

All visual and performing arts courses are taught in French. Arts courses do not include conference work. Students cannot audit arts courses. **As arts courses require advanced planning, it is imperative that students make their wishes known to the Paris Program Director during their first pre-departure advising meeting.**

Intensive Programs in the Arts

Students with high intermediate/advanced proficiency in French and who specialize in the arts may apply for an intensive program. Students in intensive programs take half of their coursework (8 credits per semester) in their area of specialization.

DISCIPLINE	SPECIFICATIONS	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS	CONTACT
Filmmaking	EICAR Film School	Statement of intention Full-year students only	Natalie Allen
Music	Classical Music Electronic Music Composition Jazz	Audition Full-year students only	John Yannelli
Theatre		Separate application process Full-year students only	Natalie Allen

Possibilities for intensive study (8 credits per semester) are also available in **dance** and the **visual arts**. Students interested in these options should indicate this to the Program Director during their pre-departure advising meeting and be prepared to write a statement of intention.

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 coursework and provide them with advice on organizing their thoughts, constructing their arguments, and presenting their knowledge and ideas in both written and spoken form. Notably, 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. This will be especially true for French university courses.

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 cultural and linguistic elements. 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 **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 students cannot attend their session, they must inform the professor at least 24-hours prior to the meeting time.

There are two types of conference work:

- Conferences for **Sarah Lawrence language courses and seminars** take place on a one-to-one basis every other week for half an hour.
- Conferences for **French university courses** may be held with one or multiple students and take place weekly for one hour. The conference professor may be the instructor of the course, a colleague or graduate student from the department, or another scholar in the field. Students will complete assignments for and receive grades from both the university professor and the conference professor. The workload distribution will depend on the French university course's requirements.

It is the students' responsibility to make sure they know what is expected of them at the French university and to communicate it to both the SLC conference professor (when he or she is not the professor of the class) and to the Program Director when the SLC conference work is organized.

Academic Calendar, Rules and Regulations

Academic Calendar

As the SLC Paris Program offers courses at a variety of partner institutions with varying calendars, students should take note of the following:

- The SLC Paris in-house course calendar is available on p. 2.
- Classes in dance and visual arts follow the SLC Paris in-house calendar.
- **French universities, filmmaking, music and theatre schools have their own calendars, which vary from the SLC in-house calendar. Students who intend to take courses in these areas should wait to receive specific dates before purchasing vacation or return tickets. Please note that courses in theatre and music usually continue until late June.**
- **All students are required to attend courses until the end of the semester** (both at Reid Hall and at partner institutions). Any student who leaves early without having previously received permission from the Program Director will lose credit.

Course Selection

Students should indicate their interests to the Program Director during their first pre-departure advising meeting. Students will have the opportunity to discuss possibilities for study and make pre-selections. Final course selection takes place in Paris during the orientation period.

Students will have one week after classes begin to confirm their choices. Students enrolled at French universities should confirm their selections with the Program Director as soon as possible so that their conference work can be organized in a timely manner. If students are, for some unusual reason, unable to make their final choices by the end of the first week, they should talk to the Program Director **immediately without waiting to be contacted first.**

Dropping a class after the initial add/drop period is not permitted.

Academic Work

Courses in Paris include both take-home papers and in-class assignments (oral presentations, in-class essays, exams...). Students should expect a total workload of at least 20 pages of writing per class.

Although papers are spread out as evenly as possible throughout the semester, the workload may seem lighter at the beginning of the semester, which allows students to acquire the skills necessary to write a research paper in French. More work therefore should be expected toward the end of the term. This also applies to most of the classes taken at French universities. **Papers must be submitted on time. French professors may be extremely strict on this question and will not accept last-minute excuses. Failure to comply will result in a lower grade or loss of credit.**

Academic integrity is required of all students and must be applied to all assignments. Plagiarism and the use of translation software and/or content-generating artificial intelligence is strictly prohibited. Students are required to cite their sources and to complete their work using their own ideas and their own words.

Academic Accommodations

Students who receive academic accommodations in the United States and who wish to receive available accommodations in France should bring this to the attention of the Program Director during pre-departure advising and provide the relevant documentation from their home universities. For students who plan to enroll in courses at French universities, it is very important to start the process as early as possible (several months before departure).

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 four 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.). Repeated tardiness and any unexcused absence will result in a 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 subsequently with the professor. The Director must be consulted first, as the Bronxville office must grant permission for any extension. Failure to complete your work (papers or exams) at the end of the term without prior permission from the Director will result in a permanent lower grade or loss of 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 don or 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 Paris 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:

- **University libraries:** students will have access to the library of the institution or university where they are registered upon presentation of their student cards.
- **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-paris3.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. Municipal libraries contain a wide selection of books, and a variety of magazines, newspapers, CDs and DVDs. If you choose to purchase an annual subscription, you may also borrow CDs and DVDs.

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

Purchasing books:

Paris has numerous bookstores. This useful website allows students to locate independent bookstores around the city and order books: <https://www.parislibrairies.fr>.

The Librairie Tschann, located just around the corner from Reid Hall at 125, bd. du Montparnasse, is very convenient for Reid Hall students. The Gibert bookstores located in the Latin Quarter have also been a reference for students in Paris for generations: <https://www.gibert.com>.

A Few Points to Keep in Mind

- **Your presence in Paris is required on the first day of orientation.** Be sure that you are aware of the calendars for all of your courses (SLC courses and courses at partner institutions), and that you apprise your parents and friends. Attendance to all classes and academic appointments is mandatory regardless of their proximity to an impending vacation. **Do not plan on travelling or hosting visitors outside of the designated vacation periods.**
- 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 this to the Program Director during their first pre-departure advising meeting, if they have not already done so in their applications.** 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 completed for each course each semester. All students must submit this material.
- Unexcused absences, repeated tardiness, lack of academic integrity and/or failure to meet academic deadlines will result in permanent lower grades and/or loss of credit. Any student who leaves Paris before the end of each term without prior permission from the Director **and** their professors will receive lower grades and/or lose credit.

Living in Paris

The following pages contain a range of information to prepare students for daily life in Paris. Many 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

SLC Paris Program students may live in 3 different types of housing :

- A **homestay**, which best enables linguistic and cultural immersion
- A **student residence*** (*Fondation des États-Unis* at the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris)
- Students may also choose **independent living****. Given the difficulty and expense of securing housing in Paris, this option is not recommended outside of exceptional circumstances (family connections, etc.).

Students should read over the **Housing Options Form** carefully and follow the instructions indicated, especially concerning dates.

* Space at the *Fondation des États-Unis* is limited and rooms cannot be guaranteed. Please note that rooms at the *Fondation* are rented for the academic year. Priority will therefore be given to full-year students. Spring semester students may “replace” 1st semester students who leave in December.

** Students who choose to make their own independent living arrangements should inform the Paris office of their choice and verify with their landlord or landlady what they will need to take care of upon arriving in Paris (utilities, internet, insurance, etc.). **Missing classes and visits for these purposes will not be excused.**

Cultural Activities and Excursions

SLC considers cultural activities as an essential part of the university experience in France. In order to facilitate students' understanding of France and their integration into French society, the Program offers activities and guidance, including:

- A wide variety of visits in and outside of Paris
- Gatherings throughout the year with French university students
- Information and advice on activities outside of the classroom (exhibits, performances, extracurricular activities, volunteer work...)

Students may also benefit from discounts in theaters, cinemas, concert halls and exhibits, upon presentation of their French student I.D. card.

Visits and Excursions

A number of day trips and week-end excursions are organized outside of Paris. Recent activities have included trips to Dijon, Giverny, Provins, Chantilly & Vaux-le-Vicomte, as well as excursions to Marseille and the Loire Valley.

Museums

Each year, the SLC Paris faculty and staff take students on guided tours of museums such as the Louvre, Pompidou, Orsay, Cluny, Rodin, and Picasso museums.

Extensive information on Parisian museums can be found on the City of Paris' website: <http://parismusees.paris.fr/fr>. The Paris staff will offer recommendations for students throughout the year.

Sundays in Paris

Paris can seem like a quiet town on Sundays, as many businesses are closed. Here are some suggestions for making the most of a Parisian Sunday:

- Some grocery stores are open until 1pm, and some *épiceries* are open all day (consult the opening hours posted on stores in your neighborhood). You may also shop at one of the city's outdoor markets, as some are open on Sunday mornings: <https://www.paris.fr/equipements/marches-alimentaires/tous-les-horaires>
- Enjoy one of the city's many lovely parks and gardens – open daily
- Visit a museum, monument or church.
- Go to the movies ! For a list of theatres, see: <https://www.allocine.fr/salle/cinema/ville-115755/>
- For those who feel the need to shop, here are some recommendations: www.parisinfo.com/shopping/shopping-le-dimanche-a-paris

Daily Life

Food

Students' options for meals will vary depending upon their housing selection (student residence, host family, apartment) and their class schedule. Reid Hall has a small café where students can purchase breakfast, lunch, or snacks on weekdays. Students may also eat at the numerous bakeries and cafés in the neighborhood. Students who live at the *Cité Universitaire* or who attend classes at French universities may find it convenient to eat on-site at a *Resto-U*, a university restaurant that offers inexpensive meals. The SLC Paris office will provide students with information on *Resto-U*s, open-air markets, and reasonable restaurants during orientation.

Health

Medical Insurance: All students will be covered while abroad by a medical insurance policy administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Solutions (formerly 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.

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 BCBS Global Solutions network providers online and schedule their appointments directly through BCBS Global Solutions so they may benefit from direct payment. The Paris staff also assists students with registration for the French national health plan (*sécurité sociale*). This plan, which is free of charge for students, provides partial basic coverage and allows students to avoid advancing fees in some cases. 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 <https://www.sosmedecins.fr>
- 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, <https://www.american-hospital.org>). Doctors generally speak English. Students may inquire with GeoBlue about direct payment options for care at the American Hospital.
- Institut Arthur Vernes (36, rue d'Assas, 75006, tel. 01 44 39 53 00,

<https://www.institut-vernes.fr>). Very close to Reid Hall, some doctors speak English.

- For a list of pharmacies open on Sundays or during the night, see : <https://www.sosmedecins.fr/pharmacies-de-garde>

Students will receive additional information on health services during orientation in Paris.

Mental health: Students have access to “Reid Hall Psychological Services” and may make appointments with an English-speaking psychologist or psychiatrist : <https://www.psreidhall.com/>. The first consultation is covered by the program and subsequent consultations are covered by students’ BCBS Global Solutions insurance. Students who have specific concerns (notably regarding medication) may also contact Reid Hall Psychological Services prior to departure.

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 and identical prescriptions are not always available in France.

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 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: As most French banks will not open accounts for American students staying less than 1 year, it is recommended to open an international online bank account prior to departure (for example, Revolut).

Identity Papers

Important: Remember that your passport is your only international identification. **Be very careful with your passport** and make sure to keep copies of your passport and visa on file.

French law requires all citizens to carry proof of identity with them at all times. Non-European citizens may also be asked to show proof that their stay in the country is legal (visa/residency permit). This can be requested by authorities in France at any time. However, because of the prevalence of pickpocketing in Paris, the US Embassy does not recommend that US citizens carry their passports with them on a daily basis (see the Embassy's [website](#) for more information). If you travel outside of France, you will need to bring your original passport.

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
<https://fr.usembassy.gov>

It is possible to obtain a new passport at the American Embassy. Students will also need to complete administrative formalities with French immigration services to replace their "VLS-TS" (see below). The Paris staff can help students with this process.

The titre de séjour "VLS-TS" (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 residency tax of approximately 50 euros. **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.**

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 a French number 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 on how to fill out and submit the travel sheet during orientation.
- Reading local media 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.

Reid Hall is secured with an entry code. Students will need to scan their Reid Hall ID cards to enter the building. Guests must present themselves at the reception desk upon arrival.

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 an 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. ***Important: some telephone companies do not allow their clients to unlock their phones unless the devices have been paid in full.***
2. Purchase a French phone and SIM card.

To note: Many smartphones now have an “eSIM” (dual SIM) option. This is very practical as it allows students to keep their American number AND obtain a French number on the same phone via the eSIM technology.

The Sarah Lawrence Paris Program office will assist students in purchasing a French cellphone and/or SIM card during orientation.

Transportation

Public transportation is well organized and easy to use in Paris. Students can access all relevant information and calculate their itineraries in advance by using the following website: <http://ratp.fr/>. As SLC Paris students take public transportation daily for classes and program activities, **the Program will provide them with an unlimited student metro card (“Forfait Imagine R”) during orientation.** The card allows students to travel on the metro, bus, tramway or suburban trains (RER) all throughout Paris and the *Ile de France* region.

Subway: The *métro* and R.E.R. (suburban trains) are the most convenient and simplest means of transportation in Paris. On weekdays, metro lines run approximately from 5:30 am to 1:15 am and until 2:15 am on Fridays, Saturdays and evenings proceeding bank holidays. RER lines run every day from approximately 5:30 am to 1:20 am. The exact times of the first or last metro/RER at a given station will vary depending on its location on the line.

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: As students will be provided with an unlimited transportation card on the first day of orientation, **they should not purchase a weekly or monthly pass themselves.** However, they may need to purchase a few tickets between the time of their arrival and the first orientation meeting. It is possible to purchase individual tickets via the rechargeable “Navigo Easy” pass. The “Navigo Easy” pass can be recharged at subway stations, or on your phone via the RATP app: <https://www.ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs/ticket-t>. Correspondences are possible for one and a half hours but only between similar lines (bus-bus, bus-tram, metro-metro, metro-RER, RER-RER, tram-tram).

Taxis: Parisians rarely hail taxis. Customers either wait at taxi stands (*bornes d’appel à taxi*), or reserve a taxi by phone, online or using the “Paris Taxis” app. Taxi rates vary based on distance, location and time of day. For more information on taxis, students can consult : <https://www.paris.fr/taxis>. The taxi company G7 is Paris’ largest : <https://www.g7.fr>. Always remember to add a 10% tip, plus 2 euros for luggage.

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 stations and other train information, consult the SNCF website (www.sncf-connect.com)

Travel: Student Discounts

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

Students planning on traveling extensively in Europe may be interested in the following rail passes:

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

The Interrail pass (for European citizens and residents): www.interrail.eu

The "Carte Avantage 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.sncf-connect.com/app/catalogue/description/carte-avantage-jeune>

If you are planning to do a lot of traveling, you might want to obtain a Youth Hostel membership card : <https://hihostels.com> / <https://www.hifrance.org>

Working in France

Students who have been issued a regular student visa are permitted by the French government to work part time. 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. Tipping is therefore not required but it is considered good manners to leave a 5 to 10 percent tip on the table. When taking a taxi, be sure to leave a 10 percent tip in addition to the price of the ride.

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). Lost articles must be declared online and the *Service des objets trouvés* welcomes the public by appointment-only.

For information on how to use this service, consult their website:

www.prefecturedepolice.interieur.gouv.fr/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	February	March	April
46/38	53/41	59/43	62/44
May	June	July	August
73/54	78/59	84/62	84/63
September	October	November	December
71/56	68/54	55/45	46/38

Source : infoclimat.fr (2022 averages)

To note: Extreme highs and lows will vary outside of the average temperature ranges. In 2022, the extremes in Paris were 104,9°F (in July) and 23°F (in December)

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 an inexpensive 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)

movie festivals (discounted tickets)

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 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 classroom/library 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 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.

For more information about Reid Hall's history, see: <https://reidhall.globalcenters.columbia.edu>

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 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 and Paris offices of your departure and date of your arrival and/or any subsequent changes.
- Laptop with wireless internet capabilities.

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