



MCCULLOCH CENTER FOR GLOBAL INITIATIVES

STUDY IN MONTPELLIER

2022-23



Mount Holyoke College Program
In Partnership with Amherst and Williams Colleges
Montpellier, France

Welcome to the Mount Holyoke College Program in Montpellier!

We hope that studying in Montpellier will be as rewarding and exciting for you as it has been for so many other students since we began offering the program in 1998.

This handbook will answer many of your questions about how to prepare for studying in Montpellier, and how to make the most of that opportunity. The handbook was written by Amy Loth, the On-Site Director of the program, with contributions provided in 2017 from Joanne Picard, Dean of International Studies at MHC, and two MHC students who recently participated in the program, Hannah Wescott and Rebecca Pittel. We have made every effort to ensure that information included here is accurate at the time of writing, but please note that information is subject to change. We recommend that you verify information directly with other entities as needed (banks, airlines, shops, etc.).

This handbook focuses primarily on the MHC program in Montpellier, and we strongly recommend that you read it in conjunction with additional resources that address more generally a wide range of issues and considerations relevant to study abroad no matter the location:

On the [McCulloch Center Study Abroad website](http://mtholyoke.edu/global/study%20abroad) (mtholyoke.edu/global/study abroad)

- [Diversity & Identity](#)
- [Health & Safety Abroad](#)
- [Pre-departure](#)
- [Returning to MHC](#)

On the McCulloch Center study abroad Moodle site (log in to Moodle, scroll down to Miscellaneous, select Study Abroad, and click to self-enroll)

- Additional resources on Diversity & Identity and Health & Safety
- Practical tips (checklist, financial planning, packing, staying connected, and more)
- Culture Shock and Adaptation
- Returning home (including how to connect your experience abroad to the campus, community, and career plans)

You are welcome to be in touch with Amy Loth and April Stroud as you plan for study abroad, and throughout your stay in Montpellier; see contact information on the next page.

We look forward to your joining the program!

Amy Loth, On-Site Director

April Stroud, Director of Study Abroad

Contact Information

Mount Holyoke Program in Montpellier

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Amy Loth, Director

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Please remember that there is a +6 EST time difference (6:00pm EST = midnight in France).

For emergencies, please leave a detailed message if you get voice mail; Amy will call you back as soon as possible.

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McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives

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In an emergency outside of office hours (evenings, weekends, holidays), students should call Campus Police (413-538-2304).



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PREDEPARTURE PLANNING AND RESOURCES

Study abroad is rewarding, exciting, and fun. The cultural differences and the people you encounter can enrich your life by prompting you to develop a different outlook, new approaches to solving problems, and new ways of living in the world. Coping with these differences can also be stressful and challenging at times. You can minimize the stress and get the maximum benefit from your experience by being prepared. No single handbook could be an exhaustive introduction to living in France, and we encourage you to seek out other resources, including former students.

This is also a good moment to consider your goals for study abroad, and strategies for meeting them. Think of your semester or year abroad as part of a continuum with your overall academic program, and consider these questions:

- How does your semester or year in France relate to your major/minor/other academic interests and goals?
- What do you most want to achieve? Increased proficiency in French? A new perspective on yourself and your place in the world? An in-depth view of your major or an issue of interest to you? Enhanced skills for future employment?
- How can you best accomplish these goals? (For example, if language proficiency is high on your list, consider joining a language exchange, or pledging to find opportunities to speak French with residents for an hour every day.)
- How can you best bring these experiences back to your home institution? (For example, by developing an independent study or thesis that draws on your work in France, or articulating how the skills and perspectives you will enhance while abroad—such as adaptability, initiative, the ability to work with others from different cultural backgrounds, a more nuanced view of the world—are valuable to an employer even if the work you pursue does not relate directly to France.)

Once you identify your goals and priorities, you will be better able to plan how to structure your experience abroad to help you meet them.

AMY SAYS

I highly recommend the following books before you leave for France:

- [Study Abroad 101](#) – Wendy Williamson
- [Culture Shock: France](#) – Sally Adamson Taylor
- [French or Foe](#) – Polly Platt
- [Cultural Misunderstandings](#) – Raymonde Carroll

CHECKLIST FOR PREDEPARTURE PLANNING		
	Fall/Year Students	Spring Students
Obtain/renew passport as needed	April	July/August
Begin visa application process by registering on-line with Campus France and scheduling your visa appointment (see additional instructions from the McCulloch Center)	April/May	August/September
Send course “wish list” to Amy Loth	June	October
Consult with bank about the best way to access funds while abroad. Purchase about \$100 worth of euros to have with you upon arrival.	July	October
Read at least one or two books from reading list on French culture	July	October
Send scan of student visa to Amy Loth as soon as you receive it	July/August	November/December
Have medical, dental, and eye exams; obtain copy of vaccination record to bring with you	July/August	November/December
Plan how and what you will pack. Remember essential items for your carry-on luggage (passport with French visa; ATM card, credit card, euros; student ID; vital medicines)	August	December
Depart for Montpellier!	Late August/early September	Early January

Packing

Rule of thumb: Pack everything you think you need, then take out half!

Luggage:

Most airlines allow you to check **one** piece of luggage. The average maximum size (length x width x height) per piece of luggage is 62 inches. The maximum weight per piece of luggage is normally 50 pounds. This is to be confirmed when tickets are issued by the airline. You can also bring one little carry-on piece of luggage which can either be held in the overhead storage compartment on the plane or stowed under your seat (e.g. a small backpack). You may store only a coat over your seat. **DO NOT** burden yourself with more items (or items that are too heavy) than you can easily carry alone.

You and you alone will be responsible for carrying your luggage, and if you are overburdened, you will be miserable. Remember that you will have to carry your luggage around airports and train stations, up and down flights of stairs, on and off subways, etc. European trains do not wait long at stops and you must be able to get your luggage off the train in a hurry (while everyone else is trying to do the same).

Lightweight backpacks and suitcases with extendable handles and wheels that roll well (i.e. they don't tip over going around corners or on curbs – try them out in the store) are the best solutions for making your travel more comfortable.

As you plan and pack, keep these things in mind:

- **Organize your luggage so that you have everything you need for the first few days in one bag that will be easy to access during your orientation stay in Montpellier.** Valuables, medication or other items which you need each day should be packed in your carry-on bag. Your passport and traveler's checks or credit cards should be in your carry-on bag or on your person. Never ever leave this bag unattended in any crowded public place. This includes airports in the U.S. and in France, on the bus, or on the street during your arrival and departure.
- Be sure that all your luggage can be securely locked and that your name and permanent address are on the luggage tag and inside the bag. ***Be sure you pack any valuable items, money or items you need each day (medication, contact lens care items, etc.) in your carry-on luggage.***
- The airline terminals are large and traveling is always an adventure. Nobody will be available to carry your bags for you but you. Before you leave home, practice carrying your bags up and

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I personally recommend that you use one manageable (not too large) wheeled suitcase or one combo-wheeled suitcase as your checked luggage item, plus a small shoulder bag or backpack with a zipper as your carry-on. The smaller bag will be useful for short trips you make later.

Note: Some students may be housed on the high floors, and sometimes elevators are out of order. Previous students really regretted having brought too much unnecessary luggage with them. And they asked me to tell you that they didn't even wear some of the clothes they brought with them because they bought clothes in France!

Please travel lightly!

down flights of stairs, around your back yard or up and down your street to be sure you can manage them on your own if luggage carts aren't available.

Please remember, throughout your stay in France; never leave your luggage unattended while traveling. When traveling, if you cannot lock up your belongings, you must keep your passport, money, and documents inside your clothing or underneath you while you are asleep, or in plain view, or take turns watching them with a friend.

For fall semester and year program students, some items for winter wear can be shipped after you arrive in Montpellier. They will arrive well before cold weather sets in.

Clothing Tips:

Young French students dress very similarly to students from the US. The main difference according to previous students is that their French counterparts tend to be a bit dressier and less relaxed when out and about in town. A shoulder bag or backpack without obvious American logos will be useful for around town and on campus. Of course, do bring what you like and what you are comfortable in! Dark and/or neutral colors are most popular.

You generally will dress casually in Montpellier and will probably want only one or two dressy outfits. Jeans are very popular; shorts are acceptable, but shouldn't be too short, and shouldn't be worn in church or other more formal settings. Sneakers (nice tennis ones, not gym shoes) are acceptable in town, and you could also bring comfortable black or brown walking shoes. Montpellier is very warm from May to October but from November to April the weather is changeable. Some days in the winter can be freezing cold and often windy, so you will want a warm coat and gloves/mittens.

As for shoes, make sure they have **good traction** (rubber soles, for example). There are lots of hills in Montpellier and the streets are slippery after it rains.

An example of an easy-to-pack wardrobe:

- ✓ 3 or 4 pairs of pants (including jeans)
- ✓ 5-6 long sleeve shirts
- ✓ 5-6 short sleeve shirts
- ✓ 1 dress casual ensemble
- ✓ 2-3 shorts and/or skirts
- ✓ 2 lightweight sweaters, 2 very warm sweaters (*don't forget it gets cold in winter!*)
- ✓ 2 pairs comfortable walking shoes with good traction (*rainy streets are slippery*)
- ✓ 1 pair sandals (summer shoes) or nice sneakers to wear in town with good traction

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I recommend that you bring wash and wear clothing – don't bring clothes that need to be ironed. Unless you bring a travel iron (which is a good idea according to students), one will not be available to you.

- ✓ Gym sneakers if you want to play sports
- ✓ Flip-flops for beach
- ✓ Underwear, socks, etc.
- ✓ 1 warm, winter coat (and/or a warm, waterproof windbreaker), with gloves, and scarf (essential for cold and windy days)
- ✓ 1 light jacket
- ✓ 1 pair slippers
- ✓ 2 pairs pajamas
- ✓ 1 swimsuit

This list is not exhaustive, and is only a guideline, so think carefully about what you will need during your stay in France.

Work around a basic scheme or coordinated colors for mixing, matching and layering for colder weather. Most students abroad find that they rely on a few staple items, including some which they buy after arriving in France, and wear them frequently. Enjoy the simplicity! Europeans do not consider it essential to wear something different each day.

There are blankets, comforters, sheets and towels in your homes. Amy will direct you to stores in Montpellier where you can buy inexpensive linens if you wish to purchase your own.

Avoid packing aerosol containers which may explode, and liquids in glass containers which may break. Put all liquids in plastic bags in case of breakage.

Be sure to include a tag with full identification and addresses inside each piece of luggage as well as outside.

Be forewarned that you will do laundry less frequently than you do at MHC – laundry machines cost more in France and dryers are expensive, too. Get mileage out of your clothes by wearing hand-washable T-shirts under shirts and sweaters and hang-dry clothes. A small load of laundry costs about €3 and a dryer cycle is about the same.

Medicine:

If you know you will require medication while traveling abroad, obtain a full supply before you leave. Customs regulations do not permit shipping of medication. You should carry up-to-date prescriptions and/or a statement from your doctor, especially if you will be carrying insulin, a syringe or any narcotic drug. Keep all vital medicines in your carry-on to insure a constant supply if your luggage is lost or delayed. Use original prescription containers, marked with contents and use, for your own protection. Penalties for transporting illegal substances are severe.

It is strongly recommended that students arrange for a health examination through their personal physician before coming to Montpellier. Please update your immunizations and bring a record of them with you.

Electrical Equipment:

In order to operate US appliances abroad, you will need an adapter and/or converter (available in hardware stores). An adapter is necessary to fit US plugs into the 3- pin round sockets of Western Europe. The voltage in most of Europe is 220 volts (AC) which will blow out most North American appliances (110 volts AC). Check your appliances. Hardware and travel stores carry adapter plugs.

It is generally better to purchase small appliances such as a hairdryer, hair straightener, curling iron or clothes iron on site and **not** bring them from home so that you do not need a converter/adaptor. With these items, even with a converter, the current transition causes them to spark and burn out.

NEVER PLUG A CONVERTOR INTO A POWER STRIP OR OTHER EXTENSION. A converter must always be plugged directly into a wall socket or you run the risk of starting a fire.

Computers:

Previous students highly recommend that you bring a laptop. However, they warn you not to let yourself become isolated because you spend too much time on the internet using Skype to chat with friends from home, etc., so they recommend that you limit the time you spend on-line.

It is important to remember that you will also spend more time using the English/American internet and that sometimes keeps students in their rooms instead of getting out and making French friends. The internet can be a trap (just think of how much time you spend using it at school or at home) and during your stay in France, you must make the time and effort to meet people and speak in French. Make sure that you limit your time on the computer.

Identification and Security:

Put identification labels inside each of your bags and make a list of your credit card numbers. Make a photocopy of the inside of your passport so you have a record of the number and the date and place of issue. You will need to know this information if your passport is lost or stolen and it's much easier to get a replacement passport if you have easy access to a photocopy. Leave a copy with your family or a friend at home who can have it sent to you in an emergency, and keep a copy in your apartment or room in Montpellier.

Other Essentials to Pack:

You will need numerous passport photos after you get to Montpellier, which you can purchase inexpensively at photo machines in Montpellier. All imaginable toiletries, foods, gadgets and conveniences are available in France – the European brands will be less expensive, so experiment!

You can save money on food if you bring a few light tools for food preparation while traveling: an insulated lunch bag, a bottle opener, spoon and lightweight cup for light lunches are some good ideas. When you move into your homes in Montpellier, you will find that the kitchens in the apartments will have basic equipment for meal preparation.

Other useful items: flashlight, sunglasses, and a small but sturdy umbrella.

Please do not take expensive jewelry items, valuable sports equipment or other items which would mark you as a likely target for thieves. Many reported thefts occur when students leave cameras, computers or other valuables in hotel rooms when they are sight-seeing on vacations.

Make every effort to lock your room and your baggage, and be wary of pickpockets whenever you are out and about. Do not pack computers or money in your checked luggage. Don't bring US- made notebooks and paper to France. You will need to purchase notebooks and paper of French style and dimensions for your work.

AMY SAYS

I strongly suggest you bring a supply of music from home and a means to listen to it (laptop, smart phone app etc.). It will do wonders for your morale during early bouts of homesickness and culture shock.

Weather

Located right on the coast of the Mediterranean, Montpellier has one of the sunniest and most agreeable climates in France. There are more than 300 days of sunshine per year.

Spring is very pleasant with lots of sunshine and flowers blooming everywhere. People often have lunch outside on the many terraces of the city or on the nearby beaches. Official "beach weather" begins in early May for sunbathing and early June for swimming.

Summer is very warm, often downright hot during the day, but dry. There is always a soft evening breeze that keeps the heat from being overwhelming. There are many outdoor festivals and at night the numerous terrace cafés are always full. No need for sweaters or jackets in the evening. The sea is very warm and just about everyone in Montpellier visits the nearby beaches (15-20 minutes by car, 30-40 minutes by bus) on a regular basis.

Autumn is a continuation of summer that lasts until October. The sea stays warm and it's possible to swim until mid-October. Evenings are still very mild and it's still possible to have dinner at one of the many restaurants with an outdoor terrace. This is also the time of the wine harvests in the region which go along with the festivals in the villages around Montpellier.

The winters in Montpellier are mild compared to New England. However, it can be **very windy** and the temperature can dip into the low 30's for a couple of weeks. The weather will feel downright frigid, and you should pack WINTER GEAR. We even get an occasional dusting of snow. Since we are near the water, the winter can be damp – combined with the wind and the fact that you spend much more time outdoors than you typically do in the winter, you will feel cold if you don't have a **warm winter coat and warm sweaters**.

Also, you will get spoiled and accustomed to mild temperatures through the late fall. When the serious cold weather hits in Montpellier, don't be caught off guard.

This being said, on some sunny days in winter (December, January, February), you can have still have your lunch outside on one of the terraces or just enjoy a coffee on Place de la Comédie. The colder days go along with a deep blue sky and a fantastic light. If you like skiing – the Cévennes mountains and Pyrénées are close by and have ski resorts.



Temperatures			
Month	Average	Minimum	Maximum
November – December – January	8°C or 46.4F	2°C or 35.6F	14°C or 57.2F
February – March – April	14°C or 57.2F	9°C or 48.2F	18°C or 64.4F
May – June	17°C or 62.6F	14°C or 57.2F	25°C or 77.0F
July – August	26°C or 78.8F	20°C or 68.0F	33°C or 91.4F
September	24°C or 75.2F	18°C or 64.4F	27°C or 80.6F
October	18°C or 64.4F	13°C or 55.4	22°C or 71.6F

Traveling to Montpellier

For the group flight, plane tickets will be round-trip tickets from New York to Montpellier. The departure date typically will be in early September for fall/year students, mid-January for spring students. You will receive the exact dates by e-mail once the dates have been confirmed. The tickets will be valid for your return to the US at the end of the program in mid-to-late December (for the fall semester students) and mid-May (for the spring semester and year students). Exact dates will be determined and announced as soon as possible.

The tickets will be e-tickets, meaning that you simply present your passport and the reservation code of your ticket, which you will receive once the tickets have been purchased.

The exact date of the return portion will be determined by Amy Loth in coordination with the airline and based on the end of the academic program at the university in Montpellier. Therefore, if you participate in the year or spring semester program and plan to spend the summer in Europe, it would be wise not to opt for the group travel option.

If you do not opt for the group flight, please note that you will need to purchase a round-trip ticket in order to enter France legally. **Please do not book your flights until the group flight is confirmed.** Amy Loth will send an e-mail announcing the confirmation of the official arrival date and time in Montpellier, at which time you can make your travel arrangements.

Students who travel independently must arrive in Montpellier the same day as the group flight. If you arrive prior to the designated arrival day, you are responsible (financially and logistically) for your lodging and/or transportation to the hotel in Montpellier for the orientation program.

You are responsible for coordinating and financing your own transportation to and from the NYC airport, as well as for the return to the Montpellier airport at the end of the program.

You are responsible for confirming baggage restrictions directly with the airline.

Tickets are not refundable unless otherwise specified. You may modify the dates of travel for a change fee plus any increase in the fare resulting from the change of dates. Check with the airline for details.

Please note that students must vacate their program housing by the end of the program (mid- to late-December for fall semester students, mid-May for spring semester and year students, exact dates to be announced).

Whether you travel with the group or on your own, check with your airline to confirm:

- baggage restrictions (how many pieces you are allowed, and their maximum size and weight)
- what you can or cannot put into checked or carry-on luggage
- how early you need to arrive at the departure airport
- what to expect for security screening.

Generally, you must arrive a minimum of two hours in advance for international flights. You will need to allow time for security check-in and connections, if you are flying in to the US point of departure

from elsewhere.

Security: Allow plenty of time to go through the security check-in and for arrival at the departure gate. Be careful about putting valuable items such as cameras or portable computers on the security conveyor belt if there is a crowd. Do not place valuable items on the belt unless you are sure that you are the next person in line to go through the metal detector. When in doubt, you should request assistance from an attendant.

Medicine: Keep all necessary medicine in your carry-on bags.

Checking Baggage: Pack everything you will need for the Montpellier orientation program in one bag. This way you don't have to be digging around for things during orientation before you move into your housing for the year or semester.

For information about preparing your luggage, please see section "Packing."

Arriving in Montpellier

Students participating in the group flight will be met at the Montpellier airport baggage area (look for the "Mount Holyoke College" sign). Your shuttle transportation to Résidence l'Observatoire will be arranged in advance.

If you plan to arrive at the Montpellier airport by your own means (not with the group flight), you must meet the MHC group at their arrival terminal to take advantage of the reserved van service. Please plan to arrive at least one hour prior to the MHC group flight arrival time. Please know that the van service cannot wait for you if your flight to Montpellier is delayed or changed.

If you miss the organized MHC van service, take a taxi on your own directly to the **Résidence l'Observatoire**. It will cost about 40 euros.

Résidence l'Observatoire
1 rue Henri Guinier
34000 Montpellier
Tél: 04 67 58 99 88

Dinner will be provided on the arrival day.

Tips for Your First Days in Montpellier

- Travel in small groups (at least 2), and please do not go off on your own until you know your way around – even during the day.
- The tramway stops running at midnight
- If you are speaking in English with your friends, speak very softly in order to avoid standing out as American tourists. There's nothing wrong with being American – it's just that if you stand out, you will be a likely pickpocket target or might simply just be bothered in the street. Some people have just seen too many American TV series and think all Americans are very wealthy.
- Be very careful with your shoulder bags or backpacks. Never let them out of your sight or your grasp. There is far less violent crime in French cities than in the USA but many more pickpockets!
- Do not flash money, credit cards, or passports – be very discreet.

- If you go to a bar or club at night, be careful and quiet when returning to the hotel late at night (after 10 p.m.). The outside door to the hotel will be locked and you will need to enter through the door on the left side of the hotel with the code you will receive.
- If you return to the hotel later than 8:00 pm, please be very quiet. Do not speak or laugh loudly...whisper. The walls are thin and the other people (children, people who need to wake up very early to catch a flight) in the hotel could be trying to sleep.

Orientation

Orientation will take place over a span of about five days after your arrival. You will receive more specific details upon your arrival, but here is a brief outline of what to expect (subject to change). Students will arrive directly at the Résidence l'Observatoire, with breakfast, lunch, and dinner provided on each of the first two days. Orientation sessions will continue for an additional two days prior to the beginning of classes at UPV.

Topics covered during orientation will include:

- Visit Montpellier, overview of housing issues
- Overview of health & safety issues
- Information meeting at Université Paul Valéry
- Academic advising meeting and course selection

Validation of your Visa and Enrollment in STEP

A) How to Validate your VLS-TS long stay student visa

As a holder of a long stay student visa (VLS-TS) you **must** validate your visa within three months of your arrival in France.

In order to complete the online validation process, you will need to have with you:

- Your passport with the visa and entry stamp in it (you will need information from your visa and the date that you entered France which is indicated on the stamp)
- Your address in France
- A credit or debit card

Once you have gathered all of the above, please log on to : <https://administration-etrangers-en-france.interieur.gouv.fr/particuliers/#/> and click on « Je valide mon visa » or « Validate your VLS-TS Long Stay visa ».

You will note that you can complete the process in French or English - simply choose your language in the upper right hand corner of the page.

The website will then guide you through the process :

1. First you will be asked to enter your visa number
2. Then, you will be asked to enter information on your visa (starting and ending validity dates, issue date, reason for stay (étudiant/student) and corresponding reference (normally it will be R311-3.6°).

3. Confirm your first and last names. Enter additional personal information including marital status, phone number, email address.
4. You will then need to provide your date of entry into France (date that is stamped in your passport) and your address in France.
5. After confirming all of the information that has been entered, you must pay the 50€ tax.

You will then be able to download the PDF document confirming that you have validated your visa on this confirmation page. You will also receive two emails :

1. First, you will receive an email with your login information to the French government site. It is important to keep these login details.
2. Second, you will receive an email confirming that you have validated your visa with the confirmation document attached.

You may also find information about validating your visa on the Campus France website :

(<https://www.campusfrance.org/en/how-to-validate-your-long-stay-visa-visa-long-sejour-upon-your-arrival-in-france>) . Again, it is very important that you validate your visa within **3 months of arriving in France**.

B) How to Register for STEP

If you are a US citizen, we also ask that you register for **STEP**. STEP is the *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program* which is a service of the bureau of consular affairs, a bureau of the US State Department.

By enrolling in STEP, you will be registered with the nearest Consulate which will allow the US Embassy to reach out to you in case of an emergency and it will allow you to receive health and safety announcements from the US Embassy in France.

If you travel outside of France, you can also register your trip in order to receive announcements particular to the county in which you are travelling.

To enroll in STEP please go to : <https://step.state.gov/>

Once on the site, you can create an account (which will ask for a bit more personal information but will also allow you to easily enter any trips you may be taking) or simply click on « Enroll a trip and get alerts ».

If you are not a US citizen, please check to see if your country has a similar program, most do.

Your status while on a student visa:

While in France, you are subject to French law. Breaking these laws could result in being expelled from the country or arrest or punishment in accordance with French laws. Furthermore, Mount Holyoke College expects program participants to cooperate fully with the On-Site Director and to observe program regulations. Breaking of French laws, program or university regulations, will result in your dismissal from the program.

HOUSING IN MONTPELLIER

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will be housed in individual studio apartments at the downtown student dormitory Residence l'Observatoire. The On-Site Director negotiates with l'Observatoire and handles all payments, covering rent, electricity, water, renter's insurance, internet access, and municipal taxes (for trash removal and other city services). All studios at l'Observatoire are equipped with wifi internet. The wifi is quite slow in the evenings, so students recommend bringing an Ethernet cord or plug for your computer.

The downtown student dormitory **Résidence l'Observatoire** is conveniently located just two minutes from the Place de la Comédie in the historic center of Montpellier. Each single studio is furnished with essentials and is entirely independent with a kitchenette and bathroom with a sink, shower and toilet. Please visit this link for more information about l'Observatoire: <http://www.residences-etudiants.com/en/l-observatoire/index.asp>.

Apartment Rules:

- Don't hang anything heavy (i.e. poster frames) on the walls or make big, gaping holes with nails. Don't use scotch tape on the walls because it will rip off paint or wallpaper when you attempt to remove it. Any damage done to the walls, floors, ceiling, etc. will be paid for by you at the end of the year or semester. If you want to hang up a poster, use thumbtacks and don't make a million holes.
- When you use the oven, burners, TV, lights, heat, etc. – turn them off when you leave. Never leave on anything electric while you're out. Not only is it expensive, but it's dangerous – electrical fires can happen. Also, don't leave any running water when you're not home. Never leave a candle unattended.
- The keys are entirely your responsibility. If you lose them, you will need to make copies at your expense. Never put your names or addresses on them.
- Air out bathrooms after each shower or bath. Humidity will cause paint to peel and mildew to build up.
- **Always lock your door.** Make sure to close completely the outside door of the building when you enter or leave.
- Please be considerate of your roommates, housemates, and/or neighbors. In general, be aware of loud talking late at night with windows open, loud music/TV, and any loud noise from your apartment or in the stairwell after 9:00pm. At any time of the day, when you walk up the stairs to your apartment, don't yell! Speak softly if you need to say something to your friend or roommate.
- **Do not put a lot of toilet paper in the toilet. Do not put ANY Kleenex, paper towels or feminine hygiene products**

AMY SAYS

ALWAYS LOCK YOUR DOOR!
If you leave it open for a "second" to talk to someone down the hall or to get the mail, you are bound to have a very unpleasant surprise—like someone stealing things from your apartment. Please, please, please, always lock your door. And use all the locks if there is more than one available. They are there for a reason!

in the toilets and make sure your visitors know this rule. The plumbing in old homes isn't always sturdy and you'll block up the toilet. If your On-Site Director must call a plumber and he discovers that the toilet is blocked up with tampons or pads, she'll give **you** the bill. This is the tenant's responsibility, not the owner's.

- Never plug a converter into a power strip or other extension as you could start a fire. Always plug a converter directly into a wall socket.

Specific Apartment Rules:

- Please tell the staff of the Observatoire right away of any problems with the apartment (leaks, etc.).
- Hair and soap buildup will cause your shower and sink drains to clog if you are not careful. To unclog them, use the Draino-type product, "Déstop." Cleaning showers and sinks regularly will help avoid this problem, as will purchasing inexpensive drain filters to catch hair before it goes down the drain.
- When you go to sleep at night, lock your door fully. When you leave the apartment, close all windows and shutters. This is for 2 reasons: first, to avoid theft and second, in case of a sudden rain storm.
- Guests: they are welcome in your new homes. However, make sure they know all these rules. You are responsible for the behavior of your guests – if they break something or cause damage to the apartment, you are ultimately responsible. Be considerate of your roommate(s) and your neighbors.
- Please, no loud parties in your apartments. If you want to "fêter," please go out to a restaurant, café or disco. No more than 3 guests at a time in your apartment.
- Use bleach regularly (once a week) for the toilet bowl (a toilet brush is there for your use...) and an anti-calcium deposit product every couple of weeks ("Antikal" or "Viakal").
- Remember, any broken appliances, furniture, dishes, etc. must be replaced by you before you leave at the end of the year or semester. You should inspect the apartment carefully before moving in and during your first days there, and discuss any concerns with the On-Site Director at the outset to resolve problems. Your On-Site Director will do a full check with you before you leave to make sure everything is clean and in order.
- Trash must be deposited in a bin on the street. Don't leave bags of trash in front of the building.
- To **recycle** in downtown Montpellier, please check this web site for information:
<http://www.montpellier3m.fr/vivre-propre/tri-des-dechets>.

Airbnb/Couchsurfing/Subletting Policy:

Apartments are for the use of MHC in Montpellier, France Program students only. Mount Holyoke contracts for the apartments and for insurance with the understanding that the apartments will be used only by program participants and their occasional guests. The apartments are rented in Mount Holyoke's name, and the College may be held liable for damages of any kind for which students are responsible.

Program participants may have guests on a limited basis. The term “guests” refers to friends or family members of a student participating in the program. A “limited basis” is considered to be a maximum stay of one week per guest. There shall be no more than three different guests per semester per student. All students living in the apartment should discuss and come to agreement on any overnight guests.

Students are not permitted to have anyone else stay in the apartments. This includes, but is not limited to, any contacts made from Airbnb and any other individuals not personally known to the student. Any violation of this policy is contrary to our lease, jeopardizes the good relationships we have built with landlords and neighbors, and compromises the safety and security of program participants and other residents. Renting/subletting/lending/exchanging housing coordinated by the MHC Program in Montpellier is strictly forbidden and grounds for immediate removal from MHC-organized housing for the duration of the program, with the student responsible for all associated costs.

Leaving MHC Housing at End of Program:

All studio apartments will be very carefully inspected after your departure. If additional cleaning and repairs are required, students will be billed for the expense.

ACADEMIC MATTERS



Université Paul Valéry

Université Paul Valéry Calendar 2022-23:

FALL SEMESTER

Fall & year students arrive in Montpellier: September 5

Beginning of classes: September 12

Break: October 29 – November 6 (inclusive)

End of classes: December 16

Exams: Saturday December 3, Saturday December 10, and Saturday December 17

Fall students leave Montpellier: December 18

SPRING SEMESTER

Spring students arrive in Montpellier: January 16

Beginning of classes: January 23

Break: February 25 – March 5 (inclusive)

Break: April 22 – May 1 (inclusive)

Exams: May 9 – 17 (inclusive)

Students leave Montpellier: May 18

Useful Course Vocabulary in French:

CM = Cours Magistral (large amphitheatre course)

TD = Travaux Dirigés (small group class)

TP = Travaux Pratiques (lab class)

Fascicule = course catalogue

UFR – Unité de Formation de Recherche (grouping of academic departments)

Course Selection and Registration:

You should consult with your major advisor at your home institution about the courses you want to take in Montpellier, and how they will count toward requirements. Amy will ask you to submit a “wish list” of courses in advance of your arrival. Be aware that some courses offered this year may not be offered next year, so have a back-up plan, and be prepared to be flexible; this will greatly facilitate your course selection process.

Registration for classes is a time-consuming process. The university is divided into 6 “U.F.R.s,” or groupings of academic departments. Each academic department within a particular U.F.R. prepares its own course catalogue (“fascicule”), and each catalogue is produced at a different time; there is not one big catalogue for the entire university. The fascicules are normally on-line in early-mid September, right before classes start; keep checking the academic departments on-line for the information you need.

Sometimes, departments get behind or have problems obtaining course hours and descriptions from their professors – in this case, the course information is posted on the **bulletin board** outside of the department office.

Prior to your arrival and during orientation, you will work with Amy to map out your course schedule. You can then communicate with your professors at home to see about receiving credit towards your major. Amy will be available to advise you and answer any questions you may have.

You are required to take 5 courses per semester, which is generally the normal full-time courseload. You may take a maximum of 2 of the special classes for students on US programs (“Cours RI,” described below). The other 3 classes must be “integrated” classes (regular classes at UPV with French students). The translation course offered by the English department at UPV does not count as a special “Cours RI,” but as an integrated class.

Choose most courses in disciplines of interest to you at the **Licence** level. The Licence diploma is given after the first three years of study at the university (L1, L2 & L3). The next level (fourth and fifth years, so M1 & M2) is the **Master**, and the top level (sixth & seventh years) is the **Doctorat**.

Please note that the 3rd year of Licence is not exactly the equivalent of the American junior year. With the difficult baccalauréat exam French students take at the end of the high school years, they enter the university with the equivalent of an added year of university experience. Plus, French students often redo a year of university if they don’t pass all their exams. Students preparing the Licence at Université Paul Valéry may be older than you and may have more experience with the material being studied.

Program students are “étudiantes pluridisciplinaires,” meaning that you are taking courses at UPV “à la

carte.” You can choose courses in any Licence cycle of study. Considering that the courses you will take will be in French with French students, you are strongly encouraged to take L1 courses if you wish to study French literature. However, if you wish to take higher Licence or even Master courses in other disciplines in which you are advanced (IR, Economics, foreign languages, etc.), you may certainly discuss this option with Amy Loth.

In certain departments at UPV (A.E.S., for example – like IR, Politics and Economics), taking a 3rd year course isn’t necessarily harder than taking 1st or 2nd year course. In fact, it is sometimes recommended. The class size is often smaller and more personal than the large amphitheater classes of the 1st cycle of study (1st & 2nd years). See Amy if you have questions.

Some classes are ½ CM and ½ TD; French Literature, History and Cinema classes, for example, are sometimes like this. If you take a class that is ½ CM and ½ TD, you are responsible for BOTH PARTS of the class. In other words, even if you don’t like the CM part, you must go to class; you can’t just take the TD.

Some classes are called classes with “Options.” You must check times and room numbers for the correct “Option” of your class. Imagine a big French literature class divided into sections. A section is called an “Option” here. Additionally, you will need to fill out a “fiche de vœux” (a wish list) and put down several “Options” in order of preference. You may need to select 2 or 3 so that Amy will know what to do if she can’t enroll you in your first choice. Please note that you can’t mix & match courses from different options.

If you are an English major or minor, you may take one 3rd-year Licence level course in English literature. All other majors and semester students are required to take all courses in French.

Don’t get in over your head by taking classes that are too difficult. Having all your classes in French all day long will be a big challenge in itself!

For a UPV course to equal 4 MHC credits (a normal class at MHC), it should meet for about 3 hours per week. For example, a French literature course in the Lettres Modernes department has 2 parts: a “CM” (cours magistral = big amphi class) and a “TD” (travaux dirigés = smaller group meeting). Each part meets for 1.5 hours per week. You take both parts every week and that equals 3 course hours, or 4 MHC credits. There are exceptions to this rule: the “Cours RI” (special courses offered by UPV, see below) and some high-level Econ and IR courses. Ask Amy if you aren’t sure about a particular class.

Navigating the Université Paul Valéry Web Site:

All departments at UPV have set up detailed web sites within the UPV site with course catalogues online. However, navigating them is complicated because departments have organized information in different ways. This general information should help you find course information for most departments; if you have difficulty finding what you need, contact Amy.

- Start with the home page: <http://www.univ-montp3.fr/>.
- From there, click on “Les UFR” which is located on the left side of the home page. This brings you to the list of the “UFR” (Unités de Formation de Recherche = groups of academic departments). Voilà!
- If you are interested in French literature, you need to look at UFR 1. The department is called

"Lettres Modernes." So when you are at the UFR 1 home page, look at the top left under "Les départements" to find Lettres Modernes. From there, click on the link on the lower left of the page Licence Lettres Modernes. (Why "Licence"? The "Licence" is the diploma like the American Bachelor of Arts but awarded at the end of 3 years instead of 4. It is still considered to be the equivalent of the American BA.)

- Back to Licence Lettres Modernes. Click on the tab "Télécharger" (that means to download) and then you will have the option of downloading the "Fascicule Lettres Modernes." A "fascicule" is a departmental course catalogue, so go ahead and download it.
- Questions? Please watch this tutorial from Amy to help you navigate the UPV website: <https://youtu.be/UsMmFhYl11s>.

Special Courses Offered by UPV Service des Relations Internationales:

Each semester several special courses organized by the Service des Relations Internationales are offered to students on American programs at UPV. You may take a maximum of two of these courses per semester unless a special arrangement has been made with the MHC French department and approved by the Director of Study Abroad at MHC. Cours RI will be the ones that operate the most like American college courses, meaning that you will have daily or weekly assignments to complete, and class participation will be expected of you. You will receive the list of courses by e-mail as soon as it becomes available. Courses in French language and phonetics typically are offered each semester:

- Français Langue Etrangère : Grammaire et Methodologie (FLE311, 312, 313)
- Phonétique et pratique de l'oral (PHO311, 312)
- Pratique de l'écrit (ECR311, 312)

Generally, there will be three or four additional courses; recent offerings have included courses like these:

- Théorie et critique littéraire : pourquoi faire ? (LIT310)
- Civilisation de la France contemporaine (CIV310)
- Cinéma Masculin-Féminin : La France au miroir du cinéma (CIN310)
- La littérature fantastique en France au XIXème et XXème siècles (LIT320)
- Histoire de l'Art : du moderne au contemporain (ART320)
- Civilisation du Sud (CIVSUD320)
- Civilisation de la France contemporaine (CIV320)
- Les échanges euro-méditerranéens (HIS320)

Translation Course:

There is an English-French translation course offered by the UPV English department each semester. It is a very high-level course, and a B1-level of French is the requirement to be approved for this class. You will take a French placement test prior to your arrival in Montpellier and this test will determine your level of French.

Here is an explanation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages.

Enrollment Requirements:

You are required to enroll in the normal full load each semester (ordinarily 5 courses), including at least one semester of the French language maintenance class FLE301. Both Mount Holyoke and the terms of your student visa require you to be enrolled as a full-time student for the duration of the program. Successful completion of the normal full load will earn you a full semester (16) or year (32) of credit from Mount Holyoke; you will not receive more credits from MHC even if you take more courses in Montpellier.

Please note that for a UPV course to count as the equivalent of a 4-credit course at Mount Holyoke, it must meet for 3 hours per week during the entire semester (13 weeks). Therefore, the total course hour amount must equal 39 hours for the semester. Some UPV courses meet for 3 hours per week but only for half of the semester, so pay attention to the total course hour amount when selecting your courses at UPV.

The “Français Langue Etrangère” class is **strongly recommended** for all semester students and for the first semester for year program students.

“Phonétique Corrective” is also strongly recommended for all students. This is a requirement for MHC French majors and is not offered at MHC.

First Impressions of Université Paul Valéry:

The workings of Université Paul Valéry may seem a little disorganized, confusing and frustrating to you compared to the way things are done at your home institution, but please be patient. The system functions well here with the means available, but it is very different from the system to which you are accustomed.

Although high standards of academic performance prevail, the expectations are met in a different way. Expect a very different standard of organization, learn to be patient and do not panic. The way in which information about class meeting times, reading lists and the like will be presented is very different from what you are used to. Things are expected to get off the ground gradually over a period. This is quite unlike the American system where everything is expected to be organized from the very first day.

American students often misunderstand the initial signals they receive from professors and other students and mistakenly assume that their professors do not expect much from them, that there is no standard, and that the other students don't work very hard. Discuss the French system with your French acquaintances or new friends before departure or while in France. Be prepared for a system which, although more relaxed and superficially disorganized at the beginning, will in the long run expect a great deal from students.

As French classes are less structured, it is up to you to develop and practice good study habits. The success rate in the French system is relatively low overall and students are expected to be independent

AMY SAYS

Life at French universities is quite different from that in the United States. You will hear me say this time and again, “**Different** does not mean better or worse. It's just **different!**”

learners. **Study abroad students who succeed are those who do the required class work, study diligently on their own and take responsibility for their own learning.**

Teaching Styles:

French professors are not evaluated on their teaching as American ones are. Instead, they focus on their research. It is considered to be the student's responsibility to attend lectures and obtain the information needed to prepare for the exams. Many professors do not live in the city where they teach. If they are ill, or unable to get to town because of a train strike, they may not feel concerned about failing to appear for class. By contrast, the other students in your classes may often be quite helpful in sharing notes and other information.

The entire approach of the French educational system is to offer the student an opportunity to sharpen analytical skills and learn independently. Although the professors may not check to see if students attend class regularly, they assume a responsible student will do so, or that the student will take steps to obtain the necessary material in another way. If you are taking a T.D. or any other class with fewer than 40 students, you can be sure the French professor is aware of your attendance. These are reasons why Mount Holyoke expects you to attend class and to plan ahead in order to be ready for the exams at the end of each semester.

Attendance Requirements:

All students on the MHC in Montpellier program are expected to remain in Montpellier and attend classes while the university is in session. **Missing 3 classes during the semester constitutes grounds for a failing grade in France. If you miss an exam due to personal travel, you should expect to receive a zero for the exam.** Do not be misled by the way in which French university students approach their classes! Since their degree programs are based on completing certain exams, they may choose to prepare for their exams primarily by reading on their own. They may take courses or exams again if they are not successful the first time, which is not at all unusual.

Traveling during exam time is strictly prohibited. Do not attempt to negotiate exam dates or missed classes for the sake of personal travel or other activities. Under no circumstances will the On-Site Director proctor exams at an alternate time for students who wish to travel during exam periods.

Before Classes Start:

The department office bulletin boards are VERY important.

Once you have established which classes you will take, you must go to the bulletin board of the office of each U.F.R. in which you are taking classes to find out when and where classes will meet. Get in the habit of walking by the department office weekly. It is up to you to find information and to check for updates that will be posted there. No one will call you at home, send you an e-mail, or necessarily post on-line to tell you if a class is cancelled or an exam time has changed. You are responsible for obtaining information.

FLE and PHO (grammar and phonetics) courses often begin earlier than regular university courses. See the lists posted outside of the American Programs office (Bât. Administratif, Bureau 207) for room numbers.

During orientation, Amy will show you how to get to UPV from downtown Montpellier; you can get there by walking (25-30 minutes) or taking the tram (15-20 minutes).

Course Drops:

You may drop a course by the announced course drop date each semester in Montpellier without it appearing on your transcript. If you should drop a course past the announced drop date by which a drop is acceptable, you can stop going to class, but the course will still appear on the MHC in Montpellier Program transcript with a grade of F. Please note that the grade of F would only appear on the MHC in Montpellier Program transcript and not on the official MHC transcript or in your MHC GPA.

Studying at Other Campuses in Montpellier

Students may be able to take one (or sometimes two) course at other campuses in Montpellier; please contact Amy as early as possible if you are interested in doing this.

Université de Droit et Science Politique (“Sciences Po”):

To consult the courses offered, see the UM1 web site:

http://formations.umontpellier.fr/fr/formations/droit-economie-gestion-DEG/licence-lmd-XA/licence-science-politique-program-fr_rne_0341087x_pr_1237372519834.html

Institut Protestant de Théologie:

To consult the courses offered, go to the Institut website

(<http://www.iptheologie.fr/index.php?ou=mon>) and click on “Programme” at the top of the welcome page.

Université des Sciences et Mathématiques:

Students who are science or math majors and who have strong French language skills may be able to take one or two courses per semester at Université des Sciences et Mathématiques, located across the street from the main UPV campus.

To consult the courses offered:

- Go to the home page (<http://www.fdsweb.univ-montp2.fr/>)
- Under the “Candidatures/Formations” tab at the top of the page, click on “Offre de formation”

AMY SAYS

Don't get discouraged by the challenge of finding information – this is part of the adventure! Just look carefully in the windows, on the walls, all around your department (or “UFR” – these are groupings of departments with their own offices) to see if a notice has been put up. I myself went to one class three times at 9:00 a.m. (in the snow, uphill, both ways...) before I finally realized that a later starting date had been posted on the wall outside the UFR.

and then “Offre de formation Générale.”

- Click on the red bar in the middle of the page that begins with “Cliquez ici...” and at the next page under “Offre de formation de la Faculté des Sciences” click on the green plus sign next to “Licence.”
- You will see a list of departments. Click on the one that interests you and then on one of the sub-categories to see the years L1, L2 and L3 of that section. Depending on the section you may need to click two or three more times, but you will end up at the list of courses.

Challenges of Studying at Université des Sciences:

Previous students who have studied at the Université des Sciences say that the students are friendly and the campus, while very large, is easy to navigate. However, they say that there are challenges as a foreign student enrolled at both the Université Paul Valéry and at the Université des Sciences. If you are dedicated to your study of math or science and wish to continue during your year or semester in France, this is an excellent and unique opportunity for you to do so. However, you will have to work diligently and independently to succeed. Keep these things in mind:

- Class schedules are not coordinated with UPV and often conflict with classes there.
- There are more class hours per week than at UPV.
- Courses may be more challenging than at your home institution.
- The classes are more specialized than in the US, and French students often have a more in-depth background in math and science than US students.
- You need to be an independent learner, and prepared to do outside work to fill in gaps in your background.
- Textbooks are rare, so you must be able to take lots of detailed notes very quickly.
- Problem sets for lab classes are very abstract.
- The emphasis is on lecture with a final exam at the end of the semester, not regular homework.
- Professors sometimes change the schedule at a moment’s notice and you may have conflicts with your other classes.

Conservatoire de Danse:

Dance majors and minors may take one class in contemporary dance (the only option currently available), for credit, at the Conservatoire de Danse in Montpellier if they are in at least level 5 or 6 at MHC (or the equivalent elsewhere).

After a physical exam in Montpellier, you will audition for the class. Each class is about 1 ½ hours and they are held in different locations around the center of Montpellier: some are held in a converted chapel, others are held in a studio at the old opera house on the Place de la Comédie.

Academic Culture

Contact with French Professors:

The manner of teaching in France is very different from the US. The first week of class, your professor will give you a long list of recommended books. Don't panic! Go up to your professor at the end of class, introduce yourself (very important) and explain you're an international student here for the year or semester. Ask them to suggest 1 or 2 of the most important books on the reading list so you can begin working without feeling overwhelmed. You must, of course, purchase and read the books which are being used in class so you can follow along.

Your professors will know if you're not coming to class – they discreetly take attendance. (Most professors have a rule that students are not allowed to miss more than three classes during the semester.) If you stop going to your CMs, you'll be totally lost. Sit in the front row of the amphitheater and do your best to take notes. Better still, sit up front and make friends with a serious French student who takes good notes, and who may turn out to be of valuable assistance in helping you to prepare for your exams.

Regarding your classes, if you have any concerns or complaints, contact Amy first. Please do not address your professor directly via e-mail with a complaint before having consulted with Amy.

It has only recently become common for French university professors to correspond via e-mail (“courriel”) **on occasion** with their students. However, please do not send messages to your professor criticizing the class or asking them to: a) tell you what you need to study for an exam, b) tell you what you missed when you were absent, or c) to re-explain things you did not understand in class. E-mail communication between French professors and students is formal, so please write your messages very carefully and use the utmost respect in addressing your professors. You begin your message with “Cher Monsieur” or “Chère Madame.” Preface your question with “Je me permets de vous écrire afin de vous demander...” or something like that if you are about to ask a question. End your message with “Je vous remercie par avance” and then “Sincères Salutations” followed by a comma and then your name. Do not use exclamation points in your message – they make your message seem as if you are shouting and that will not come across well at all.

Most importantly, please only send an e-mail to a professor in the following situations: 1) to apologize for having missed a class, or 2) if the professor asked you to contact them via e-mail. If you miss a class, please do not ask the professor to fill you in on what you missed. It is expected that you will be independent and communicate with another student in the class to obtain this information.

Classroom Etiquette:

This is very important in France, as traditions are sacred and professors expect more conventional signs

AMY SAYS

It is always a good idea to try to speak with your professors outside of class. It is less common here since professors don't hang around after class, but they will sometimes have office hours. Check with the department office. If not, go up to the professor before or after class. I think it is a very good idea to present yourself to the professor as an international student and show that you are serious about the class.

of respect than in the USA. So, please:

- Don't eat or drink anything in class (Americans have a bad reputation for leaving candy wrappers on desks and empty soda cans everywhere)
- Never call a professor by their first name; say Monseieur or Madame, followed by their last name
- Don't wear a hat in class
- Don't slouch in your chair as an obvious sign of boredom – your professor will certainly make a remark
- Don't sigh loudly as another sign of boredom - even if you're not bored, your professor will think you are!
- Don't leave the room in the middle of class unless it's URGENT. Try to use the restrooms before or after class – walking around in the middle of a professor's lecture is considered very rude.
- Show up on time, even if the professor doesn't.
- Pay attention and don't chat with your neighbors, even if the French students are not behaving as they should. You want to be noticed for being different in a positive way!

Study Habits:

Most program participants are used to studying in their rooms at night after dinner. Your living arrangements may enable you to keep a typical American schedule for meals and study. However, you may want to adapt to the European habit of eating dinner late (7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) and relaxing afterwards. After dinner, families may watch TV for a while; students may go out with friends.

Studying takes place during daylight hours, perhaps at the university or municipal library or in some other spot such as a café. If you live with a French family, you may need to adjust your schedule to this routine and ask a lot of questions to find out where and when your French friends do their reading and writing. Previous students suggest you study at Café Latitude (rue Sainte Croix, just up the street from the MHC office) during the afternoon. Libraries close at 7:00pm.

French Grades and Exams:

The grading system in France is nothing like the USA. Working hard doesn't guarantee anyone an "A" or even a "B." Grades are always out of 20 points, and even 8 out of 20 is a passing grade. A grade of 10 out of 20 is respectable for an American student in a French university class. A grade of 12 or 13 out of 20 is impressive. Don't panic when you get your first 6 on an exam in an UPV class – it might happen. Just talk with the professor and try to get feedback so you can do better the next time. You won't be able to negotiate the grade you received, but at least you can show the professor you are serious about the work. This approach will be very helpful to you later during the year.

French universities often base final grades on one or two exams, including a final exam, and written assignments. Organize your study schedule and prepare thoroughly for these exams. Since students in France are not expected to turn in weekly assignments in many courses, program students adjusting to the system must become used to taking careful notes and considering ways in which they might

organize and analyze the course material in writing a final essay exam. Contact the On-Site Director if you have any questions about how you should be preparing. Observe the way in which French students organize their notes and papers. You will notice that they purchase notebooks lined in grids rather than with the American style lined paper. Ask the French students in your classes to show you what the expected style is: where to write your name, how to format the pages of your essay or examination, and how to organize your notes. **Neatness and the correct appearance of your written work are extremely important, both in your examination essays and the papers you are assigned.**

When you appear for the exam, you must present the identity card issued by Université Paul Valéry. Students arriving late will not be admitted to the exam rooms.

Like American university courses, French exams may evaluate your powers of analysis more than specific course content. Since all French students pass a rigorous entrance exam, the baccalauréat (“le bac”) before beginning their university study, it is assumed that they can master content readily.

Therefore, essay exams and oral exams may focus on one or two questions and ask you to analyze the material critically. Program students often fail to recognize the need to prepare carefully for this type of exam. Many French students fail in this system, but they may have the option of taking a course again if the first results are not satisfactory. However, the program student who plans to return home at the end of the year or semester will have only one opportunity to succeed in the course.

Final exam administration varies with department, course format, and, occasionally, professor preference. However, for the most part, exams are organized through a sort of lottery system in which all students “sitting” the exam will receive the prompt of either the CM or their respective TD. This means that, assuming you are in a standard course made up of a TD and a CM, each of which treats a different topic, your exam will test you on the content of only *one* of these two topics. You will not know in advance which topic your test will cover, so be sure to prepare for both. (It is also possible that you will be assigned some form of final in *both* your TD and CM, whether these assignments take the forms of standard tests or papers/projects to be submitted in the last week or so of class.)

If you run into any logistical headaches about exams, don’t hesitate to contact Amy; she can answer questions and will work with the Department *RI* (International Relations) to sort out conflicts in exam scheduling, etc.

Transcripts for MHC in Montpellier Program:

At the end of each semester, your grades will be reported to the Service des Relations Internationales at Université Paul Valéry. The university liaison submits documentation to the Mount Holyoke College On-Site Director, who records the grades for your courses. Therefore it is extremely important to provide the On-Site Director with a detailed list of the courses you plan to take for credit, with exact course codes and the correctly spelled name of the professor.

If you make any special arrangements to change from one T.D. to another, to take an exam at a different time (for a reason such as illness or emergency – personal travel or entertainment is not acceptable), or turn in a paper late, be sure to notify Amy Loth in writing about the name of the course, the section and the name of the professor, and the special arrangements that are being made. Report the grade you received for this special arrangement and keep all your papers and documents. This information will help the On-Site Director to verify the grades if questions arise.

French universities are much slower with reporting grades than in the USA. For students on the year program, you will receive one transcript with grades for both semesters upon completion of the program. Normally the transcripts are mailed to your summer addresses in early July as UPV does not release the grades until mid-June, after the second exam session.

Fall semester program students will receive their transcripts in March. Spring semester students will receive their transcripts at the same time as the year program students do, in July. Your French number grades (out of 20 points) will be converted to letter grades. If you need additional transcripts in the future (for graduate school applications, for example), you may request them from Amy.

As the program sponsor, Mount Holyoke will post credits and course titles to the MHC transcript. For Five College students, we will send a copy of the official MHC transcript, and a copy of the transcript from Montpellier (with grades) to your Registrar's Office. You may request additional copies of the official MHC transcript from the MHC Registrar's Office.

Bringing Credit Back:

At MHC, credits will transfer automatically as elective credits (for courses completed with grades equivalent to C- or better). It is up to each department to determine whether and how a given course can count toward the major, minor, or another requirement. Five College students should consult with their home campus about how their credits will transfer.

Save all your e-mail correspondence with faculty, especially messages that state that particular courses in Montpellier will be acceptable for particular credits at home.

Recommendations from Previous Program Students:

- "Go to class!! We can't stress this enough – especially in T.D.'s (smaller classes of 20 – 30 students). You may think your professor doesn't know who you are, but when exam time comes around and you meet individually with your professor for an oral exam, you will have the shock of your life when he/she calls you by your name without looking at an attendance book. Your grade will be much better if you attend your classes regularly, and your professor will be much more compassionate if you screw up your final exam."
- "Go over your notes after each class to make sure they make sense. This will help you at exam time."
- "There will not be a syllabus for each class, so be prepared to make your own as the semester gets started."
- "Your professor will give a suggested reading list, and it will be helpful – read the books. However, you can ask the professor which books on the list you should focus on if the list is particularly daunting."
- "Don't be discouraged at first if you have a hard time understanding every lecture. Your comprehension will get much better very quickly, so keep at it."
- "Your life at home (either home stay or in an apartment) will be very separate from your life at the university. This is a huge difference from life at MHC and it is a wonderful difference! Take

advantage of it.”

- “Make a few friends at the university (students who have had international experiences tend to be the easiest ones to meet) and ask them to help you find your way around.”



MONEY MATTERS

IMPORTANT: Please read this section carefully and share it with your parents or anyone else who is contributing to your expenses. Early planning will enable you to take full advantage of the best methods for exchanging money and transferring funds to France.

Regardless of the level of financial resources you may have available, you will need to have quick access to your funds and, at the same time, to have your money protected against loss. The following section describes the best procedures available now. International banking procedures continue to improve and other procedures may become available. For additional information, please check locally, and if you wish, contact larger banks and post offices near you.

French currency is called Euros. The rate of exchange as of April 2022 is:

1 US Dollar = 0.92 Euros

Current rates are available from many sources on line ([Oanda](#), [Yahoo](#), [Wall Street Journal](#) etc.).

The euro (sign: €; code: EUR) is the official currency of the eurozone, which consists of 19 of the 27 member states of the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

How Much Money to Take:

Plan to change approximately \$100.00 (US) into euros before you leave home so that you will have some cash with you when you arrive in Montpellier. This is advisable because there might not be easy access to a “bureau de change” or a bank when you first arrive. To purchase euros, contact any large commercial bank at least a month in advance. Do not carry much more than the equivalent of \$100 in cash.

Credit Cards, ATM Machines and Cash Advances:

One of the most convenient ways to access funds is to use an ATM card from a bank that belongs to a widely-used network such as Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus, Exchange, etc. ATM machines are available throughout Europe and at banks in the downtown areas of Montpellier. Cash withdrawn is in the local currency, and the exchange rate is the best daily rate available. You can have funds deposited in dollars to your U.S. checking account and withdraw them in local currency throughout Western Europe by using the ATM card. You may also qualify for a debit card that will allow you to obtain cash advances and charge purchases to your bank account at home. However, there is usually a limit to the amount that can be withdrawn in cash in a single day from an ATM machine.

Regardless of the credit service you use, the card you present must be in your name as given on your passport. At a cardholder's request (your parent/guardian), most major lenders will issue an additional card in the name of a son/daughter authorized to use the account. Many lenders will also issue cards to students who have parents co-sign for the line of credit extended. Please note: if you already have a debit card or credit card, be sure you know your 4-digit PIN number and verify that the number and card are valid overseas. Your card will need to have the security chip (not just the swipe function) and your PIN will need to be a numerical code with four digits. Keypads in Europe do not have letters and do not

accept more than four digits. Contact your bank for details, and to find out about any fees for international use.

Bank of America Debit Card:

Bank of America has a relationship with French BNP bank (of which there are several branches in Montpellier), which allows you to use your Bank of America debit card at any BNP ATM without paying conversion or ATM fees. Your family can just transfer funds into your Bank of America account and you can withdraw money from any BNP ATM.

Please note that there is a fee, however, when using the Bank of America card as a credit card to charge your purchases.

However, do NOT plan to rely solely on one ATM card to get you through your year or semester in France! Plan to bring a credit card or a secondary ATM card in addition to any primary ATM card you plan on using.

Charging Purchases:

Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted in stores, restaurants, and for other services in Montpellier; American Express is less commonly accepted. Credit cards generally get a better exchange rate (though there may be service fees), so if you plan to buy clothes or even relatively large quantities of groceries, train tickets or other costly items, consider using a credit card. You can also obtain cash advances from any Visa- or Mastercard-participating bank in Europe, which you can use as cash or convert to traveler's checks or bank deposits. Check with your credit card company about services and fees.

Banking in Montpellier:

You may open a checking account in Montpellier with Le Crédit Lyonnais (LCL) or Société Générale. You can obtain a Carte Bleue visa debit card for your French checking account. The French find it a convenient way to shop, easier than writing a check.

You will need the following documents to open a bank account in Montpellier:

- Copy of passport, copy of visa, and copy of page with stamp of date of entry in Europe
- Acceptance letter from Université Paul Valéry or a copy of your UPV student ID card
- W9 form for American students (the bank will give it to you)
- Housing certificate or "attestation de residence"
 - If you live in homestay, your host must write a handwritten letter stating that she is hosting you from (date) to (date) and provide a copy of her "carte d'identité" or passport and a copy of her most recent electricity or phone bill
 - If you live in an apartment, the owner must write a handwritten letter stating that s/he is renting the apartment to you from (date) to (date) and provide a copy of her/his "carte d'identité" or passport and a copy of the most recent electricity or phone bill for

AMY SAYS

Since there is a Bank of America in South Hadley, I recommend that you open accounts there so you can take advantage of this special deal during your stay in Montpellier.

the apartment

- If you live in the Observatoire, they will provide a letter upon request

You always need to keep a balance in your account of at least 10 euros. Bank fees are usually about 1 euro per month.

Once you have provided all the required documents, including a French phone number (you can purchase a French SIM card with an American credit card at the “Free” provider in front of the Polygone mall), you will receive an e-mail from the bank with your debit card code. You will need to go back to the bank to pick up your debit card. The process of opening a bank account can take up to 10 days, so please plan accordingly.

Sending Money to France (Wire Transfers):

Another way to receive funds is to have money wired to your French bank account. For transfers from the U.S., it costs approximately €20 for you to *receive* your wire transfer at a French bank; however, the bank *sending* the wire will also charge a fee, so wire transfers are not the most efficient way to send money. Consider using wire transfers only if you are sending one large wire transfer during your stay. You will need to ask at the bank for the “feuille d’information pour un virement automatique depuis l’étranger,” which will have the bank’s international wire transfer information on it. You should give this information along with your R.I.B. (this is a paper you can get printed at the ATM with your account number on it, along with other important bank info for a wire transfer) to the person who will be wiring you the funds from outside of France.

Personal Checks in US Dollars or Other Foreign Currency:

Not recommended: it’s expensive to deposit personal checks from elsewhere to your French bank account (the fee is approximately €15 per foreign check), and it can take up to two months for the check to clear and be made available to you. Better to have funds deposited into your bank account at home and withdraw money in France with your ATM card.

How Much Money Will You Need?

In terms of how much to budget, it will depend on your personal taste/extravagance. For Montpellier, we suggest a total of \$150 per week (groceries, supplies, personal travel and entertainment). This is merely an average estimate for budget purposes. This estimate in dollars may change with the fluctuation of exchange rates, with individual preferences for types of food and entertainment and use of utilities. Please plan to budget very carefully at the start of the program, as it’s easy to overspend.

The program fee that you pay to Mount Holyoke covers tuition, room, orientation, program excursions and activities, round-trip airfare from the US point of departure (for students on the group flight), and, for students in homestays, partial board. You will be directly responsible for (remaining) meals, books, personal expenses, and any additional travel that you choose to do. For Mount Holyoke students approved for Laurel Fellowships, the budget for financial aid purposes will include the program fee and Mount Holyoke’s administrative fee, both of which will be paid to Mount Holyoke, as well as allowances toward meals, books, and personal expenses (see below).

These estimates are for the necessities essential to student life in Montpellier. They are not meant to

cover the cost of all of the additional opportunities and activities that you may choose to pursue while abroad (such as concerts, vacation travel, restaurant meals, etc.).

ESTIMATED EXPENSES NOT COVERED BY THE PROGRAM FEE		
	Full Year	Semester
Books	\$400	\$200
Laundry	\$600	\$300
Toiletries	\$400	\$200
Entertainment	\$600	\$300
Telephone/postage/internet	\$400	\$200
Public Transport (city tram & bus pass)	\$500	\$250
Government Medical Visit (if required)	\$100	\$100
Food (Apartment)	\$3,800	\$1,900
Total		
Apartment	\$6,800	\$3,450

STAYING SAFE IN MONTPELLIER

(See also the general [Health & Safety](#) Information on the McCulloch Center study abroad website and in the Study Abroad Moodle site.)

While there is much less violent crime in France than in the United States, petty crime (including pickpocketing) and minor assaults occur in Montpellier, especially in certain parts of the city at certain times of the day. Because of Montpellier's agreeable climate and location along the main routes for international travel by train, car or ship around the Mediterranean, many transients pass through the area. This situation creates certain high-risk areas and situations of a type which may be unfamiliar to you. Be street smart and use common sense!

Previous students stress that having city experience in the US doesn't mean much in Europe. People react in a completely different manner in France, and it's normal for you to take a month or two to get adjusted to this. In southern France, people see city life as a "contact sport" – you may be bumped into, brushed against, spoken to when you don't feel like chatting and maybe even a little bothered by some men.

Follow these easy, common-sense precautions; they will become second nature, and after a few weeks in Montpellier, you will feel at home and like a native.

Keeping Your Belongings Safe

- Never leave your bags or belongings unattended. Security personnel in airports and train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended luggage (if it hasn't already been stolen by then). Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone. Make sure no one puts anything in your luggage.
- Make sure your plane/train tickets, credit cards, money and passport are on your person, well-protected, and not all in the same bag or pocket. Don't put money or credit cards in your back pocket or a coat pocket that someone can easily reach into. Keep money and valuables inside a closed bag or backpack with a zipper (not the outside pocket) or in an inside pocket of your jacket.
- Never put your name and address on your apartment keys in case they are lost or stolen. Carry your keys separately from your wallet that might have your ID in it. For example, keep your keys in your pocket and keep your wallet in your bag.
- Do not flash money, credit cards or passports – be very discreet. Never carry your PIN code written on a paper with your ATM card.
- Be extremely cautious when using your smartphone in public. Look around to see if you are in a safe place. If the area is crowded, go into a store or another location to use your phone.

AMY SAYS:

On a personal note, I am from a very small town in rural Connecticut. I have lived in Montpellier for over 20 years and have never had anything stolen. I had had very little experience with large cities, but I am very careful (especially of my shoulder bag or backpack) and stay aware of my surroundings, which is what you should do. If I sit down at a café, I keep my hands on my bag and make sure it is secure. When I take a night train to other European countries, in order to sleep I wrap my arms around my backpack and turn against the wall or simply put it under my head as a pillow.

- Carry your passport only when you REALLY need it (e.g., you are going to the bank and need official ID). Otherwise, find a good place to hide it in your apartment or in your room at home. When you travel outside of France, carry a photocopy of the passport separate from the passport itself; the photocopy will help expedite a replacement if the original is lost or stolen.
- When out at night, carry the strict minimum for cash and leave your credit & ATM cards at home.
- Never leave valuables (cell phone, wallet, passport, checkbook, etc.) in the trunk of a parked car – even if you think the area is safe. A previous student did this twice and managed to have her belongings stolen on both occasions.
- Keep your hand on your shoulder bag when you are walking around in a public place, and keep the zipper closed, be it in Montpellier or while you are traveling.
- ALWAYS lock your door fully in a hotel or your apartment, even if you are just going down the hall. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Keeping Yourself Safe

- Don't walk alone in Montpellier or any city after dark if you can help it, especially until you know your way around and feel comfortable. Be wary around train stations in all European cities; surrounding neighborhoods tend to be a bit sketchy. Avoid dark, deserted streets: your risk of being mugged is obviously much higher if no one is around. On the other hand, you should also be wary of large crowds because it is easy to have your pocket picked. Well-lit, well-travelled streets are much safer than dimly-lit side streets.
- Avoid looking conspicuously like a tourist. Don't stand around with your phone in your hand, wear sweatshirts with American university logos, call loudly to other group members in English or provide other clues you are a newcomer. If potential pickpockets think you are from the area, you are less likely to be targeted.
- Avoid speaking loudly in English or laughing loudly in public places. This goes for in the street, in restaurants, cafés, trains, stores - speak softly and be discreet. You will attract much less attention to yourselves and therefore will be bothered much less often.
- Be alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact. Be wary of people who seem overly friendly or overly interested in you. Be cautious when you meet new people and do not give out your address or phone number. Be careful with information about other

AMY SAYS

All of this information is meant to make you be cautious, not paranoid. I have never been aggressed, never had my pocket picked, nor been hassled in any serious way in Montpellier, and it's not because I am just lucky. I am always careful and know not to let my guard down. Being cautious signals to others that you would not be an easy victim, and that will help keep you and your belongings safe.

AMY SAYS

Remember that you are in a Latin culture now and there is a lot of verbal contact from men to women in the streets. You may feel that this is sleazy and sexist, and your concerns are always valid. However, keep in mind that this sort of public interaction is expected and often, French women do not react negatively to it. This being said, if a fellow says something dirty and obviously means to harass you, just keep moving.

students or group events. Be alert to anyone who might appear to be following you or any unusual activity around your place of residence or classroom. Report any unusual people or activities to the police (dial 17 from any phone, or 112 from a cell phone) immediately.

- Choose inconspicuous places to meet friends (in front of a particular store, for example) rather than the McDonald's, the Trois Graces fountain, or the steps of the Opera on the Place de la Comédie; these places are just too obvious and the local "zonards" (sketchy people) of Montpellier may hang out there. If you arrive first for a rendez-vous, be mindful of the people around you as you wait. If someone approaches you and you don't feel comfortable, don't stay there. Talk a walk around the block and keep moving about until your friend arrives.
- If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, act like you know what you are doing and where you are going. If someone bothers you and you feel uncomfortable, move away and ask for help if needed. If you think you're being watched or followed, cross to the other side of the street, lose yourself in a crowd or duck into a store until the person has moved on.
- Notify Amy Loth (and your roommate or host, if you have one) when you plan to travel away from Montpellier. Let them know where you will be and how you can be contacted in an emergency.
- Be aware that long hair, bare shoulders and short skirts on women can be magnets for attention – possibly unwanted attention. If you will be out and about after dark, dress conservatively and bring an accessory to tie back your hair (if yours is long). This just comes from years of experience.

Out and About in Montpellier

- Don't go to La Paillade – it's known as a difficult suburb of Montpellier. Be very careful around the section of town between the Comédie and the train station at night. The "Rockstore" and "Macadam" cafés can be fun, but go in a group because the location is sketchy.
- If you go to a bar downtown at night, be very careful when returning home late at night. Sleep on the floor or sofa of a friend's home rather than walk home alone, particularly if you would need to travel a considerable distance.
- Women, don't look young men in the eyes and smile unless you are prepared for the consequences. A smile or even just

AMY SAYS

Another little tip is the French woman "walk." In order to avoid being bothered, simply avoid looking people in the eye when you are walking in public. Look down at the ground, walk briskly and for goodness sake, don't smile at anyone you don't know! You may think this is being impolite or downright rude, but French people save their smiles and friendship for those people who earn them. Do the same. French women in particular have mastered this. Walk confidently and purposefully, looking straight ahead of you or slightly downward. This way, you are not inviting unwanted attention.

If someone makes a disagreeable comment to you in the street, just don't respond. I can't say it enough. Yes, it gets annoying and you'll want to put the person in his/her place...but don't do it. You may end up in a sticky situation you could have avoided by simply swallowing your pride and turning a deaf ear.

a look in the eyes WITHOUT a smile is a serious come-on. Beware. Just watch how French women of your age move through the streets – they never make eye contact and yet manage to walk without bumping into people too much. You'll get the hang of it.

- Previous students have noted that they attract less unwanted attention in public when with their male friends. Women, consider asking a male friend to walk you home; men, walk along with a female friend if asked.
- If someone asks you for money or a cigarette, just nicely say “Désolé/e” and keep walking. They may insist a bit, but will give up once they see they won't get anything out of you. Just keep moving so you won't be an easy target.

ATM Safety

- Avoid taking out money alone from an ATM. It is always preferable to go with a friend.
- Do NOT use your ATM card at night – take out the cash you need during the bank's open hours.
- Always be extremely careful when taking out money from any ATM at any time because someone standing behind you in line might be watching you type your PIN code so he/she can steal your card and use it later. The same goes for using your debit card in a store to make a purchase (you type your code on a keypad at the cash register).
- If your card is “eaten” by an ATM, try not to leave the machine. A trick that thieves use is to put a piece of transparent fishing line in the card slot and manipulate the machine to make it look out of order. Then when you leave the machine because it has eaten your card (or so you think), they manage to get your card with the fishing line. Have the friend with you stay at the machine and you go into the bank to get help.
- Never carry your PIN code with your ATM card. If your card gets stolen in France and the thief has the PIN code, you will not be able to recover the money that was stolen. You can only contest purchases made with a stolen credit card (when the PIN code was not known).

What to Do in Case of Theft

You should, of course, follow the safety instructions in this handbook to try to prevent theft from happening in the first place, as once something is stolen, it is practically impossible to recover it. MHC housing is in normally safe neighborhoods, with solid doors and functioning locks (which you must remember to use!). However, if you are pickpocketed or something is stolen from your apartment, follow the basic steps below, and notify Amy Loth right away.

If your apartment is broken into, make sure the thief is no longer there and you are not in danger. Call Amy on her cell phone immediately. If anything of value is stolen, call the police (dial 17 from any phone, or 112 from a cell phone) and ask them to come to your apartment to write a report. You may have to wait some time, so please be patient. Take photos of the broken door or lock, or any sign of forced entry, as evidence; make a list of items stolen and their value in euros. Amy will have the door/lock repaired or replaced; she can also help you file a claim with your rental insurance provider. (The program provides rental insurance for students living in apartments or l'Observatoire.)

If you have a small gathering (remember, parties are NOT allowed in your apartments to avoid problems with neighbors regarding noise) and guests you do not know personally are in attendance, you are at risk to have something stolen from your home. Please use common sense and put valuables (jewelry, computers, money, checkbooks, etc.) out of sight. If something is stolen from your home under these

conditions, it is useless to call the police or your rental insurance provider because there was no forced entry.

If you forget to lock your door and things disappear from your apartment while you are not at home, it is the same situation. No forced entry = no insurance coverage.

If your purse is stolen or your pocket is picked, figure out what you have lost. Call your credit card companies immediately and CANCEL the cards. Find the telephone numbers to contact them from France ahead of time; or you can dial a 1-800 number from France to the USA by dialing 001 880 and then the number. You will be charged as you would for a regular call to the USA.

If your keys were in your bag along with a form of ID that has your name and/or address in Montpellier, you must tell Amy so that she can have the lock changed. You shouldn't carry your keys with ID in the same bag because this puts both you and your roommates in danger.

If your passport is lost or stolen, contact your home country's embassy (likely located in Paris) to apply for a replacement. An emergency, limited validity passport may be issued for immediate travel (please bring proof of travel, such as your airline ticket, if your departure is imminent), otherwise you should expect it to take at least 4 to 6 weeks (in the case of the US) to receive your new full-validity passport.

Resources in the Event of Sexual Assault:

While we are not aware that any program students have suffered any kind of assault, it is good to know what your resources are if something should happen. Call police (17 from a land line phone, 112 from a cell phone), or go directly to the nearest police station. Special units have been developed to provide medical, legal, and emotional support to women who have suffered from sexual assault. Additional support is available from:

- <http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/particuliers/F1526.xhtml>
Telephone: 08 842 846 37 7 days a week from 9am to 9pm
- <http://www.stop-violences-femmes.gouv.fr/Les-associations-de-soutien-aux.html>
Telephone: 3919 Monday to Saturday, 8am to 10pm

Emergency contraception is available from any pharmacy without a prescription (brand name Norlèvo, generic name Levonorgestrel Biogaran), at a cost of between 4 and 9 euros. Norlèvo must be taken within 72 hours.

Other resources include Amy Loth; the McCulloch Center at Mount Holyoke; and Campus Police at Mount Holyoke (413-538-2304; they can put you in touch with MHC's Title IX Coordinator and other resources).

STAYING HEALTHY IN MONTPELLIER

(See also the general [Health & Safety](#) Information on the McCulloch Center study abroad website and in the Study Abroad Moodle site.)

Health Examination and Immunizations:

We strongly recommend that you have a medical, dental, and eye exam prior to studying abroad, even if you consider yourself to be generally healthy. Make sure your immunizations are up to date, and bring a record of them with you to France. If you plan to travel outside of Western Europe (in Africa, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe) during your stay abroad, check with the [Centers for Disease Control](#) about health precautions recommended for travel in those areas.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take a supply of contact lenses sufficient for the year, and an extra pair of glasses (if you have one). If you need or wish to purchase glasses or contact lenses in France and wish to be partially reimbursed by the French sécurité sociale, you will need to see an optometrist in Montpellier to obtain a prescription. If you know you will require medication while traveling abroad, obtain a full supply before you leave. Customs regulations do not permit shipping of medication. You should carry up-to-date prescriptions and/or a statement from your doctor, especially if you will be carrying insulin, a syringe or any narcotic drug. Keep all vital medicines in your carry-on to insure a constant supply if your luggage is lost or delayed. Use original prescription containers, marked with contents and use, for your own protection. Penalties for transporting illegal substances are severe.

Don't worry about bringing cold medicine or the like – you can find excellent over the counter medicine here.

Year program students may be required to have an official medical examination in France. This examination costs 58€ and may be required to obtain the attestation OFII. This administrative step appears to be in the process of being phased out, but please budget accordingly.

Health Insurance:

You must have health insurance (the college student insurance, or your family's health insurance plan) that will cover you in the US and abroad (in France and during any travel outside of France), without any gap in coverage.

If you have the MHC student health insurance plan, the plan will continue to cover you while you are studying abroad, generally on an out-of-network basis because you are not able to first consult with Health Services on campus. The FAQ available from the [Gallagher & Co.](#) website includes details of coverage and how to submit claims. You should expect to pay for medical expenses up front, and then submit claims and receipts to request reimbursement. If you have insurance from another source, such as your parents, ask whether the policy will cover you abroad; not all do work abroad, so don't assume yours will.

All students will be partially covered by the national health insurance called "sécurité sociale." The cost of the French sécurité sociale is included in the program fee and will cover up to 70% of nearly all medical visits (but note that it does not cover counseling or birth control at all). Reimbursements for medicine vary widely, depending on the medicine prescribed.

You will be charged on a pay-as-you-go basis for any medical care required. You will have to pay for services as delivered and file any claim(s) with your American insurer upon return, or in Montpellier at one of the two student agencies for health insurance (the MEP or the LMDE). Be sure to keep all records of medical treatment for this claims process.

Tips for Staying Healthy:

Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner and make sure you have a balanced diet. Drink plenty of water. Sleep at least 8 hours per night. On school nights you should go to bed at a reasonable hour so you will be able to get up for classes in the morning. If you regularly stay up very late, you will create your own personal “jet lag” and throw off your biological clock. Exercise regularly, especially if you feel anxious or stressed. See a doctor right away if you have any medical concerns – don’t delay getting professional help.

Tips if You Get Sick in Montpellier:

All pharmacies carry over-the-counter medicines to treat minor ailments such as a cold, sore throat, cough, headache, stomach upset, cuts and scrapes, etc. Ask your local pharmacist for advice about treatment.

If you have symptoms that don’t respond to rest and over-the-counter treatments, or that leave you unable to keep down food or liquids (which can quickly lead to dehydration) see a doctor (there is a list of doctors in this handbook).

If you are sick over the weekend or at night, you can call SOS Médecins for emergency care. SOS Médecins is a group of doctors who are available 24 hours/day and they will come to your home. Their number is also listed in this handbook.

Mental Health:

A year or semester in a foreign country presents many challenges. While culture shock is a very normal part of the experience, it is also important to know the signs of more serious problems. As explained in the book *College of the Overwhelmed* (Richard Kadison, M.D.), the primary symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression to watch out for are:

- Sleep changes (early morning wakening, waking through the night, or trouble getting out of bed in the morning can all be early warning signs of depression)
- Increase or decrease in appetite

AMY SAYS

Please take the advice about mental health very seriously, as it is based on many years of experience with study abroad students. It is tempting to think that you will leave your problems at home when you study abroad, and that counseling will not be necessary. But experience shows that it’s more likely that the stresses of being in a new environment, away from your usual support network, will magnify anxiety, and make medical conditions or other problems worse. If you are experiencing difficulties, please let me know right away (don’t wait for me to pick up on subtle signals!) so that I can do my best to help you. However, I am neither a certified psychologist nor a trained counselor. If a student approaches me with a personal concern or mental health condition that I feel surpasses my level of experience and competence, I will recommend that she contact a professional in Montpellier at once.

- Loss of motivation
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of concentration
- Feelings of hopelessness or loss of self-esteem
- Loss of interest in activities that are usually pleasurable
- Intense worry without foundation for concern
- Small problems that feel overwhelming
- Physical symptoms of anxiety: rapid heart rate, upset stomach, feelings of panic, headaches, sweaty palms

Any of these symptoms by themselves may be passing signs of stress, but if they cluster and become more persistent, they should be cause for concern.

If you have received any counseling within the last year, or if you are aware of any conditions that may affect your experience as you deal with the challenges of studying abroad, consult with your counselor or other health care provider about what support you may need in Montpellier. Some students have found it helpful to continue with counseling while in Montpellier, and Amy Loth can help you connect with a therapist either prior to or shortly after your arrival. It is better to decide in advance than to wait until you are experiencing difficulties that may affect your academic work, your relationships with other students, and your overall well-being.

Keep in mind that working with a new counselor may present challenges due to a change in style. Some students in the past have had difficulties in making the transition to a new therapist. If you think that this may be an issue for you, ask if your current counselor can continue to work with you while you are abroad. However, note that this is not a possibility for counselors at MHC, and some other counselors may not offer it due to ethical, legal, and financial complications.

A 45-minute session counseling session in Montpellier costs approximately €60, which cannot be reimbursed by the French national health insurance. However, this may be reimbursed by your US health insurance policy, so please check with your provider. This does represent a financial commitment up front, so you should plan ahead.

AIG/Travel Guard:

As a participant in an MHC program abroad, you are eligible to access travel and security information and emergency services through the Five Colleges, Inc., contract with AIG/Travel Guard, a medical and security assistance program. This program is not a substitute for health insurance (it does not cover the cost of medical care, though AIG can help you access care): it helps with certain medical and other emergencies, medical evacuation, and repatriation. We expect all students to register with AIG/Travel Guard (it is fast, easy, and free), and to take advantage of the extensive on-line resources available to you at no charge.

See the [Health & Safety](#) section of our website for more information about AIG/Travel Guard and a link to the portal where you can register. See the [Five College Risk Management](#) website for more information, additional resources, and a to a printable copy of the membership card. The membership card includes the information you will need to access AIG/Travel Guard support, and you should always carry it with you.

Health Care and Sécurité Sociale (French National Health Insurance):

What do I do if I need to see a doctor in Montpellier?

- Make an appointment with a doctor on the website <https://www.doctolib.fr/> . Bring at least €80 in cash with you (general doctor visits cost €25, specialists may cost €50 or more).
- If the doctor asks you if you are “couverte par la Sécurité Socialé,” he/she wants to know if you are covered by the French national health insurance. As a student, you have a right to basic coverage; however, the process to obtain it is lengthy. The doctor will give you a form to be partially reimbursed by your US health insurance or in France if you complete the required steps at <https://www.ameli.fr/herault> .

The doctor says I need a blood test. Where do I go to get one?

- Go to any Laboratoire d’Analyses (there is one clearly indicated near the Place Albert 1er tram stop) with your prescription for the blood test. Ask your doctor if you need to be “à jeun,” meaning “on an empty stomach.” Blood tests are required if you wish to get a prescription from the gynecologist for oral contraceptives.

The doctor gave me a prescription for medicine. How do I get the medicine?

- Go to any pharmacy (look for a sign with a neon green cross) and present your prescription. You will pay for your medicine in full. Present the prescription that the doctor gave you to the pharmacist. The pharmacist will give you another form that you’ll attach to the doctor’s form.

What if the doctor or pharmacist asks me for my “Carte Vitale ”?

- Just say that you are a foreign student and that you do not have a “carte vitale.”

Gynecological Exams and Birth Control in France:

If applicable, please think through arrangements for birth control (prescriptions for pills can be easily obtained in France – you won’t be able to use your American prescription here) ahead of time. Whatever sorts of precautions (in terms of both careful behavior with respect to relationships and actual prophylactic measures) you would take at home should be taken in France as well. Exercise the same judgment and caution that you would at home.

If you wish to begin using oral contraceptives during your stay in Montpellier, you must make an appointment for a consultation with a gynecologist. She will expect that you have a basic knowledge of contraceptives and that you have already had a gynecological exam. If this is all new to you, you of course should explain that to her and make sure you ask questions because she will not “hold your hand” through the process. Doctors in France tend to be very efficient and take less time with their patients, so have your questions prepared in advance.

The basic gynecological exam in France is just like in the USA, but the “lead-up” to the actual exam will be different from what you are accustomed to. Nudity in France is not considered uncomfortable and the doctor will simply tell you to undress and go to the examining table after she has spoken with you about why you have come to see her. She will not give you a paper “dress” or sheet for before and during the exam. The exam itself won’t last long and is painless. You may also want to ask for a “frottis,”

which is a pap smear (a cotton swab is used to take a sample of cervical cells for laboratory analysis). There is sometimes a tiny bit of discomfort with this part of the exam but it is really very quick.

She will require you to have a blood test done before giving you a prescription for the birth control pills. You can go to any “laboratoire d’analyses” (there is a clearly indicated lab near the Place Albert 1er tram stop, for example) to have your blood drawn and analyzed. When you get your results the next day, you go back to the gynecologist and she will give you the prescription for the pills. Oral contraceptives are NOT reimbursed by the French national health insurance. Do not expect to receive the forms from the pharmacy to be reimbursed. However, you can be reimbursed for the office visit, and your US insurance may cover the cost of the prescription.

Testing for STDs:

If you need to be tested for HIV or other STDs, which are just as common in France as they are in the U.S., there is a free screening service offered in Montpellier at the Hopital Saint Eloi, 2 avenue Emile-Bertin-Sans. It is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 9am to 4pm and Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am to noon. You don’t need to make an appointment and all tests are anonymous and confidential. For more info, call 04 67 33 69 50.

Physical Exam to Play Sports:

If you would like to join a sport team or club, you will probably need to have a physical and get an “attestation” (letter or certificate) stating that you are healthy. You can do this for free at the medical center on the campus of UPV – it’s a building called the Maison des Etudiants and it’s located near bâtiment F.

Doctors, Specialists and Emergency Numbers in Montpellier:

SAMU (Ambulance): 15

POLICE: 17 (or 112 from a cell phone; this is a general emergency number for Europe, mostly for cell phones, but can also be dialed from landlines in some countries)

POMPIERS (Fire): 18

If you are ill at night or on a weekend, call SOS Médecins at 04 67 45 62 45. These doctors will make house calls and are a wonderful resource in an emergency. Count on paying €55 for a visit during the weekdays and up to 70€ for a night or weekend visit, so make sure you have the money in cash.

Again, for any medical appointment you may use this service: <https://www.doctolib.fr/> .

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR LIVING IN MONTPELLIER

Hours of Business in Montpellier:

Most stores are open from 9:30/10:00am until 7:00/7:30pm in Montpellier. Small shops may take a break from noon until 2:00pm for lunch. Everything is closed on Sunday (some grocery stores are open in Sunday morning but not afternoon) and many shops are closed on Mondays until 2:00pm.

Most businesses are open from Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 6:00pm and closed on Saturdays, except for the rare bank, Free (the telephone/internet company), and the TAM office to name a few.

Shopping for Groceries:

Inside and next to the Polygone (the mall just off the Place de la Comédie) there are two large Monoprix supermarkets. There are larger supermarkets with discount prices located outside of centre ville – take bus #28 from the Place de l'Europe tram stop to “Carrefour” (the name of a big supermarket). Or, you can take the tram ligne 2 (the one with flowers on it) to the Carrefour in Saint Jean de Védas (stop at Condamine, 2 stops before the last one).

Another inexpensive store is “Lidl”: take the flower tram from the train station in the direction of “Jacou” and get off at the “Voltaire” stop.

At the Odysseum shopping center (where IKEA is located, tram line 1), there is another large supermarket called Géant Casino that students have appreciated.

Previous students recommend bringing an empty backpack or large reusable shopping bag (like the blue one from IKEA) with you because it will be easier to carry everything home from Carrefour that way. You can find inexpensive clothing at Carrefour as well, such as socks, underwear, slippers, flip flops, etc.



For the freshest fruits, vegetables, fish and meat, go to one of the marchés in town. The most central market downtown is called Les Halles de Castellane, but you can visit this site to learn about the many others: <http://www.montpellier.fr/423-halles-et-marches.htm> . The markets are open from early in the morning until noon.

A good organic market is “Le Rayon Vert” on the right side of the Polygone mall. This will be helpful for vegetarians looking for tofu.

Recommendation from previous students:

- Don't buy too much food at once. Go shopping more often and buy less each time.
- Preservatives are not used as much in France as they are in the USA, so vegetables are “organic” and will spoil more quickly. Besides, going to the market to see your regular vendors is fun.

University Cafeteria Meals:

There are four main university cafeterias in Montpellier, called “Restau-U's” (Restaurants Universitaires): Les Arceaux, Vert Bois, Boutonnet and Triolet. They are named for the areas of town where they are located. Program student opinions on the French university food are quite positive. Lunches and dinners in Montpellier cost €3,25 each. To pay at the restaurants universitaires, you may just use the Izly function of your Université Paul Valéry student ID card (it's a bit like a one-card from MHC) or pay in cash.

Your UPV Student ID Card:

You need to activate your ENT which will then allow you to use the wifi at UPV and, activate your UPV e-mail address as well as to, and use the Izly part of the card to pay for your meals at the Montpellier cafeterias. <http://www.izly.fr/#howitworks>

Books and Supplies:

The least expensive bookstore is the FNAC in the Polygone. They also have music, films, computer supplies, etc. Their literature selection is narrow, limited to popular or classical works. There is a much wider (the largest in Montpellier) selection at Sauramps, which also has a paper supply store on the ground level. The English bookstore “Le Bookshop” is on the rue Bras de Fer and serves tea & coffee—previous students love this place. They also have conversation hour on Mondays and Fridays from 5-7pm and students recommend this as a great way to meet French people. A large paper supply store, Gibert Joseph, is located next to the main post office and the Préfecture – great for paper and writing supplies. They also have used books and you can sell your books back to them at the end of the year or semester.

Smartphones:

Students find that smartphones are now simply indispensable. They have purchased French phones with French SIM cards included or have just inserted French sim cards into their existing phones for about €15.

With a smartphone from home (equipped with a new SIM card for France) or a new smartphone purchased in France, it is best to sign up for a 3G or 4G service with the French mobile phone/internet provider “free,” whose deals are the most advantageous of cell phone service providers in town. You

can get a non-binding plan that can be cancelled at any time with “free.” For 20€ a month you get unlimited calls to the United States and within France and unlimited texts in France. The data cap for a phone equipped with 4G is 50Go and for 3G it is 3Go, beyond that it is reduced. For more information about this plan, here is the link: <http://mobile.free.fr>.

When you arrive in Montpellier, you can go to the Free Center at 34 allée Jules Milhau (on the left as you enter the Polygone, our big mall in the center of Montpellier that is just off the Place de la Comédie). It is open from Monday through Saturday from 10:00am to 7:00pm. They will help you obtain a SIM card and sign up for the non-binding plan (plan sans engagement) for 20€ per month. You will need to pay at that time (cash or chip-enabled credit card), present your passport and your address in Montpellier. You will receive your SIM card from a “vending machine” and a store employee will insert it into your phone for you.

<https://mobile.free.fr/assistance/692.html>

Make sure to record the number and memorize it if possible so that you can supply it not only to Mount Holyoke classmates and Amy, but additionally to new French friends when they ask how to contact you!

Language Exchange Opportunities in Montpellier:

Previous students highly recommend the French-English language exchange at the English bookstore “Le Bookshop” on Mondays and Fridays from 5-7pm. This is a great way to practice speaking French in a comfortable atmosphere and to make new friends!

<https://lebookshop.jimdo.com/>

You may also sign up with the language exchange organization “Franglish” in Montpellier:

<http://www.montpellier.franglish.eu/en/conversation-exchange-montpellier> .

Libraries:

There is a library on campus at UPV; you can take out books when you receive your student ID card from UPV.

There also is a beautiful municipal library in the Antigone and a student membership costs only €5. You can check out DVDs and books from all of the libraries and médiathèques in the agglomeration of Montpellier with your card. To get your card, you will need to bring an ID photo, your passport, and a letter from Amy stating your address in Montpellier, and the “Pass’ Metropole.”

<https://mediatheques.montpellier3m.fr/DEFAULT/mediatheque-emile-zola.aspx>

AMY SAYS

The local daily newspaper is called the “Midi Libre.” I encourage you to pick up the local weekly paper, however, which is called “La Gazette.” It comes out each Thursday and costs €1,20. La Gazette has lots of interesting information about Montpellier and is an excellent resource for all events in the area (cultural, sporting, etc.).

A smaller version of the Midi Libre is available every weekday morning at all of the tramway stops in Montpellier for free! It is called “DirectMontpellierPlus” and I highly recommend picking up a copy each day. The short, popular “20 Minutes” paper that is handed out near tram stops is also a great way to pick up new French vocabulary and pass the commute time to school in a similar fashion to your fellow travelers.

Pass' Metropole:

This card is free and allows you to use certain public services in Montpellier, such as the municipal library. You need to bring your passport and proof of residency (Amy can provide you with a letter) to the Mairie de Montpellier. This is the city hall (big black square modern building) at the Moularès-Hôtel de Ville stop on lines 1 and 3 of the tram. Just ask which ticket window will serve you the Pass' Metropole when you reach the welcome desk of the Mairie.

Apartment Supply Stores:

The best place in Montpellier to purchase linens and supplies is IKEA. Take the tram line 1 (the blue tram) to the Odysseum stop and you'll see the big blue IKEA store.

**Shopping:**

You will enjoy shopping for clothes here – a popular pastime in France. Sales are regulated by the government and only happen twice a year: once in July and once in January. They are called “les soldes” and you can get good deals on clothes, shoes, etc. at your favorite stores. Previous students recommend Mango on the Grand Rue Jean Moulin and Zara in the Polygone, to name a few. You may also enjoy the thrift stores behind la Vieille Porte.

Odysseum:

At the Odysseum (end of the tram line) there is an ice skating rink, a planetarium, an aquarium, restaurants, more shopping, etc.

Post Office:

Letters within France and to other European countries cost €1,16. To the US, they cost €1,65. You can either buy a lot of stamps at a time and guess on the weight or use the automatic postage machines in the central post offices (Préfecture, Rondelet). Lines at the post offices are often long and move slowly because the post office is also a bank. The automatic machines are convenient – you place your letter on the scale, the machine tells you how much it costs for the destination you choose, you put in your coins and then it gives you a sticker to put on the letter or small package.

If you would like to buy pretty stamps, you will need to get in line to purchase them from an employee of the post office.

If you plan to ship a package outside of France, please be prepared to fill out a customs form. If you plan, the post office sells special boxes up to a certain weight that you can purchase. You bring the box home, fill it up with the thing(s) you wish to send, and then bring it back to the post office. These boxes are convenient and will often save you money.

Gym:

The gym “New Planet Forme” at the Place Saint Denis (04 67 92 62 84) has a lot of equipment and flexible hours. The price is €30 per month (with a student ID) and the staff is very friendly.

Intramural Sports Program at Université Paul Valéry:

This is called the SUAPS and offers all sports and many dance classes. To participate in any of the sports, just present your UPV student ID card at the SUAPS office on campus at UPV and pay about €30 for a physical exam. This is a great way to meet people and you don’t have to have excellent sports skills as all levels of ability are accepted.



Dance Classes:

If you would like to take dance classes for your own enjoyment and not at the Conservatory level, previous students recommend Choré-Danse near the Place Albert Ier in Montpellier: <http://www.chore-danse.fr/>.

Musical Instruments:

If it's not too much trouble and you would like to play in a band during your stay in Montpellier, students recommend that you bring your instrument.

Insurance for Organized Activity:

If you are asked to provide proof of a supplemental insurance in Montpellier for an organized activity such as a ski trip, visit the LMDE office on the rue Jules Ferry (they take care of students' French health insurance there as well). You will need to purchase the "Assurance Etudiant" and then show the certificate you will receive once you've paid for it. It costs about €15.

Pass'Culture:

Students highly recommend getting the Pass'Culture because there are tons of concerts and performances in Montpellier that cost only €5 each. You can also get discounted movie tickets for the Diagonal and Royal cinemas (€3,70).

The Pass'Culture costs €9 and you can get it at the Culture Kiosque at the welcome hall of the CROUS (a municipal student center) located at 2 rue Monteil. The hours are Monday from noon to 4:00pm and Tuesday through Friday from 10:00am to 4:00pm. The tram stop is Boutonnet; when you get off the tram, walk up the main street where the big boulangerie is on your right. The CROUS is clearly indicated just in front of you slightly towards the right. You need to bring proof that you are a student (acceptance letter from UPV or UPV student ID card when you get it at the start of the program) plus one little ID-size photo. (You may also be asked to present your passport.) <http://passculture.crous-montpellier.fr/mode-d-emploi-du-pass-culture> 314

Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra in Montpellier:

With the "Tutti Pass" (youth discount card, under 30 years of age), you can attend 4 performances for only €20. See <http://opera-orchestre-montpellier.fr/page/tarifs-jeunes> for more details. You can purchase the card at the Corum (conference center off the Esplanade in Montpellier that also houses the orchestra) or at the Opera on the Place de la Comédie.

Joining an Activity in Montpellier:

One MHC student said:

"I met almost all of my French friends through activities. Just get out and do something. Something new or something you've done a lot of if you want to feel more confident. I started going to dance classes that I found through the Foire aux Associations even though I didn't have a way to get home afterwards because the buses had stopped running. As a result, I asked people in my class if someone could drop me off near downtown, and the girl who could do it after every class became my friend! I also met my boyfriend through the band I joined. You have to be persistent, because I auditioned and/or contacted about 4 bands before I found the one for me. The others already had enough flutes or for one reason or another I couldn't join."

The Foire aux Associations is the city-wide Activities Fair held each year in September. It is a huge event with a fun carnival atmosphere! Every activity (club, sport, orchestra, theater troupe, political or religious organization, dance school, etc.) has a stand with flyers to distribute and a sign-up sheet. It is

up to you to stroll around, visit the booths, find out what is offered and sign up for some activities that interest you! Spring semester students can consult the activity director of Montpellier at <http://www.assos.montpellier.fr/2898-annuaire-des-associations.htm>.

Activities like clubs and sports aren't organized at the university in France the way they are in the USA, so this is your opportunity to get involved. There will be a fee to take dance lessons, for example, or to participate in a photography club if you'll be using the club's darkroom supplies. Many clubs also require a membership fee to cover administrative costs (paying teachers, coaches, rental fees, etc.). Anticipate spending approximately €200 for a year membership to participate in a club, sport or other activity in Montpellier.

Some students have said that they enjoy the flexibility they have with their schedules during their stay in France and were happy not to have joined an activity. Just so you know, joining an activity is not essential to a wonderful experience in France. It is important to know yourself well and do what is right for you.

Vocabulary for the Foire aux Associations:

Someone at a booth might ask you....

Voudriez-vous un renseignement? - "Would you like some information?"

Voudriez-vous vous inscrire? - "Would you like to sign up?" (and you can sign up without committing to the activity... just so they contact you for the first meeting)

You might want to ask....

Y-a-t-il des frais d'inscription? - Is there a cost to sign up ?

Pourriez-vous me donner des renseignements s'il vous plaît? - Could you please give me some information?

Est-ce que je peux prendre une brochure/un dépliant ?- May I take a brochure/flyer ?

Montpellier PublicTransportation:

TAM (Transports de l'Agglomération de Montpellier)

Getting around Montpellier is quite easy with the unified bus and tramway system. You can get information on the internet about the TAM system at <http://www.tam-voyages.com/>.

With a photo ID and a photocopy of your passport (proof that you are under 25 years of age), you are eligible for youth discounts ("les forfaits jeunes"):

- 10-trip ticket (10 one-ways) costs € 10
- 31-day (consecutive) pass costs € 28
- 12-month (consecutive) pass costs € 196

Year program students are advised to purchase the 12-month pass. The cost is figured into the Program Personal Budget. You should purchase it ASAP in order to take advantage of it right away.

To obtain the pass, go to the TAM office located at: 6 rue Jules Ferry (near the train station). The office is open from Monday to Friday from 7:30am – 6:30pm or Saturday from 9am to noon. You need to fill out a short application, give your copy of your passport, your photo ID, and your € 196 (cash, French bank check in euros or credit card). The special card you will receive allows you to ride the tram or bus at any time.

Pick up the brochure with the application inside and fill it out before you get in line to get your card. If you don't wish to use the bus or tramway very much and enjoy walking, you can purchase a 10- trip bus card without any student ID for €10. Tickets may also be purchased from automatic machines at all tramway stops and must be validated (stamped) in the green machine inside the tram. The unlimited weekly and monthly cards are very hi-tech and just need to be swiped in front of the machine. Tickets and cards are randomly checked for validation by controllers (almost always middle-aged men dressed in navy blue) who get on the bus in small groups. Present your validated ticket to them when they ask to verify it. Please buy your bus and tram tickets or cards and validate them appropriately. The controllers will give you expensive fines to pay if you are caught without a ticket.

Semester program students are advised to purchase the 31-day pass as needed. The cost is figured into the Program Personal Budget. This pass will need to be renewed in person at the TAM office each month.

Late-Night Bus:

The “Amigo,” or late-night bus, runs in Montpellier every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night from midnight to 5:00am. It stops at all the clubs on the “route de la Plage” outside of downtown Montpellier so you can travel safely. You take the Amigo bus from the Corum stop behind the Esplanade: please verify the times at the bus stop. The Amigo bus is included in the TAM network so it is a regular fare and the year pass is accepted. The last tramway goes around Montpellier at 1:00 a.m. Always double-check the exact time that the last tram leaves the stop where you wish to meet it and keep in mind that some locations that you hope to access late on weekend evenings may only be accessible by tram.

Walking from UPV to the center of town takes about 20 minutes (via rue Boutonnet). You can also take the tramway: from UPV, either walk or take the “navette” (a bus) to the Saint Eloi tramway stop. Then take the tramway (direction “Odysseum”) into town. Validate your ticket on the navette and then again on the tramway – it doesn't cost you twice, but you need to do it to show that you've made a correspondence. Always leave enough time during the school year to WALK to the university in case there is a problem with the tramway or if the drivers are on strike.

The bus/tramway card you will receive from Amy at the start of the orientation period is good for 10 one-way trips. You can buy more cards from machines at tramway stops with cash or credit/debit card or from the TAM office.

AMY SAYS

I know we've become dependent on our phones for maps, but when you are somewhere without wifi, you will be glad to have an old-fashioned map with which to navigate. However, it is also useful to know that the TAM mobile application, which is free to download to your smartphone, gives a live view of tram arrivals.

Speak softly or better yet not at all while on the tram so as not to attract unwanted attention.

Bike Rentals:

If you love to ride your bike, you may wish to rent one from the TAM office.

The bike rental program is called Vélomag. See the TAM web site for more details: http://www.tam-voyages.com/presentation/?rub_code=1&thm_id=6&part_id=

Getting to the Beach:

The nearest beach town to Montpellier is called "Palavas les Flots." To get to Palavas, you must first take the Montpellier tramway line 4 (the gold tram) from the Observatoire to the "Garcia Lorca" tram stop. From there, you take the bus #631 (red Hérault Transport) for €3,20 to Palavas. You can get off the bus at "Salle Bleue," which is in the town. It is about a 5-10 minute walk to the beach. However, you can of course explore if you like. <https://www.palavaslesflots.com/fr/mon-cadre-de-vie/transports>.

You can also take tram line 3 to Pérols and get off at the very last stop at "Pérols Etang de l'Or." There is a walking path to the beach, and it takes about 20-30 minutes (2km). Lots of people do this, so you can just follow the crowds.

Strikes and Demonstrations:

The employees of the postal service, SNCF (rail system in France) and many other public services went on strike in the fall of 1995 and the country was almost paralyzed. There have been no massive strikes since then. However, smaller strikes (e.g. postal, train, university) are not uncommon in France. They are not regarded as evidence of civil instability but rather as a means of registering dissatisfaction with government policies. Students are advised to watch, read or listen to the news (radio is a very good way – Radio France Hérault at 101.1FM has lots of news) about any potential strikes and to be careful about sending things by regular mail if they need to arrive quickly or require special handling. If there is a strike, Mount Holyoke College reminds you to be careful not to take part in political activities which would be in violation of the terms of your visa.

The university has assured us that students on study abroad programs have never lost credit because of a strike and that any interruption of classes is temporary. The On-Site Director will help you continue your academic work in the event of a student strike at the university.

Working or Interning in France:

It isn't easy to find a part-time job in Montpellier and there are no work-study opportunities for students at Université Paul Valéry. It is strongly recommended that you do not count on working in France, but it is possible. As an international student in Montpellier, you may be able to work up to 20 hours per week. If you have experience as a server, you could try to apply for a job at an English-themed café or pub.

Babysitting and teaching English are possibilities – look for signs on bulletin boards at UPV or consult on-line at: <http://montpellier.vivastreet.fr/>.

You might be able to find unpaid volunteer or intern opportunities in Montpellier, however. With lots of advance planning, creativity and motivation you may even find a summer job or internship. They don't just fall out of the sky, though, so be prepared to work at it.

You must first write your résumé and cover letter in French. Then the search for an internship or job is up to you! Go door to door in Montpellier instead of simply mailing them out – this is appreciated because it shows you are motivated to go the extra mile. Contact Amy if you have any questions, need guidance, or would like to see examples of a French résumé and cover letter.

Vacation Travel

SNCF (French Train Service):

In France, the train system is called the SNCF. The train station (la gare) in Montpellier is located just off the Place de la Comédie – you descend the rue Maguelone that is lined with palm trees.

The SNCF also offers a youth discount card called the “Carte 18-27,” or “Carte jeune” (see their website for details: <http://www.sncf.com/fr/tarifs-reduits/carte-jeune>).

This card costs €50 and you can purchase it directly at the train station. Bring an ID photo and a photocopy of your passport, along with €50 (cash, French bank check in euros, or credit card).

The Carte jeune offers 30% reductions for all TGVs (high-speed trains) at particular times, and 25% reductions for all national trains. If you plan ahead and travel on the days and times that permit you to use your card to obtain the discounts, the card usually pays for itself on your second round-trip voyage.

Previous students highly recommend this card. It is not factored into your Personal Budget as rail travel is for travel outside of Montpellier and therefore considered vacation travel.

A former student recommends: “Sometimes idtgv and ouigo trains, which do not accept carte jeune discounts, are cheaper than fares with carte jeune due to their built-in discount rates. The train to the Paris suburbs from Montpellier is particularly advantageous!”

You may also purchase American student Eurail and other passes in the USA for use all over Europe (usually within a 6-month period of time). Previous students recommend either the American Eurail card or the SNCF card for travel in Europe. Purchase your tickets between six weeks and three months ahead of time to save money.

If you miss your train:

Up until one hour after you've missed your train you can get your ticket reimbursed at the train station if you go to a ticket window in person.

Special Considerations for International Students:

Be cautious when using on-line registration for flights as this may create problems when you pass immigration. One student encountered a problem as there was a discrepancy between her passport number listed on her on-line registration and her residency card number which was required on a form she filled out at the immigration counter.

Pay extra attention to travel requirements for other countries in Europe, such as Great Britain.

Bus to Barcelona:

Students are fans of this inexpensive travel option. With the bus company Eurolines (www.eurolines.fr) located at 8 rue de Verdun (the street just to the left of Monoprix, off the Place de la Comédie), the roundtrip to Barcelona from Montpellier costs about €50. The bus takes about 5 ½ hours each way. Check the hours with Eurolines. The stop in Montpellier is located at the “Sabines” tram stop on the Ligne 2 of the tramway.

Train to Paris:

The TGV (high speed train) from Paris to Montpellier leaves directly from Terminal 2 of the Charles de Gaulle Airport. Please note, however, that the Charles de Gaulle Airport is actually located in Roissy and not in Paris. This is very important if you purchase your train ticket on the internet at the French national train (SNCF) web site: <http://www.sncf.com/>.

Montpellier Airport:

From the Montpellier airport, you can either take a taxi to downtown Montpellier or the “navette” (bus #120 Hérault Transport) which is a shuttle bus. It leaves Montpellier from the Place de l’Europe tram stop (tram lines 1 and 4) and runs about every half hour. A one-way trip on the navette costs about €1,60. Check the Montpellier airport web site for details. <http://www.montpellier.aeroport.fr/en/acces-a-l-aeroport/en-transports-publics#>.

You can find a taxi outside of the Arrival Hall of the Montpellier airport, Door A. A taxi ride to the center of Montpellier costs €25 to €35, depending on the amount of luggage, the day and the time.

CULTURE SHOCK AND ADAPTATION

Going abroad is one of the most exciting learning experiences of a person's life. It can also include a series of confusing and frustrating (and, let's admit it, sometimes embarrassing) incidents that leave you longing for home from time to time. Aside from basic preparation for the trip, it is valuable to take some time to investigate what you are likely to encounter, so that you can better understand and enhance your study abroad experience.

Our culture influences who we are and how we relate to the world. Because we have grown up with this culture, we are comfortable in it. Our values and attitudes have been shaped by our experiences in our native culture. What happens when we suddenly lose cues and symbols that orient us to situations of daily life? What happens when facial expressions, gestures and words are no longer familiar? The psychological discomfort one feels in a foreign situation is commonly known as culture shock. This is a reaction to differences one encounters in a foreign culture and can consist of many phases as described below. While there are common themes in intercultural adjustment, keep in mind that individuals may experience these phases differently depending on such variables as individual personality and prior experience.

When you first go to live in another culture, you may occasionally feel frustrated and annoyed with the people of the country because you cannot find the usual ways of meeting your needs. "There aren't any water fountains; how do I get a simple drink of water?" "If a French web site won't accept my American credit card, how do I make a purchase?"

In time, you will learn different systems for taking care of these matters. It is fair to assume that the new system has logic of its own and to seek ways of understanding it. Ask a lot of questions: your On-Site Director is there to help you understand the French way of life. You can always find a few people



who like to complain about the new culture and are looking for company to share their discomfort. You can join them, or you can try to be observant and find some new ways of dealing with life's basic needs. While it sounds like a cliché, you will likely find that stepping outside your comfort zone to try new things, new ways of doing things, will result in the most deeply satisfying personal growth. You may even grow to like the new system. If there are things you continue to dislike, try to focus on the things that you prefer.

Don't forget that it can be tiring to adjust to a world in which everything is new. Be easy on yourself. Don't allow yourself to become too tired. Recognize that other new students, even if they seem to be having a wonderful time, are also feeling tired and frustrated at times. If you begin to think that your language skills, or ability to adapt, are not as good as they should be, please recognize that those feelings, too, are universal parts of culture shock, which is just the name for the extreme emotional ups and downs that come when you are adjusting to a very new situation. You have not let anyone down. You are new to life in this place and with time, you will develop the skills you need to adjust and enjoy the experience. Many returning students say that it helps to stop and remember why you wanted to study abroad. They say that this helps them to recognize and appreciate the good things about being abroad.

Cultural Adjustment Phases

Before: The Pre-Departure Experience

Upon deciding to study abroad, you may experience elation coupled with frustration in dealing with pre-departure items such as travel and financial arrangements, or applying for a visa. During this stage expectations are high, and the pre-departure planning and arrival instructions may be both overwhelming and exciting.

During: The On-Site Experience

Initial Fascination: Upon arrival, you may experience a state of euphoria wherein surroundings seem glamorous and exotic, and you feel that you are the focus of attention and activity.

Initial Culture Shock: The initial fascination and novelty of the new culture often fades as you settle in, and you may become annoyed with everyday differences.

Surface Adjustment: After this initial "down," which may last a few days to a few weeks, adjustment takes place as you settle into your new surroundings. Your language skills begin to improve, and it is easier to communicate basic ideas and feelings without fatigue. You also often develop a small group of friends and associates who help you to feel integrated.

Feelings of Isolation: At some point, the novelty may wear off completely and the difficulties remain. Frustration increases, and a new and more pervasive sense of isolation can set in. You may feel bored and unmotivated as you feel little stimulus to overcome deeper and more troublesome difficulties. Unresolved personal issues often resurface during this stage.

Integration and adaptation: When you are finally at ease with professional or academic interests, as well as language, friends and associates, it is easier to examine more carefully the new society in which you are living. Deeper differences between you and your hosts become understandable, and you find new ways of dealing with them. As you become more integrated into the surroundings, you come to accept both the situation and themselves in it, allowing you to relax and feel at home.

Return anxiety: Once you are well settled in, the thought of leaving new friends and your new home raises anxieties similar to those felt before departure. You begin to sense how much internal change has occurred because of the experience, and apprehension may grow at the thought of returning home to people who may not understand these new feelings and insights. You may even feel guilty for wanting

to stay, knowing that there are people waiting anxiously at home. This leads to re-entry adjustment. (We will talk about this at the end of the program.)

Culture shock may manifest itself in one or many of the following forms:

- Changes in sleeping habits
- Disorientation about how to work with and relate to others
- Language difficulties and mental fatigue from speaking and listening to a foreign language
- Feelings of helplessness, lack of motivation
- Loneliness
- Placing blame for difficulties on the program or host culture
- Homesickness, feeling depressed
- Getting angry or tearful easily
- Unable to work efficiently, effectively
- Stereotyping of host country or culture
- Increase in physical ailments or pain
- Compulsive eating or lack of appetite

Please remember that emotional and physical reactions to these various phases will influence how you relate to local citizens. Excitement and fascination with the host country's behavior and customs will help pave the way for positive interaction. Conversely, hostility and aggression toward those "strange and unfamiliar" customs cause host nationals to remain at a distance.

A bit of advice for friends and family: Before you leave, you and your friends and family members may want to read as much as possible about France in order to gain some perspective about the experience. You may also want to talk to people who have been to France.

Please keep in mind that you may not be able to call home immediately, as this may be too inconvenient, complex or difficult. During this phase of adjustment, your friends and family should be prepared to receive phone calls and e-mails in which you complain and talk about how frustrating everything is in the host country. While these feelings should be taken seriously, students abroad tend to call and write home when things are not going so well and do not call and write when things are going well (i.e. you are too busy having fun!). Constructive advice for friends and family members to share during a stressful telephone call would emphasize adaptability, a sense of humor, and a lot of common sense. The encouragement and support of friends and family at home is a powerful tool in the adjustment process.

Handy Survival Traits:

- Sense of humor
- Ability to fail and keep going
- Willingness to expect the unexpected!

French Society

LGBTQ Community:

You will find that the LGBTQ culture is very different in France than in the US. Montpellier is known for having a very comfortable and well-integrated LGBTQ community: its Gay Pride festival is second only to Paris. There are gay and lesbian cafés, bars and restaurants in a central neighborhood that is frequented by Montpellier residents. Previous students in Montpellier recommend le Café de la Mer at the Place Marché Aux Fleurs (next to la Préfecture) and the UP Bar at 5 rue de Girone.

However, the LGBT community is discreet. And while men are more likely to have established meeting places, women may be more difficult to meet because French LGBTQ women tend to blend with the straight population.

Religion:

Most French people in Montpellier are Catholic, but there are significant Muslim, Jewish and Protestant populations as well. Cities in the south of France, such as Montpellier, are very open and extremely welcoming of all faiths. Montpellier has a history and a reputation for being an extremely tolerant city where different religions mix and live together peacefully. It was a haven for Protestants during the religious wars, and the famous medical school of Montpellier was created by Jewish, Muslim and Catholic students practicing together in the Montpellier botanical gardens. There are Catholic and Protestant churches, Jewish synagogues and Muslim mosques.

There are two synagogues in Montpellier: Ben Zakai and Mozel Tov (45 rue Proudhon, 18 rue Ferdinand Fabre). Jewish students from MHC in Montpellier have been “adopted” by families at Ben Zakai, meaning they have been invited to participate in religious holiday celebrations and to dinner at the families’ homes. The students observed that both synagogues and the Jewish community in France in general are conservative in comparison to what you may be accustomed to at home (separation of men and women during services, strict kosher regulations, etc.). If students are more interested in hanging out with Jewish people their own age, there is an association called UEJF (Union des Etudiants Juifs de France). You can get more information about the UEJF from the Association Culturelle Israelite de Montpellier at 4 rue Dessalle Possel (04 67 92 92 07).

A former student has recommended the Mosquée Ibnou Sina in Montpellier. The address is 272 avenue Paul Bringuier and the phone number is 04 67 45 62 16. It is in the Petit Bard section of Montpellier, bus n°19 to Pierre de Coubertin.

If you need assistance finding other places of worship, please do not hesitate to ask Amy to help you to locate them.

Race and Ethnicity:

There are people of all races and ethnicities in Montpellier, and respect and integration of different races and ethnicities is of the utmost importance in France. However, like anywhere else in the world, there are also people who are unfortunately capable of making racist comments.

Fortunately, this is rare. Each year there are students of different races and ethnicities on the program who feel very comfortable in Montpellier.

French society is much less “politically-correct” than the USA in general, so you may find it quite a change from most colleges in the US. The French love to challenge and tease, and you may find this surprising when it is about something you would consider to be of a sensitive nature. Please know that this is a cultural difference, and while it is not meant to be hurtful, it might take you off guard. Don’t hesitate to contact Amy Loth if you have any questions or concerns regarding your experiences in France.

Making Friends:

When you are the lone foreigner in a group of any nationality, it can be intimidating. It is important to realize and accept that at first, you won’t be able to participate fully in conversations. That is perfectly normal, so don’t be hard on yourself. Even if you understand the conversation, it may move too fast for you to add a comment. Jokes and humor are especially difficult to understand, so you must be patient. It can be very difficult to express yourself and that is frustrating, but don’t give up. It’s a challenge and it’s a lot of work to make progress, but you will make progress if you keep trying.

You may hear some students complain about how difficult it is to meet French people. Then there are other students who meet lots of French people and have very active social lives. How do they do it? The answer is simple: they constantly put themselves “out there.” They go up to a classmate and begin a conversation (no matter how simple or silly), they attend social gatherings when French people are present, they join an activity: in short, they WORK at it.

One student said, “Don’t be shy, French students love to go out and have fun! If you’re planning any kind of get-together with American program friends, invite your French acquaintances and tell them to bring their friends...even if it’s a laid-back outing like just meeting people at a café.”

AMY SAYS

It’s true that many young French people your age have grown up and gone to school with the same peers for such a long time, their friendship circles are already established. It can be difficult for a foreign student (you) to break into these groups because the new French friends may be reserved, thinking that you will forget all about them when you leave at the end of the program. It’s up to you to reassure them that you are a true friend. I know it is hard work – I’ve been there – but it is really worth it in the end.

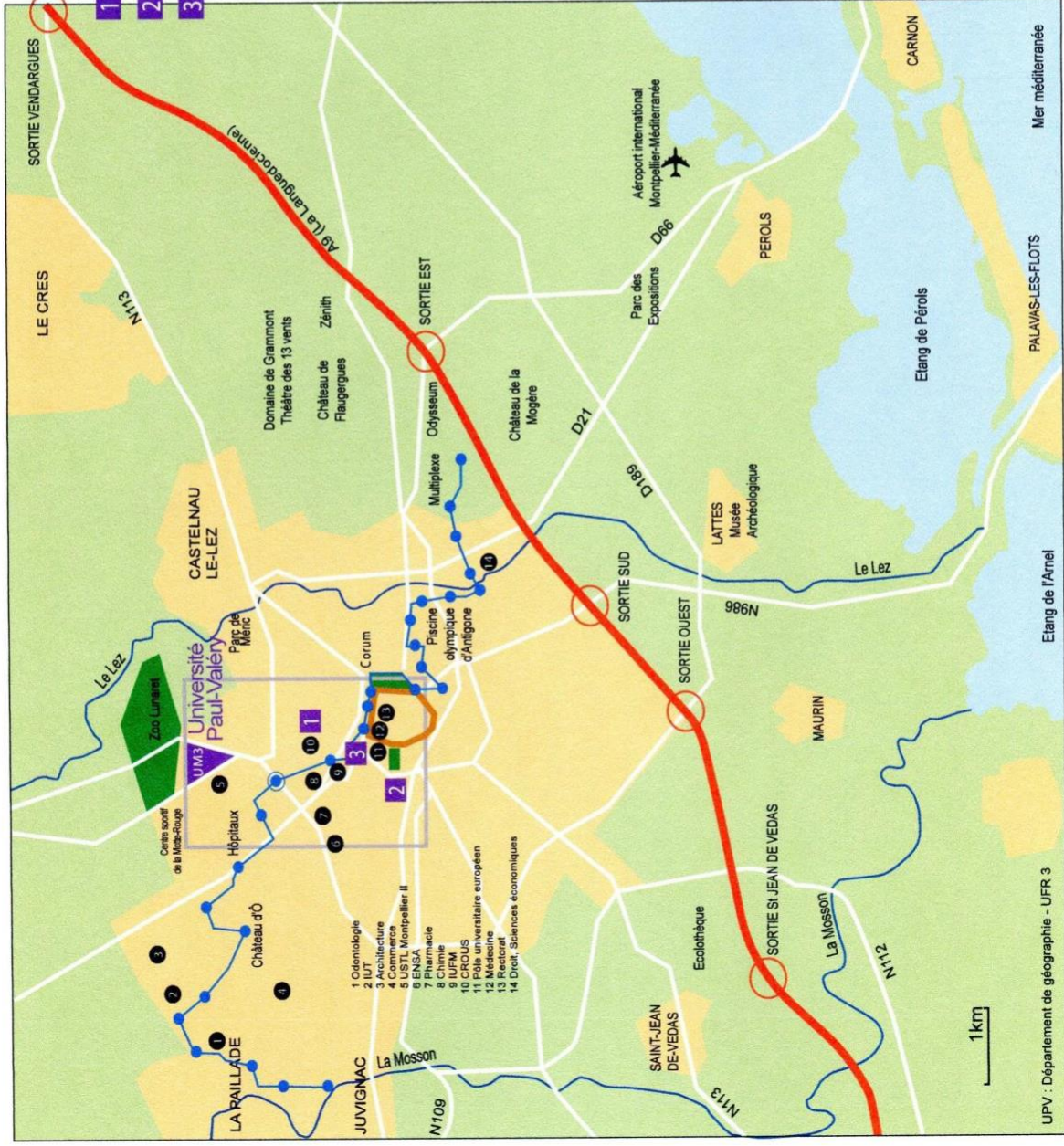
AU NORD DE LA VILLE : L'UNIVERSITÉ PAUL-VALÉRY - MONTPELLIER III

Route de Mende - 34199 Montpellier cedex 5
& 04 67 14 20 00 - <http://www.univ-montp3.fr/>

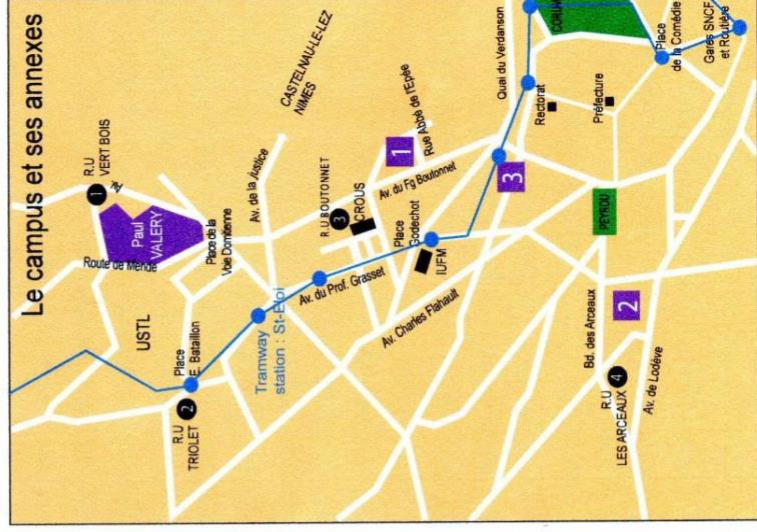
1 17 rue Abbé de l'Épée

2 11 rue Saint-Louis

3 Saint-Charles (projet 2ème site : rentrée 2006)



UPV : Département de géographie - UFR 3

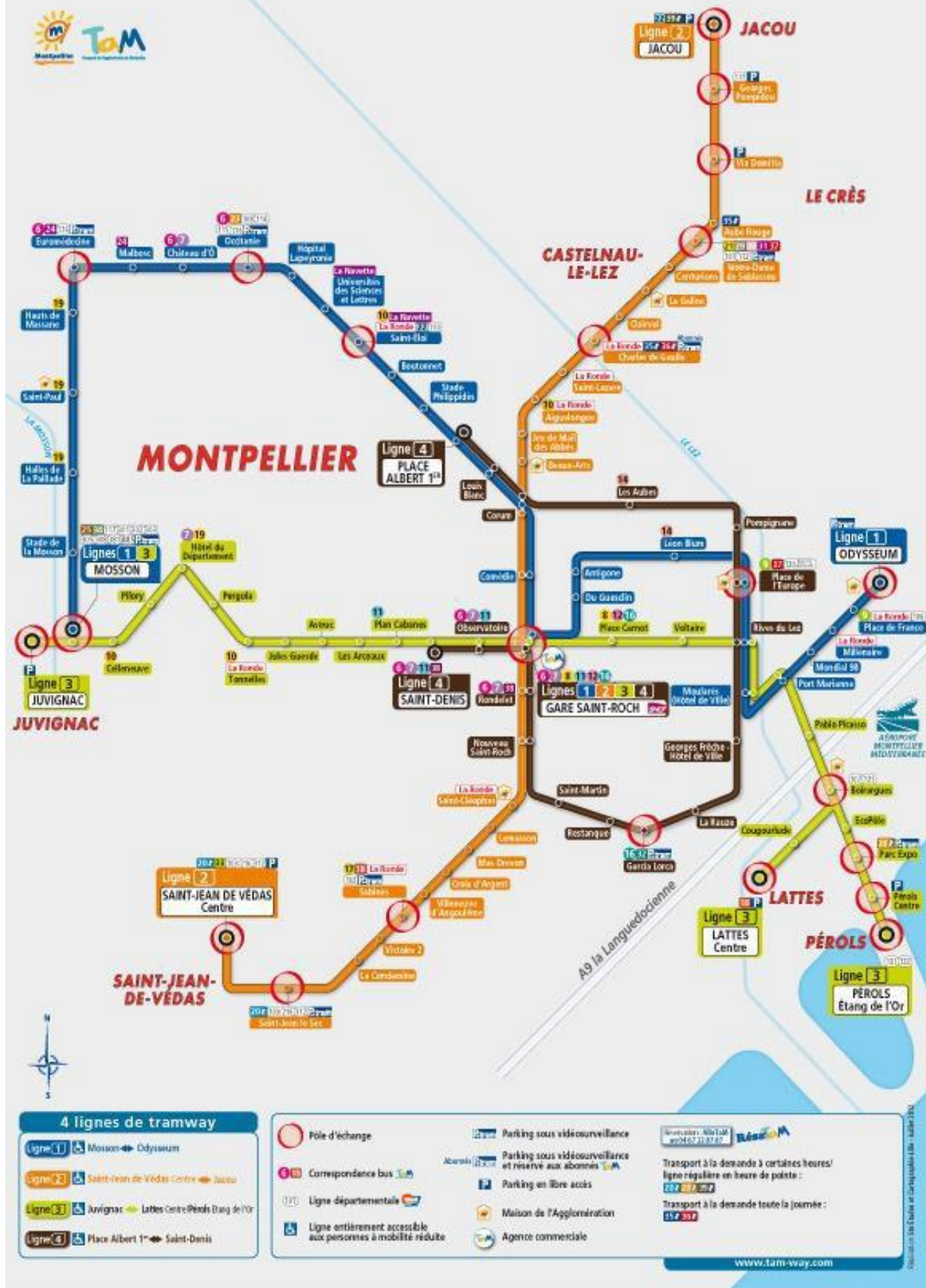


8 PRÉFA



- Félides Rouges (ampli D)
- Raimon de Miraval (ampli E)
- Raimbaut d'Orange (ampli F)

DP LP (Direction du Patrimoine
de la Logistique et de la Prévention)
IMPRIMERIE



COVID-19 Update

Please visit these websites for updated information:

<https://www.campusfrance.org/en/information-coronavirus-en>

<https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/coronavirus-advice-for-foreign-nationals-in-france/coronavirus-statements/article/applying-for-a-covid-certificate-if-you-were-vaccinated-abroad-procedure-for>

<https://www.montpellier.fr/4485-coronavirus.htm>