**The University of Manchester**

**French Studies Research Seminars**

2022-23

**Tues 25 October 2022, 5pm**

Ellen Wilkinson building A2.6

+ Zoom:  <https://zoom.us/meeting/99840213398>

**Dr Antoine Burgard** (HCRI, UoM)

‘Who is a child?

Young migrants, age determination and border policing

in 20th-21st centuries Britain and France’

The precise determination of one’s age is now key to migration experiences and processes, especially for young asylum-seekers coming to Global North countries. Being recognised as a 'child' or an 'adult' has a considerable impact on access to resources and on the outcomes of asylum applications. Using Britain and France as starting points, this presentation will discuss how age has been increasingly included in migration control over the 20th century and what this history can teach us about current public debates surrounding border policing, child protection, medical ethics, and migrant rights.

**Weds 07 December 2022, 5pm**

Ellen Wilkinson building A2.6

+ Zoom: <https://zoom.us/meeting/93595618740>

**Dr Antonia Wimbush** (French Studies, Liverpool)

‘Remembering the BUMIDOM :

Caribbean migration to France in documentary films’

This talk questions the extent to which documentary films can be considered sites of counter-memory – that is, memorial practices which contest official, national versions of histories and memories. It focuses on two documentary films by Francophone directors, *L’Avenir est ailleurs* (2007) by Antoine Léonard-Maestrati, and *BUMIDOM, des Français venus d’outre-mer* (2010) by Jackie Bastide, which both address the BUMIDOM (Bureau pour le développement des migrations dans les départements d’outre-mer). The BUMIDOM was a state-run migration bureau in operation between 1963 and 1982. It organized the recruitment, transportation, and accommodation of workers from Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion, and French Guiana arriving in mainland France, undergoing economic growth at the time. For some, the BUMIDOM was an opportunity for social advancement as it led them away from a life of poverty on the islands and enabled them to earn a living. Yet for others, it was exploitative and coercive, and it reinforced gender norms as the work offered to BUMIDOM participants was highly gendered. Despite the huge numbers from the overseas departments who arrived through this scheme, the BUMIDOM has not yet entered the official French national narrative, and the state has neglected to incorporate the BUMIDOM into its memorialization of migration, because this would mean acknowledging the gendered and racialized aspects of the scheme. I argue, then, that documentary filmmakers use cinematic techniques to counter the official state-sanctioned discourse about the Bureau and allow those directly involved in its activities to share their personal experiences of migration.

**Weds 15 February 2023, 4pm**

on Zoom only, link TBC

**Ass. Prof. Julia Elsky** (Loyola University, Chicago)

‘Writing the Occupation.

Jewish Emigré Voices in Wartime France’

*(event co-organised with Manchester’ Centre for Jewish Studies)*

Among the Jewish writers who emigrated from Eastern Europe to France in the 1910s and 1920s, a number chose to switch from writing in their languages of origin to writing primarily in French, a language that represented both a literary center and the promises of French universalism. Under the Nazi occupation of France, these Jewish émigré authors continued to write in their adopted language, even as the Vichy regime and Nazi occupiers denied their French identity through xenophobic and antisemitic laws. These writers reexamined both their Jewishness and their place as authors in France through the language in which they wrote. In addition to discussing authors like Irène Némirovsky, Jean Malaquais, and Romain Gary, in this talk I will pay particular attention to Benjamin Fondane’s rewriting of his poetry during the war, engaging with the topics of exile and multilingualism, and putting his work into the context of a Jewish Francophonie.

**Tues 14 March 2023, 5pm**

Ellen Wilkinson building A2.6

+ Zoom: <https://zoom.us/meeting/98321286178>

**Dr Isabelle Vanderschelden** (REMELICE, Université d’Orléans)

‘Traditions and legacies of dialogue-writing

in contemporary French comedies (Audiard, Splendid, Veber)’

Comedy has always been the cornerstone of the French film industry, with each generation bringing new stars, authors and box-office hits. From a generic perspective, it is often seen as a vehicle to release tension and address society issues with some distance and poetic licence. The nature of French humour is diverse; it has also been influenced by culturally specific features – the stage traditions of farce, *théâtre de boulevard* and *marivaudage*, a persistent sense of satire and parody and, above all, the performance of the French language relying on wit, wordplay and jokes. As a result, dialogue plays a crucial role in producing humour and entertaining Francophone audiences across generations, even if comedies are sometimes viewed as too culturally specific to cross borders.

After outlining the main traditions of humour underlying comic cinema in France since 1945 (traditions supported by the increasing role of television in launching comedy stars), this presentation will focus on dialogue-writing styles and strategies. Using examples from a range of classic comedies and cult dialogue writers like Michel Audiard, Francis Veber, Josiane Balasko and Alain Chabat, we will try to elucidate what really makes the French laugh, why some dialogue writers like Audiard have left such a legacy, why cult dialogue is so important in audiences’ collective imaginary, and why some actors become dialogue writers and perform their own lines. Warning: discussions of comedy can be serious!