In 1992, the Institut de droit comparé Édouard Lambert created an American Law course, accessible to 3rd and 4th year law students at the Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3. The course is taught throughout the academic year in a series of three or four modules of 12 hours each, each module being taught by a professor visiting from an American Law School. The purpose is to give a general introduction to American law and an insight of the American legal method. Many students attending apply to study one year at an American partner Law School within our exchange programs with American Universities. Others are looking for an exposure to American law in view of adding a further international component to their curriculum.

This note gives an outline on the organization of the course and some basic information to American law professors who may be interested in visiting at Université Jean Moulin, Lyon, France, so that they may organize their visit.

I. THE AMERICAN LAW COURSE

A - THE COURSE CONTENT
The program varies from year to year depending on the visiting professors. It is agreed that the visitor coming first in the fall term teaches either a General Introduction to US Law or Constitutional Law or, as may be agreed, some introductory unit on a basic topic like tort or contract. Those coming next can teach whatever topic they wish within the field of their expertise. However, very specialized or overt-technical subjects are best avoided. The purpose is to give the students a general introduction and a presentation of the American Legal Method, which can be done through a very wide range of topics.

The course is mostly attended by full time third year students who do that in addition to their other regular classes. A good half of them do apply to take part to our study abroad program with American partner Universities.

B - THE TIME TABLE
Unless otherwise agreed, a course unit is a 12 hour unit taught in a period of four weeks, which may be reduced to three weeks when needed. The best is to teach 3 hours a week but we try to make arrangements to keep two weekly slots of 2 hours available.

By French standard, a one hour class actually means a 50 minute contact period with the students.

In order to avoid time-table clashes with the regular courses taught at the Law School, the American law course is taught at lunch time and/or late evening sessions.

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C - NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND ATTENDANCE
The enrollment is usually 80 students. This means 60 to 70 students in attendance in the fall term and 30 to 40 in the spring, many students dropping when finding out that they were not selected to study abroad.

Like the other courses taught at the Institute of Comparative Law (English Law, German Law, Italian Law, Spanish Law), the American Law course is an extra-curricular course. Although not compulsory, attendance is strongly encouraged.

D - TEACHING MATERIALS AND METHOD
We may only circulate a limited number of documents, preferably less than 50 pages for each 12 hour course unit. Note that French students are not used to read as much as their American colleagues, and since the students are also attending some 20 hours a week in their third year program, they may not be expected to do much reading in American law. Although they are used to be taught ex cathedra, it is important to work with documents during classes. French students feel more comfortable when the course has a structure (division in chapters, sections, paragraphs etc).

One cannot be too ambitious with assignments. Few students will do the reading and most of them will listen passively during classes. French students are not used to participate actively but some of them will take an active part to class discussions if properly stimulated.

In addition to the 50 page handout, to be circulated to all students, a bigger document may be prepared, three copies of which will be made available at the Comparative Law Library. Another option is to recommend a book for further readings. The Library will then purchase two or three copies of the book to be reserved for the students.

Since it takes two weeks to have the documents copied, originals are to be sent one month before the visit. Book lists should be sent two or three months in advance.

E - EXAM AND ASSESSMENT
An examination is organized for each course unit, usually at the end of each teaching period. It is best done in the form of a short written exam (e.g. a set of short questions, to be answered in 60 minutes or more; a hypothetical case may be included).

Students getting a failing grade or missing the exam are allowed to sit another exam, organized in late June or early July. Visiting professors are therefore asked to provide two sets of exam questions.

Exams may be open book. Clear directions are needed as to the documents allowed in the examination room...

2. VISITING AND STAYING IN LYON

A - FORMAL APPOINTMENT AND SALARY

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A complete resume, including home address and date of birth, is requested. The appointment is proposed by the Dean and made by the Law Faculty appointment committee, with subsequent and formal approval of the University authorities and the French Ministry of Education.

The standard salary offered to American visitors is FF 21,000 per month, corresponding to a 12 hour teaching unit. The salary is paid in one lump sum after the teaching has ended. The French administration has got its own payment procedure, organized outside the commercial banking system, which causes foreign payments to be extremely slow. Unless the payment can be made on a personal bank account in France, which is difficult to open for a non permanent resident, the money has to be transferred to a bank account in the US via the French Public Treasury, Embassy or Consulates. Such a procedure can take up to three months.

B - ACCOMMODATION

Ms. Annie Simon, administrative officer of the Comparative Law Institute, will organize everything regarding accommodation, once informed of precise dates of arrival and departure and all relevant details.

A very convenient solution is to rent a studio or a small apartment (fully equipped, with cooking facilities) at the Residence Villesanzy. This residence (http://www.mairie-lyon.fr/en/focus/ecoz_villesanzy.html), owned by the City of Lyon, is nicely arranged in a well located 18th century building, for visiting professors and scholars. You will find a description enclosed. Lyon has a very modern and efficient public transport system and the Residence Villesanzy is connected by subway to the City Center and the University. Parking facilities are also offered at the Residence.

Lyon (http://www.mairie-lyon.fr/en/index.html) is a two hour commute from Paris via the high speed train (TGV). The Lyon International Airport (Lyon-Saint-Exupéry Airport; LYS) (http://www.lyon.aeroport.fr/) has a daily direct connection with New York JFK (Delta and Air France) and is easily reachable from major American cities via, Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Paris or Zurich.

C - THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2000-2001

First Semester: October 2 to December 22, 2000
Second Semester: January 15 to April 27, 2001
Winter break February 10 to 18, 2001 (one week)
Spring Holiday March 31 to April 16, 2001 (two weeks)

D - CONTACTS

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