

French

Chair: Jack Iverson, Foreign Languages and Literatures

French

Sarah Hurlburt

Nicole Simek

Zahi Zalloua (on Sabbatical, Fall 2018)

Courses in French develop critical, linguistic, and cultural competence through the study of topics in French and Francophone language, literature, and cinema. In addition to language proficiency, students in French will acquire cultural, literary, and historical knowledge of France and the Francophone world, and learn to organize and articulate a critical, literary analysis within and across specific periods and genres.

The French faculty also offer courses in French literature, history, culture, and film under the rubric of World Literature. These courses, taught in English, are open to both students of French and students with no knowledge of French language.

Placement in language courses: Students with previous foreign language experience in French must take a placement test in order to enroll. The test may be accessed through the website of the Registrar.

Distribution: Courses completed in French apply to the humanities and cultural pluralism distribution areas, with the following exceptions:

Fine Art or Humanities or Cultural Pluralism: 260

No distribution: 491, 492

Learning Goals: Courses in French develop critical skills and cultural and linguistic proficiency through the interpretation of French-language literatures and medias. The successful French major will be an engaged, self-aware reader, able to analyze a broad range of cultural production, from literary text to historical document to popular media. They will be able to formulate their ideas clearly, orally or in written form, displaying awareness of and respect for cultural specificity. They will be able to articulate some of the ways in which French-language cultures create knowledge and express ideas, displaying an awareness of how language itself and different social and cultural contexts influence their own perspectives on the world. In order to become just such a reader, the French major will develop of a set of interrelated literary, linguistic and cultural competencies, articulated below.

- **Literary Analysis**

- Study in French allows students to develop specialized skills in literary analysis critical to effective engagement with a range of aesthetic and social questions. Upon graduation, a student will be able to:
- Analyze the structure of literary texts across genres, media (written, aural, visual), and Francophone cultures;
- Distinguish between unreflective aesthetic impressions and evidence-based interpretations and judgments of cultural products;
- Situate texts in relation to intellectual and historical contexts by identifying, assessing, and arguing from appropriate primary and secondary sources.

- **Advanced Language Competency**

- Language study is the foundation of the French major. A keen grasp of language itself is essential to understanding both the content and the significant formal dimension of a broad range of cultural products. Through the study and analysis of literature, advanced coursework in French seeks to develop a C1 level of competence according to the Common European Frame of Reference, as summarized in the following list of goals:
- Attain a level of linguistic proficiency that permit him/her to function independently and in a broad range of contexts, both familiar and unfamiliar.
- Articulate complex, clearly organized arguments, including effective transitions and appropriate use of supporting evidence.
- Function appropriately in both a formal and informal register, detecting and interpreting nuances in tone and style.

- **Cross-Cultural Competency**

- Graduates of the French program bring critically-informed perspectives to their participation in global networks of knowledge, commerce, technology, environment, and culture. Specifically, majors will be able to:

- Engage effectively in dialogue by speaking and writing with precision, nuance, and attention to ambiguity and difference;
- Recognize and analyze socio-aesthetic norms and judgments across national, historical, cultural and linguistic boundaries;
- Demonstrate familiarity with common cultural references and socio-political structures in Francophone communities of pertinence to personal and professional actions, as well as a capacity to build further knowledge in these areas.

The Foreign Languages and Literatures: French major: Thirty-six credits in French language and literature at the 300 and 400 level (or equivalent), with the exception of up to 4 credits from Whitman courses numbered 250-300. These credits must include one Introductory Studies course (French 320-329, or equivalent) and at least 12 credits at the 400-level. Credits may include up to 12 credits at the 300-level or higher transferred from approved study abroad programs or other colleges or universities; up to 4 credits from Whitman courses numbered 250-300; and up to eight credits from courses approved by the French faculty that are taught in English and deal with French or Francophone material.

Senior Assessment: All French majors are required to pass written and oral examinations the second semester of their senior year based on the departmental reading list. Declared majors have access to the French major CLEo site, which contains the reading list and sample questions from previous exams.

The Foreign Languages and Literatures: French minor: A minimum of 20 credits in French including one Introductory Studies course (French 320-329, or equivalent) and at least one 400-level (or equivalent) literature course taught in French. These 20 credits may include up to 4 credits from Whitman courses numbered 250-300. At least 12 of the 20 credits for the minor must be completed on campus at Whitman. Courses taught in English and courses numbered 210 or lower may not be counted toward the minor.

AP, IB, P-D-F, and independent study credits may NOT be used to fulfill major or minor credit or course requirements in French. Courses taken P-D-F prior to the declaration of the major or minor may be applied to the major or minor.

100 French I

Fall

Iverson

4 credits

A one-semester course for students who have had little or no formal contact with the language. Students will learn vocabulary and structures to discuss such topics as food culture, friends, familial relationships, work, and leisure activities in predictable contexts and in the present tense through the study of culturally specific examples from the French and francophone world. Students learn the structures and cultural functions of grammatical gender and formal and informal registers. Conducted in French; meets four times a week plus a half-hour conversation session with the French Native Speaker. Students who have previous experience in French are required to take a placement examination for entrance (available from the Registrar's web site).

150 French II

Fall, Spring

Fall: Simek; Spring: Zalloua

4 credits

A one-semester course for students who have already studied French at an introductory level. French II situates the student in time, emphasizing past and future narrative structures in predictable contexts through the study of culturally specific examples from the French and francophone world. Themes may include urban culture and media, health and the environment, travel and technology, and personal and national celebrations. Weekly readings and compositions, grammatical exercises, exercises in spontaneous and recorded oral production, and active participation required. Conducted in French; meets four times a week plus a half-hour conversation session with the French Native Speaker. *Prerequisite:* French 100 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's web site).

200 French III

Fall, Spring

Iverson

4 credits

A one-semester course for students at the mid- to high-intermediate level. French III reviews the structures of French I and II but in less predictable or unpredictable contexts and with greater emphasis on the successful articulation of multiple points of view. Students develop their written and oral skills in French through the critical discussion and analysis of culturally specific examples from the media, film, and literatures of the French and francophone world. Themes may include gender and society, visions of progress, media cultures, and political and environmental attitudes. Weekly readings and compositions, grammatical exercises, exercises in spontaneous and recorded oral production, and active participation required. Conducted in French; meets four times a week plus a half-hour conversation session with the French Native

Speaker. French 200 or its equivalent is required for students wishing to study abroad in a French-speaking country.

Prerequisite: French 150 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's web site).

252 Contemporary Cinema of the Francophone World

Not offered 2018-19

2 credits

Cinema continues to be a prominent part of cultural production in the Francophone world. This course will focus on contemporary production in France, with possible inclusions from other French-speaking countries. Screenings will provide the basis for discussion, analysis of cinematic techniques, and exploration of contemporary issues as represented in recent films. Course work will include additional readings, written assignments such as film reviews and scene analyses, and presentations. Conducted in French. May be repeated for credit. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent.

255 Actualités

Spring

Iverson

2 credits

This course will focus on recent cultural and political events in France and the Francophone world. Students will explore a variety of media outlets and examine common journalistic formats, working with print, visual and audio sources. Course work will include the discussion of current news reports and major developments from recent months, vocabulary exercises, analysis of a broad range of news media platforms, and a final research project. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200, placement, or consent of instructor.

258 Phonetics

Not offered 2018-19

1 credit

This course will introduce students to the systematic study of French phonetics and prosody (patterns of stress and intonation), with the goal of improving pronunciation and the comprehension of spoken French. Course work will include weekly meetings, transcription and recording exercises, secondary readings, and exams. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent.

260 Improv(ing) in French

Not offered 2018-19

2 credits

Students will develop speed, fluency and range in register in oral communication skills in French through exercises in theatrical improvisation. In-class exercises will blend traditional theater sports games with scene work and improvisation around existing texts. Two class meeting per week. Homework includes extensive vocabulary development, reading and preparing scenes using text and video sources and practice writing dialogue in French. Conducted in French. May be repeated for a maximum of four credits. Credit may count toward fine arts. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent.

265 Reading Pictures, Looking at Text: The French "bande dessinée"

Not offered 2018-19

2 credits

The Franco-Belge "bande dessinée", or "9th art" is the third largest comic market in the world after the USA and Japan. Initially concentrated in the youth culture genres of adventure and fantasy (*Tin-Tin*, *Blueberry*, *Asterix*), French-language graphic narrative has since expanded its form and its reach to include non-fiction, autobiography, trauma narratives and social commentary as well as literary and fantastic texts. Coursework will focus on the poetics of graphic narrative across multiple subgenres within the "bande dessinée" tradition, with an emphasis on recent works. We will read works by authors such as Hergé, Goscinny, Bretécher, Davodeau, Rabaté, Larcenet, Loisel and Tripp. Students will interact with visiting authors to the Fall 2015 Sheehan gallery exhibit on graphic narrative. Two class meetings per week; frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or placement exam.

305 Advanced Composition and Stylistics

Spring

Simek

4 credits

Students will develop their creative expression and written argumentation skills through the study and practice of various popular and literary genres, such as portraiture, essays, and narrative fiction. Coursework focuses on developing written composition and stylistic strategies, but also requires active discussion of the readings, oral projects, and in-class oral activities (such as theatrical exercises). Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

306 Advanced Communication and Argumentation**Fall****Hurlburt****4 credits**

Students will expand and perfect their ability to interact accurately and appropriately in all registers of spoken and written French. Coursework includes frequent debate and conversation, analysis of electronic media, reading comprehension, advanced grammar exercises and short written compositions. Attention will be given to cultural analysis of communicative strategies. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

316 Contemporary France and the Francophone World**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

An introduction to the society and culture of France and the Francophone world from the early 20th century to the present. Topics discussed include French youth, the condition of women, immigration and racism, the economy and work, Paris, the provinces and the DOM-TOM, Francophone countries, education and politics. Assignments may include readings from the French press and modern French fiction, French film screenings, and radio broadcasts. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

320 Introductory Studies in French Literature: The Politics and Aesthetics of Love**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course provides a critical introduction to French poetry, theater, prose, and film through an exploration of representations of love in selected works by major French and Francophone authors. In focusing on love, we will examine the politics of representation: who is the subject/object of love? How is desire figured in different periods and genres? How has French literature contributed to the development or transgression of social norms? Students acquire the tools and vocabulary necessary to read closely and analyze texts in French across the centuries. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

321 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Crisis and Creation**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

From intensely personal moments of conflict or doubt to broad social and political upheavals, crisis has served as a significant motivator for literary production. This course examines representations of crisis as genesis of critical consciousness and creativity in selected works of French and Francophone poetry, theater, prose, and film. We will pay particular attention to conceptions of authorship, literary form, pleasure, responsibility, freedom, and constraint underpinning writers' engagement with topics such as gender and sexuality, revolution, racial violence, and civic and moral duties. Students will acquire the tools and vocabulary necessary to read closely and analyze texts in French across centuries. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

322 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Becoming Quebec**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course provides a critical introduction to French-language poetry, theater, prose, and film. Students will acquire the tools and vocabulary necessary to read closely and analyze texts in a variety of genres and media. In focusing on Quebec, we will examine the processes by which a national literature is formed, including the establishment of supporting cultural institutions and efforts to articulate a distinct cultural identity. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

324 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Identities**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Can we choose who we are? How do the perceptions of others influence our perceptions of ourselves? Is identity a personal truth or a social contract? This course provides a critical introduction to French-language poetry, theater, prose, and film through the study of literary texts centered on questions of identity. Students will acquire the tools and vocabulary

necessary to read closely and analyze texts in a variety of genres and media. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

327 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Coming of Age

Fall

Iverson

4 credits

The transition from childhood to full participation in the adult world has been a standard trope in French and Francophone literature. In this course, a broad range of works building from this theme will provide a critical introduction to reading French poetry, theater, prose, and film. Students will acquire the tools and vocabulary necessary to read closely and analyze texts in French through the study of selected works. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended Prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

328 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Social Climbers

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

What can you buy with money? What do you have when you've none? What motivates change in a society? In this course, we will explore intersections of class, gender and power in texts from and about 19th-century France. Students in the Introductory Studies series develop the tools and vocabulary necessary to interpret and analyze French-language poetry, theater, prose, and film. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

329 Introductory Studies in French Literature: French Masculinities

Spring

Zalloua

4 credits

This course provides a critical introduction to French poetry, theater, prose, and film through an exploration of representations of masculinity in selected works by major French and Francophone authors. In focusing on masculinity, we will examine the politics and aesthetics of gendered representation: What types of desires and actions are associated with certain models of masculinity? How does masculinity relate to the production of images of femininity? Is the image of French masculinity constant throughout the centuries? If not, what contributes to its transformation? Students acquire the tools and vocabulary necessary to read closely and analyze texts in French across the centuries. Frequent short papers, oral presentations, and active participation are required. Conducted in French. Satisfies the Introductory Studies requirement for both the French minor and the French major. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 305 or 306.

401 French Feminism

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

This course will explore the movement of French Feminism as articulated by its leading representatives, Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous. Taking a genealogical approach to the investigation of "feminism," we will situate these theorists' writing within psychoanalytic and postcolonial traditions, and compare their interpretations of feminism with those of their Anglophone contemporaries (Butler and Spivak). Particular attention will be given to the representations of gender and sexual difference in literary works and the ways such works frame the reader's access to the "feminine." Writers and filmmakers studied may include Labé, Graffigny, Breton, Beauvoir, Duras, Djébar, and Truffaut.

402 Montaigne and Literary Theory

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

The purpose of this course is to read Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* in light of contemporary literary theory. We will examine a broad array of critical schools and perspectives, including reader-response theory, feminism, poststructuralism, and postcolonial studies. Attention will also be paid to Montaigne's intellectual and literary context, reading his work alongside other key Renaissance texts. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

405 Epistolarities: Letters real and imagined**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

The epistolary novel, a widespread and popular genre in 17th and 18th century France, is a rare bird in contemporary fiction. Letters (broadly understood), however, are omnipresent to this day, in both the public and private sphere. In this class, we will investigate epistolary practices wherever they may be found. We will compare the formal strategies of authenticity found in epistolary novels, such as Laclos' *Liasons dangereuses* (1782), with the strategies of real-world personal and public letters. We will consider the impact of communications technologies on the epistolary relationship from the 18th century to the present day, and examine the ways in which intimate, familial, communal, and even national identities are uniquely defined through correspondence. Conducted in French. Prerequisites: at least two 300-level courses in French or equivalent, or consent of instructor. *Prerequisite:* Two 300-level courses in French or equivalent, or consent of instructor.

407 Ironic Enchantments**Fall****Simek****4 credits**

Whether we understand it as the creation of multiple, antagonistic meanings, as the act of saying one thing but meaning another, or as an existential paradox, irony has long fascinated writers and critics for its ability to unsettle us and to shed new light on aesthetic and social norms. Irony is frequently associated with critical, emotionless distance, or described as a corrosive force, yet writers have also turned to irony for its capacity for play and enchantment, emphasizing instead the pleasures of invention and re-creation. In this class, we will examine the various forms irony takes in contemporary fiction, essays, and films, in dialogue with earlier texts and with particular attention to competing claims about irony's affects and purposes. Taking postcolonial writing as our primary focus, we will examine the social and material conditions in which ironizing happens, and the ways in which readers with differing interpretive frameworks, dispositions, and subject positions encounter one another through the mediation of literature. Conducted in French. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite:* Two 300-level courses in French or equivalent, or consent of instructor.

409 French National Cinemas**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

What constitutes a "national" cinema? The classification of cinematic production according to national origin continues to function as an underlying organizational principle of film history texts. "National" cinema, however, simultaneously reflects and produces national (cultural) identities. The concept of national cinema thus encompasses both films that attempt to define a singular, unique cultural identity and films that actively resist such definitions. This course will examine the aesthetic, economic, geographic, linguistic and legislative boundaries defining French national cinemas. Topics will include censorship, reception, colonial cinema, cinematic remakes, literary adaptation, and the French response to Hollywood. May be taken for credit toward the French major, but not toward the French minor. May be taken for credit toward the Film & Media Studies major. May be elected as World Literature 309. *Prerequisite:* Not open to first-semester, first-year students when offered in the fall semester.

427 Subjectivity and Otherness in Medieval and Renaissance Literature**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course examines the relationship between subjectivity and otherness in French medieval and renaissance works. From the early medieval epic *La Chanson de Roland* to Michel de Montaigne's late renaissance essay "Des Cannibales," representations of the cultural and religious Other have played a crucial role in the fashioning of French identity. We will explore the ethics and politics of representations that such encounters generated. Alongside the paradigm of the cross-cultural encounter, we also will investigate the gendered construction of otherness that takes place in lyric poetry, focusing in particular on desire and misogyny in relation to the medieval idea of courtly love, or *fin'amor*, and its reconfiguration in renaissance Petrarchan poetry. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

429 Self and Society in Seventeenth-Century France**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Reacting to the rapid transformation of political and social structures, 17th-century French writers pursued a sustained inquiry into the proper role of the individual in society. Primary readings will include works by Corneille, Molière, Racine, and Lafayette. The course also will examine the legacy of the "Grand Siècle" as an element of modern French culture. Required papers, presentations, class participation, and a final project. Conducted in French. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

430 France and New France: Eighteenth-Century Literature**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Exploration, commerce, and colonialism brought the French into contact with many different cultures during the 17th and 18th centuries. These encounters raised fundamental questions about human nature, societal order, and the existence of universal truths, questions that shaped the philosophy and literature of the French Enlightenment. In this course, we will first consider the broad impact of cross-cultural comparisons. The second half of the course will then focus on the specific example of the French experience in North America. Required papers, presentations, class participation, and a final project. Conducted in French. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

431 Literary Paris, 1600-1800**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, Paris emerged as the leading European cultural capital, characterized by an extremely active literary milieu. This course will focus on the city of Paris as a literary subject and as a site of literary production. Readings will include poetry, theatrical works, novels, and political and literary essays, as well as recent theoretical studies dealing with the sociology of literature. Required papers, presentations, class participation, and a final project. Conducted in French. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

446 The Human Comedy and the Mysteries of Paris: France 1830-1848**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Social and political and aesthetic revolutions go hand in hand in 19th century France. Major factors on the political landscape of the July Monarchy (1830-1848) include the colonization of Algeria, the rise of industrialization, the creation of a working class, and the construction of the railroad. This is the time of Marx and Toqueville; of the first child labor laws and the first attempts at a system of public education. With the rise of the press and a provisional decrease in censure, Paris drew intellectuals from across Europe, writing for a larger reading public than ever before. We will investigate the active relationship between literature and society at the end of the Romantic period through contextualized analysis of texts by Balzac, Sand, Sue, Hugo, Nerval, Gauthier and more. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level courses in French, or consent of instructor.

447 Reading the Rules of the Game: Narrative in Text and Film**Spring****Hurlburt****4 credits**

This course will explore the nature and possibilities of traditional narrative in film, theater, and prose through close readings of texts by theatrical authors such as Marivaux and Musset, prose authors such as Balzac, Flaubert and Maupassant, and film directors such as Renoir, Chabrol, Kechiche and Rivette, as well as selected critical works on adaptation and authorship. Class will be conducted in French. Texts will be read in French, and movies will be shown in French with English subtitles. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

448 New Novel, New Wave: Revolutions in Prose, Film, and Drama**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course will explore the evolution and revolution of narrative structures in France in the 1950s and 1960s. Authors and directors called into question the traditional focus on plot and characterization, launching a new era of exploration into the subjective possibilities of textual and cinematic narrative. We will study authors and directors from the movements of the “Nouveau roman” and the “Nouvelle vague,” such as Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute, Duras, Truffaut, Godard, Varda, and Resnais, as well as plays by authors such as Ionesco, Beckett, or Sarraute. Class will be conducted in French. Texts will be read in French, and movies will be shown in French with English subtitles. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

449 Modernism and the Age of Suspicion**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

We will explore the aesthetic, philosophical, and political developments of the 20th century in France through works by writers such as Valéry, Proust, Breton, Sartre, Beckett, Camus, Sarraute, and Duras. Conducted in French. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

450 Ethics, Politics, Aesthetics and the Afro-Caribbean Text**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

The French language and culture were imposed on populations across the globe over the course of France's imperial expansion. This course studies literary movements, genres, and critical approaches that emerged from this contact between cultures in West Africa and the Caribbean. Conducted in French. *Prerequisites:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

491, 492 Independent Study**Fall, Spring****Staff****1-3 credits**

Directed readings of topics or works selected to complement, but not substitute for, the regular period offerings of the French program. The proposal for independent study must be approved by the tenure-track staff. The number of students accepted for the course will depend on the availability of the staff. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

498 Honors Thesis**Fall, Spring****Staff****4 credits**

Designed to further independent research projects leading to the preparation of an undergraduate thesis or a project report. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in French. *Prerequisite:* admission to honors candidacy.

The program in French also includes courses in world literature that are taught in English and may be taken for French major credit. These classes are listed in the *World Literature* section of the catalog.