

French and Francophone Studies

Chair: Sarah Hurlburt
Jack Iverson

Nicole Simek
Zahi Zalloua

Courses in French and Francophone Studies 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 Global Literatures. These courses, taught in English, are open to both students of French and students with no knowledge of French language.

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will be an engaged, self-aware reader, able to analyze a broad range of cultural production, from literary text to historical document to popular media.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 adequate 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.

Placement in language courses: Students with previous 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 or cultural pluralism distribution areas, with the following exceptions:

- Fine Art or Humanities or Cultural Pluralism: 260
- No distribution: 491, 492

Total credits requirements for a French and Francophone Studies major: 36

The French and Francophone Studies major:

- 36-44 Credits (depending on prior experience)
- Required Courses
 - One Introductory Studies course: French 320-329 or equivalent
 - At least 8 credits at 400-level
- Other notes
 - All credits must be at 200-400 level,
 - May include a maximum of 12 credits at the 300-level or higher from approved study abroad or other colleges or universities
 - Students may count as many as 8 credits from another department toward the French and Francophone Studies major, subject to approval by the French and Francophone Studies faculty
 - Students who start in French and Francophone Studies 100 will complete a minimum of 44 credits total
 - No courses may be taken PDF after declaration of the major
 - No AP, IB or independent study credits may be applied toward the major
- Honors
 - Students submit a Honors in Major Study Application to their department
 - Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project
 - Must be submitted within the first six weeks of the two-semester period in which student is eligible
 - Accumulated at least 87 credits
 - Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman.
 - Cumulative GPA of at least 3.300 on all credits earned at Whitman College
 - Major GPA of at least 3.500
 - Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program
 - Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course.
 - Pass the senior assessment with distinction
 - The department will submit the Honors applications to the Registrar's Office of students pursuing Honors by the specified deadline
 - The department submit "Senior Assessment/Major Study Certificate" to the Registrar's Office no later than Reading Day
 - An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day

The French and Francophone Studies minor:

- 20-28 Credits (depending on prior experience)
- Required Courses
 - One Introductory Studies course, French 320-329 or equivalent

- At least one 400-level course
- Other notes
 - All credits must be numbered 200 or higher
 - At least 12 credits must be completed on campus at Whitman
 - Courses taught in English may not be applied toward the minor
 - Students who start in French and Francophone Studies 100 will complete a minimum of 28 credits total
 - No courses may be taken PDF after declaration
 - No AP, IB or independent study credits may be applied toward the minor

100 French I

Fall

Simek

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 Language Assistant. 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

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 Language Assistant. *Prerequisite:* French 100 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's web site).

200 Intermediate French

Fall, Spring

Fall: Hurlburt; Spring: Simek

4 credits

These intermediate level courses emphasize communication and intercultural competency. Intermediate French reviews and builds on structures from French I and II, but in less predictable contexts and with greater emphasis on the successful articulation of multiple points of view. Students develop written and oral skills in French through the critical discussion and analysis of culturally specific documents from media, cinema, and literature 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 writing assignments, grammatical exercises, spontaneous and recorded oral production, and active participation required. Conducted in French; meets four times per week plus one half-hour conversation session with the French Language Assistant. Students may take either or both semesters, depending on faculty recommendation. May be repeated for credit. *Prerequisite:* French 150 or French 200 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's web site).

252 Contemporary Cinema of the Francophone World

Fall

Iverson

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.

253 La Chanson**Not offered 2021-22****2 credits**

This 2-credit course will be devoted to the study of Francophone popular song culture from the early twentieth century to the present. Artists considered will come from North America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe. Students will analyze not only song lyrics but also cultural norms surrounding performance, the social construction of the singer's persona, and the historical context for particular works. Assigned work will include short papers, class presentations, a curated playlist, and a final project. *Prerequisite:* French 200, placement exam, or consent of instructor.

255 Actualités**Not offered 2021-22****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.

256 Special Topics in French and Francophone Studies**2 credits**

A one-time offering focused on a specific aspect of French and Francophone studies. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism. Any current offerings follow.

256 ST: Jump Cut! The French New Wave**Spring****Hurlburt****2 credits**

The French New Wave changed the face of cinema. In the 1950s and 1960s French filmmakers Godard, Truffaut, Resnais, Marker, Varda, Rouch, and others threw out the rule book and fled the studio, producing a series of jarring, delightful, and deeply inventive films. New Wave cinema was low-budget, often ironic, and resolutely, permanently young. We will look at the tensions between social and aesthetic revolutions and the impact of new film technologies on film production. Students will acquire and apply critical, technical, and aesthetic vocabulary relating to cinematic practices and structures. Films are in French with English subtitles; class sessions will be held in English. Students with an advanced level in French will have access to substitute or supplemental readings in French. Active participation, frequent short writing assignments, an oral presentation, and a final project required. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor. May be elected as Global Literature 201. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

258 Phonetics**Not offered 2021-22****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**Spring****Hurlburt****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. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent.

265 French Comics
Not offered 2021-22

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. Two class meetings per week; frequent short papers, active participation, and a final project are required. Conducted in French. May taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent.

300 Cuisine et gastronomie

Fall

Iverson

4 credits

Why are culinary and gastronomic traditions so strongly associated with Francophone cultures? How did these traditions develop, and why do they continue to play a significant role today? Students will perfect advanced French language skills through the critical exploration of text and media content. We will consider the concept of “terroir” and examine the relationship between food and class. We will examine the cultural assumptions implicit in television shows like *Qui sera le prochain grand pâtissier?* We will read texts ranging from Zola to *Astérix* to the *Guide Michelin*, with stops along the way. Students will explore the flavors as well as the words of French cooking, and interrogate the role of food cultures in national identity. Active participation, targeted grammatical exercises, frequent short writing assignments, oral presentations, and a final project required. *Prerequisite:* French 200, placement test or consent of instructor.

304 Speaking for Change

Not offered 2021-22

4 credits

The rhetoric of social change is contextual and cultural. If we want to change the world with our words, we must learn to express ourselves orally with skill, respect, and intent to a range of audiences and for diverse purposes. In this course students will improve their ability to perceive, interpret and navigate cultural contexts around issues of personal, communal, and civic importance. Coursework will include case studies, debate, and oral presentations, supported by short readings, media, and written exercises targeting the core language structures of persuasion and debate. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

310 Translation: Theory and Practice

Not offered 2021-22

4 credits

Students will develop their communication and analytical skills through the study of translation as a creative practice and a window onto relationships between language and culture, grammar and interpretation, and politics, economics, and ethics. Discussions focus on popular and literary texts and films ranging from fiction and portraiture to social commentary and academic writing. In addition to written exercises, coursework includes active discussion of the readings, multimedia projects, and in-class oral activities to help students continue to advance their listening and speaking skills. Three course meetings per week plus a half-hour conversation session with the Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

315 French Fried: Stories of Franco-American Exchange

Spring

Hurlburt

4 credits

How do places shape values that impact the creation of cultural products? Why is there an entire category of French comics set in the American West? Why have so many American authors written their works in France? The French have a love affair with the “grands espaces” of the American West; Americans long to visit Paris, “the city of lights”. French comics celebrate masculine colonial fantasies of the American frontier; Emily goes to Paris. The history of Franco-American exchange networks goes back centuries and continues today. Exchanges occur among fur traders, gold miners, settlers, and soldiers; students, academics, artists, and authors; winemakers and wheat farmers, bloggers and vloggers and rock climbers. In this course we will examine network structures of migration

and cultural influence across geographic location. We'll analyze the language used to talk about culture using the tools of digital humanities. We'll study national stereotypes and the international reception of, and revision to, cultural products. Students will strengthen and hone advanced French language skills through the comparative analysis of text and media content, and through in-depth exploration of values, networks, and patterns of cultural and linguistic exchange. Active participation, frequent short writing assignments, oral presentations, and a final project required. *Prerequisite:* French 200 or equivalent.

316 Contemporary France and the Francophone World

Not offered 2021-22

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 304 or 310.

320 Introductory Studies in French Literature: The Politics and Aesthetics of Love

Not offered 2021-22

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 the French and Francophone Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 304 or 310.

321 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Crisis and Creation

Not offered 2021-22

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 the French and Francophone Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 304 or 310.

324 Introductory Studies in French Literature: Identities

Not offered 2021-22

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 the French and Francophone Studies major or minor. *Prerequisite:* French 200, or placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Recommended prerequisite:* French 304 or 310.

329 Introductory Studies in French Literature: French Masculinities

Not offered 2021-22

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 the French and Francophone Studies major or minor. 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 304 or 310.

400 Paris dans tous ses états

Spring

Iverson

4 credits

Paris—political capital of France, cultural capital of the western world—has been both a monument and a magnet for authors, artists, musicians, and philosophers for over 400 years. Through the combined lens of literature, history, and urban geography, we will explore the invention of consumerism in the 17th century, the architectural and industrial modernization of the city in the 19th century, and the colonial exhibitions of the early 20th century. We will examine the shifting physical and cultural landscape of the modern city, examining both the monumental cultural projects of François Mitterrand's presidency and the marginalization of the *banlieue*. Conducted in French. Short papers, class presentations, and a final project. *Prerequisite:* at least two 300-level French classes or consent of instructor.

401 French Feminism

Not offered 2021-22

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 2021-22

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.

407 Ironic Enchantments

Not offered 2021-22

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 2021-22

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 Global Literatures 309. Not open to first-semester, first-year students when offered in the fall semester.

427 Subjectivity and Otherness in Medieval and Renaissance Literature

Fall

Zalloua

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.

447 Reading the Rules of the Game: Narrative in Text and Film

Not offered 2021-22

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 2021-22

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 2021-22

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 2021-22

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 global literatures that are taught in English and may be taken for French major credit. These classes are listed in the *Global Literatures* section of the catalog.