

French and Francophone Studies

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Language. History. Literature. Diaspora. Film. Comics. Culture. When you study French you don't just learn a language. You discover global networks of knowledge, culture, technology, and environment. You compare historical movements and systems of power. You learn research skills, collaborative thinking, and project design. You can write a paper or proposal, give a presentation or create a poster, lead a discussion, or teach a lesson – all in two languages. At every level, you investigate the ways French-language cultures create meaning and express ideas, as well as how language itself shapes our perspectives on the world.

The French program at Whitman College offers a minor, a major, and an integrated program called the Major+French, consisting of a primary major plus an integrated French component.

Affiliated faculty also offer courses in French and Francophone literature, history, theory, 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.

The successful French major, minor or Major+French will achieve at least a B2 (Common European Frame of Reference) / or Advanced Mid level (ACTFL assessment), and in many cases will achieve a C1 level / Advanced High level.

Learning Goals:

- Function independently and appropriately in written and spoken French in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts;
- Engage effectively in dialogue by speaking and writing with precision, nuance, and respectful attention to ambiguity and difference;
- Produce clearly organized and evidence-based interpretations and judgments of cultural issues and products drawing from appropriate primary and secondary sources;
- Demonstrate critical understanding of texts (including film and image) as interactions between author, audience, and contexts of production and consumption;
- Demonstrate familiarity with common cultural references and socio-political structures in Francophone communities, 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 Arts or Humanities or Cultural Pluralism: 260

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

The French and Francophone Studies major:

- 36 credits
- Required courses
 - At least 24 credits taught in French at the 200 level or above, or equivalent (including French 497);
 - Up to 16 credits composed of any combination of the following:
 - Up to 4 AP credits (see note)
 - Up to 12 credits from approved courses taught in English
 - Up to 12 credits transferred from off-campus studies or another institution.
 - Up to 4 credits “double-dipped” with approved courses counted towards another major or minor program
 - Attainment of B2 or Advanced Mid level on a recognized language proficiency assessment (DELF, ACTFL, etc.).
 - French 497 Senior capstone project; oral defense and public presentation.
- Honors
 - Students do not apply for admission to candidacy for honors
 - 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
 - Chair of the department will notify the Registrar of students attaining Honors no later than the beginning of week 12 of the semester.
 - An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day

Notes:

- Courses numbered 25X may be taken at any point following completion of or credit for one semester at the 200-level.
- Students who start at the 100-level will need a total of 44 credits to complete the major.
- No courses may be taken P-D-F after declaration.
- Within the 12-credit transfer limitation, any university-level courses taught entirely in French may count toward the major, regardless of topic.
- A score of 4 or 5 on the AP French exam or an IB French B score of 5 or higher will be recognized as the equivalent of credit for French 205 (4 credits).
- Independent study credits may not be applied toward the major, with the exception of French 497.
- Students ask a faculty member of their choice to be their major advisor. Majors are normally declared by the end of the fourth semester, but a second major can be added at a later time. In all cases, we advise students to consult with French faculty early on, particularly if the student wishes to participate in Off-Campus Studies.

The French and Francophone Studies minor:

- 20 credits
- At least 16 credits taught in French at the 200 level or above, or equivalent.
- Up to 8 credits composed of any combination of the following:

- Up to 4 AP credits (see note)
- Up to 4 credits from an approved course taught in English
- Up to 8 credits transferred from off-campus studies or another institution
- Attainment of B2 or Advanced Mid level on a recognized language proficiency assessment (DELF, ACTFL, etc.).

Notes:

- Courses numbered 25X may be taken at any point following completion of or credit for one semester at the 200-level.
- Students who start at the 100-level will need a total of 28 credits to complete the minor.
- No courses may be taken P-D-F after declaration.
- Within the 8-credit transfer limitation, any university-level courses taught entirely in French may count toward the minor, regardless of topic.
- A score of 4 or 5 on the AP French exam or an IB French B score of 5 or higher will be recognized as the equivalent of credit for French 205 (4 credits).
- Independent study credits may not be applied toward the minor.
- Minors do not have academic advisors. While a minor can be declared at any point prior to graduation, we advise students to consult with French faculty early on, particularly if the student wishes to participate in Off-Campus Studies.

The Biology+French combined major: The requirements are fully described in the *Biology* section of the catalog.

The Geology+French combined major: The requirements are fully described in the *Geology* section of the catalog.

The Psychology+French combined major: The requirements are fully described in the *Psychology* section of the catalog.

The Religion+French combined major: The requirements are fully described in the *Religion* section of the catalog.

The Sociology+French combined major: The requirements are fully described in the *Sociology* section of the catalog.

105 French I

Fall

Iverson

4 credits

French I is an introductory course for students who have had little or no formal contact with the language. Students learn vocabulary and structures to discuss topics of immediate personal relevance in predictable contexts through the study of culturally specific examples from the francophone world. Examples include food culture, friends, familial relationships, work, and leisure activities. French I also introduces students to the structures and cultural functions of grammatical gender and formal and informal registers. Conducted in French; meets four times per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a 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).

106 French II

Spring

Hurlburt

4 credits

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 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 per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. *Prerequisite:* French 105 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's website).

205 French III

Fall

Hurlburt

4 credits

French III develops the capacity to describe and explain personal history and current events with nuance and detail. Students review and build on structures from French I and II, but in less predictable contexts and with greater emphasis on the articulation of temporal and causal relationships. Weekly readings and writing assignments, grammatical exercises, focused vocabulary development, spontaneous and recorded oral production, and active participation required. Conducted in French; meets four times per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. *Prerequisite:* French 106 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's web site) or consent of instructor.

206 French IV

Spring

Iverson

4 credits

French IV develops skills in intellectual exchange and debate. Students engage with increasingly complex issues and learn to articulate critical comparisons with an emphasis on the respectful and nuanced articulation of multiple points of view. Weekly readings and writing assignments, grammatical exercises, focused vocabulary development, spontaneous and recorded oral production, and active participation required. Conducted in French; meets four times per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. *Prerequisite:* French 106 or placement exam (available from the Registrar's web site) or consent of instructor.

225 Senegalese cinema

Fall

Hurlburt

2 credits

Migration and language are central themes in Senegalese cinema. Beginning with the work of Ousmane Sembene, Senegalese filmmakers assert the importance of African languages in film at the same time as they document and critique the conflicting roles of French language in Senegalese society. Through the work of Sembene Ousmane and successors Djibril Diop Mambéty, Moussa Sene Absa, and Matti Diop, we will explore the central preoccupations and visual and verbal languages of Senegalese cinema. Course work will include screenings, short readings, written assignments, and presentations. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206 or equivalent.

230 Story building in French theater

Fall

Hurlburt

2 credits

We will read contemporary and classical examples of French theater with our voices and our bodies, exploring how the text exists in space and time as well as words. We will take these insights and apply them to texts of our own creation, that we will then also read and revise together. This course integrates the practice of improvisation in its use of theater to generate writing, and personal writing to generate theater. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206 or equivalent.

250 La Télé

Not offered 2023-24

2 credits

Talk shows, soap operas, crime series, sit-coms, even the news—these types of programs are familiar to American telespectators, yet the form they take in French-language settings can be substantially different, reflecting traditions, values and current issues in the country of origin. Focusing primarily but not exclusively on France, this course will explore television as a culturally specific and significant expression of French-language cultures. We will concentrate primarily on recent content, while highlighting historical and institutional factors that have influenced current practices. Two course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

251 What's in a monument?**Spring****Hurlburt****2 credits**

As a nation, the French have a long tradition of self-definition and commemoration through large piles of stone. The Pantheon, the Arc de triomphe... but also the Louvre, the Académie française, and the Sorbonne all blend the institutional and the monumental. Public spaces are furthermore adorned with innumerable statues and busts commemorating historical figures, some of whom, like Confederate statues in the United States, are being challenged and sometimes removed for their colonial or slave trade activities. But who gets to decide what is collected, remembered, or ignored? How is France dealing with its colonial collections and heritage, and how are new works redefining what it means to build a monument? In this course we will examine symbolic objects, institutions, and individuals as cultural products. Coursework will include readings, media analysis, short writing assignments, and a collaborative project. Two course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

252 Contemporary Cinema of the Francophone World**Not offered 2023-24****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. Two course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

253 La Chanson**Not offered 2023-24****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. Two course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

255 Actualités**Not offered 2023-24****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. Two course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 or 206, or placement exam, 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 205 or equivalent. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism. Any current offerings follow.

260 Improv(ing) in French**Not offered 2023-24****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 205 or French 206 or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

300 Cuisine et gastronomie**Not offered 2023-24****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. Conducted in French; meets three times per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. *Prerequisite:* French 205 and 206, or placement test exam, or consent of instructor.

305 Paris dans tous ses états**Fall****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. Coursework includes short papers, class presentations, and a final project. Three course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 and 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

310 Translation: Theory and Practice**Spring****Hurlburt****4 credits**

Alexa, how do you say....? Translation is both a creative practice and a personal and global necessity. We will investigate the texts and contexts of translation, from literary texts to film subtitles to news feeds; from academic writing to official documents; from the function of translation in multilingual societies to the impact of machine translation and voice recognition. Coursework will include readings, films, written exercises, discussion, multimedia projects, and live interpretation games. Targeted exercises will develop students' grammatical and syntactical awareness of the relationship between English and French. Three course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 and French 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

315 French Fried: Stories of Franco-American Exchange**Not offered 2023-24****4 credits**

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. 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. Three course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 and 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

320 French Beyond France

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

In 2014, the Observatory of the French Language excitedly announced that, by the year 2070, population growth in African nations would make French the second most widely spoken language in the world. The Observatory has since backed away from that prediction, but French remains a significant world language, with a large majority of French speakers living outside of France. This course will examine the widely varying roles French plays in countries across the globe, functioning as a language of education, commerce, culture, diplomacy and everyday life. We will also explore some of the variations in the language itself as it appears in other settings and coexists with other languages. Students will refine advanced French language skills through the critical exploration of text and media content. Coursework will include frequent short writing assignments, active participation, and a final project. Three class meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 and 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

325 French Comics

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

The Franco-Belge “bande dessinée”, or “9th art” is the third largest comic market in the world after the USA and Japan. This course will focus on the poetics of French-language graphic narrative across multiple sub-genres (fiction, documentary, adventure, autobiography, social commentary), with an emphasis on recent works. Coursework will include frequent short writing assignments, active participation, creative projects, and a final presentation. Three class meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* French 205 and 206, or placement exam, or consent of instructor.

405 Paris littéraire dans tous ses états

Fall

Iverson

4 credits

Students enrolling in French and Francophone Studies 405 will meet two times per week with students from French 305. A third, separate meeting each week will focus on more extended literary readings that will complement the materials from 305. Coursework includes short papers, class presentations, and a final project. Three course meetings per week plus one half-hour conversation session with a French Language Assistant. Conducted in French. *Prerequisite:* at least one French course at the 300 level, or consent of instructor. Students may not receive credit for both French 305 and 405.

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.

497 Independent Study Senior Capstone

Fall

Staff

2 credits

An original critical or creative project on an interdisciplinary topic of relevance to French and Francophone studies. Junior majors should begin identifying a project and supervisor at the end of their junior year. The proposal for the

senior capstone project must be submitted for approval by the start of the fall semester. *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.