



La France Mosaïque/French Multiculturalism

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MONT 3311W

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Paul Rogers, PhD

Course Description

This course examines the cultural identity of France's inhabitants in detail. After all, why do we call it la France plurielle? What does it mean to be French? Is that even a valid question? What are the origins of the French, and specifically how might a work of literature or a film reveal the various dimensions of their cultural identity? With these questions in mind, the first third of the course focuses on the history of immigration in France and the complex nature of the issue as it stands at the beginning of the 21st Century. The second third of the course is centered on mainland France, with a particular focus on those regions and populations asserting claims of independence (Pays Basque, La Corse, la Bretagne) or with strong cultural identities; we will also examine the role of minority languages, and a selection of literary works and films will serve to illustrate some of the distinctive features of each region. A similar approach will be used in the final part of the course, which will examine the rich diversity of the francophone world, and consider its influence on France's pluralistic identity.

This is a writing-intensive course, offering a broad introduction to the critical methods, standards of scholarship, and body of knowledge specific to the discipline of French and francophone studies. The course will train students to understand and analyze texts and visual media, including sculpture, painting, manuscript illuminations, and film. Since it is writing intensive, particular attention is given to the content, style, and format of written assignments.

Course Objectives

- Developing a thorough understanding of contemporary France from several perspectives; literature and film will serve to illustrate the complexities of le multiculturalisme à la française.
- Creating an analytical approach to contemporary French films and literary works that takes into account the culture's rich diversity.
- This course is writing intensive. It is paramount that students acquire strong writing skills to effectively analyze cultural artifacts/documents within the framework of the French studies curriculum. Writing is at the core of the academic experience and is the responsibility of every member of the academic community. By participating in the production and interrogation of the discourse in the field of French studies, students progress in their understanding of the discipline. Over the course of the semester, students will complete a variety of writing assignments, including at least four short reaction-type essays, three or four 1–3 page analytical essays or dissertations, and finally one 8–10 page final research/analysis paper/dossier. The instructor will provide the students with regular feedback, focusing on essay structure, grammar, and stylistics.
- Students will be required to correct at least three of their assignments, taking into account the instructor's feedback on their first version, and hand in corrected versions to thereby improve their grade. The student's initial version will include commentary and suggestions for structural/analytical changes as well as indicate grammatical and stylistic errors.

Methodology

A presentation of the cultural and social context for the selected works will serve to frame the readings and discussion. PowerPoint presentations, in-class analysis of historical/sociological documents, and outside readings will provide students with background information that they will be able to draw upon in their essays and presentations. The students' final research project (an 8–10 page paper and a 15–20 min. presentation on a topic of their choice related to the course) will further enrich their learning experience.

Course Prerequisites

Intermediate French: equivalent to 4 semesters of college-level French (FREN 1004 at the University of Minnesota).

Required Reading / Materials

Core texts

- Diop, Birago. *Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba*. Paris : Présence Africaine, 1961.

- Guène, Faïza. *Du rêve pour les oufs*. Paris : Hachette Littératures, 2004.

Readings Subheader

- Blanchard, Pascal and Nicolas Bancel. *De l'indigène à l'immigré*. Paris: Gallimard, 1998.
- Gaquin, Audrey. *Peuples et langues de France*. New York : University Press of America, 1995.
- Noiriél, Gérard. *Immigration, antisémitisme, et racisme en France*. Paris: Fayard, 2007.
- Nordmann, Charlotte, ed. *Le Foulard islamique en questions*. Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2004.
- Oillo, Didier et al. *Francophonie et mondialisation*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2008.
- Sayad, Abdelmalek. *La Double absence: Des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré*.
- Tréan, Claire. *La Francophonie*. Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu – Idées reçues, 2006.

Readings Sub-Subheader

- *Dheepan* directed by Jacques Audiard.
- *Marseille* directed by Kad Merad/*Marseille* the Netflix series created by Dan Franck
- *Paris la Blanche* directed by Lidia Terki/*La Belle et la Meute* directed by Kaouther Ben Hania.

Grading

Grading Rubric

| Letter Grade | Score or Percentage | Description |
|--------------|---------------------|--|
| A | 93–100 | Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| A- | 90–92 | Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements. |
| B+ | 87–89 | |
| B | 83–86 | |
| B- | 80–82 | Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect. |
| C+ | 77–79 | |
| C | 73–76 | |
| C- | 70–72 | Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements. |
| D+ | 67–69 | |
| D | 60–66 | |
| F | 0–59 | Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I. |

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

| Assignments | Percentage of Grade |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Participation in class | 10% |
| Essays | 45% |
| Exposés | 15% |
| Final oral presentation | 15% |
| Final research paper | 15% |
| Overall grade | 100% |

Assessment Details

Participation

Attendance and active participation in class is very important to your success in this course. Students should be present at all classes and come prepared to discuss the readings as outlined in the syllabus.

Essays

Students will complete between 4 and 5 essays / written assignments; each essay will be between 2-4 pages in length, and based on a topic of the course provided by the instructor. The topics of these assignments will be directly related to the readings or the works at the heart of the current unit being studied. Examples of topics might be an analysis of one of the works of literature or the films, or a comparative study of how one of the works studied complements sociological findings elaborated in one or more of the articles assigned as course readings or in the course lectures. Written assignments should aim to include an average of 3 citations per page. Students will be asked to include references (the nature and number of these references will vary depending on the type of assignment, 3-4 sources is a rough estimate). The instructor will provide the students with regular feedback, focusing on essay structure, grammar, and stylistics. Students must correct at least three of their essays, taking into account the instructor's feedback on their first version, and hand in corrected versions to thereby improve their grade. The student's initial version will include commentary and suggestions for structural/analytical changes as well as indicate grammatical and stylistic errors.

Exposés

Students will complete between 1 and 2 oral presentations. Presentations should last between 5 and 7 minutes and provide a springboard for class discussion. Students will be asked to present their analytical work to the rest of the class; an example might be a critical analysis of a passage from Faïza Guène's novel. Students will be asked to include references (the nature and number of these references will vary depending on the type of assignment, 3-4 sources is a rough estimate).

Final written paper

Each student will write an 8-10 page research paper, to be handed in during the last class meeting. The student should choose a topic related to the course material that they wish to explore in greater detail and share with the rest of the class. Sample topics include: a critical analysis of one or more of the literary texts or films studied, or a critical historical and analytical exploration of some of the contemporaneous events, noteworthy individuals, or societal paradigms that formed a part of the backdrop for the creation of the literary works studied. Examples of topics include: a comparative study of secularism in France and the United States, an analysis of the cultural diversity of Mayotte, or an exploration of regional language identity within the Francophone world. By the halfway point of the course, students should begin to have an idea of the approach they would like to take and consult with the instructor to narrow down their topic. Students should include roughly an average of 3-4 citations per page and use between 6 and 9 outside sources (this is an estimate and will depend upon the topic chosen).

Final presentation

During the last class meeting, students will present the research they undertook for their final written paper to the class. The goal of the presentation is to introduce the class to the research in as interesting a manner as possible. To that end, students are encouraged to use slideshows, handouts and as interactive an approach as possible; students should avoid simply reading their paper. At the end of their presentation, the student should have questions prepared to involve the listeners and be prepared to organize and moderate a group discussion. (15-20 min.)

Course Content

Unit 1

- Topics: Course introduction; Presentation of *Du rêve pour les oufs* and the author, Faïza Guène (1h)

Unit 2-6

La Problématique de l'immigration en France

- **Topics:** Discussion of *Du rêve pour les oufs*. Historical overview of immigration in France; an analysis of documents relating to the colonial era. Debates and discussion of current events and historical backdrop required for fully understanding the complex nature of France as a *pays d'accueil*.
- **Activities:**
 - In-class diagnostic essay on the question of cultural identity. Discussion of multiculturalism's key defining features.
 - Analysis of historical documents taken from: Blanchard, Pascal and Nicolas Bancel. *De l'indigène à l'immigré*. Paris: Gallimard, 1998.
 - Students will research and prepare short presentations on aspects of French society highlighted by Faïza Guène's work.
 - Debate and analysis of contemporary issues relating to the question of immigration in France: cultural/religious identity, secularism and the French state
- **Assigned reading:** Full text of *Du rêve pour les oufs* by Faïza Guène over these sessions.
- **Additional readings from:**
 - Sayad, Abdelmalek. *La Double absence: Des illusions de l'émigré aux souffrances de l'immigré*.
 - Excerpts from Noiriél, Gérard. *Immigration, antisémitisme, et racisme en France*. Paris: Fayard, 2007.
 - Jacques Audiard's *Dheepan* (1st part).
 - Nordmann, Charlotte, ed. *Le Foulard islamique en questions*. Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2004.
- **Core Required Film:**
 - *Dheepan* directed by Jacques Audiard

Unit 7-10

La France des régions: une mosaïque de cultures

- **Topics:**

- In this third of the course, students will analyze and explore several regions of France from the perspective of regionalism and cultural specificity. Historical presentation and analysis of Corsica, le Pays Basque, and Brittany and their independence movements.
- The French approach to multiculturalism and integration.
- French language policy, minority languages, and the role of French as a tool for cultural unification.
- Specific features of la Corse, le Pays Basque, la Bretagne. Occitanie's political dimension. La Catalogne ?
- Breton music and cultural traditions, contemporary Corsican questions.
- **Activities:**
 - PowerPoints and discussion : “La Corse,” “Le Pays Basque,” “La Bretagne,” and “Le Nord pas-de Calais,”
 - Discussion and group-work based on some readings from Alphonse Daudet's Lettres de mon Moulin. Analysis of passages
- **Assigned reading:**
 - “Mateo Falcone” by Prosper Mérimée.
 - Excerpts from: Lettres de mon moulin by Alphonse Daudet.
 - Readings from: Gaquin, Audrey. Peuples et langues de France. New York : University Press of America, 1995 (La Corse, La Bretagne, Le Pays Basque).
- **Core required media:**
 - Marseille directed by Kad Merad or Marseille the Netflix series created by Dan Franck.

Unit 11-13

La Francophonie

- **Topics:**
 - Overview of la Francophonie in all of its diverse dimensions.
 - Colonialism's destructive legacy, evolutions, and permutations of France's presence overseas.
 - Francophone writers in France, Francophone culture

- Historical and cultural overview of Guadeloupe—current events.
- La France d’outremer : an evolving situation, notions of cultural independence and socio-economic dependence.
- Historical and cultural overview of Réunion and Mayotte. France and Africa in the twenty-first century: “La Françafrique.”
- **Activities:**
 - Discussion and analysis: “La Problématique du monde francophone,” “La Guadeloupe,” “Mayotte,” and “La Réunion” Exploring cultural diversity through culinary traditions : La Réunion ; “Le Mali”.
 - Discussion and literary analysis / groupwork for Birago Diop’s Les Contes d’Amadou Koumba.
 - Student mini-presentations of la France d’ailleurs.
- **Assigned readings:**
 - Full text of: Diop, Birago. Les Contes d’Amadou Koumba.
 - Readings from: Oillo, Didier et al. Francophonie et mondialisation. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2008.
 - Readings from: Tréan, Claire. La Francophonie. Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu – Idées reçues, 2006.
- **Core required film:**
 - Paris la Blanche directed by Lidia Terki or La Belle et la Meute directed by Kaouther Ben Hania.

Unit 14

- **Topics/activities:** Student presentations and discussion. Conclusions and final thoughts (3h).

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance

alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).