

French 228: Advanced Intermediate Language & Culture

Course Description & General Goal

This course focuses on both the acquisition of knowledge about contemporary French culture and linguistic development in French. We will concentrate on key aspects of identity and society in France—including how French people represent themselves and are represented by others, how everyday life and the cultural landscape in France are evolving today, how geography contributes to one's identity and lifestyle in France, and what perspectives the French hold on contemporary social issues in their country. Taken together, our focus on these themes will allow us to formulate informed responses to this question: "*Qu'est-ce qu'être français aujourd'hui?*" Thus, the general goals of this course are to deepen your understanding of metropolitan French identity and society in the 21st century while simultaneously honing your capacity to analyze, articulate, debate, and defend ideas in French.

Course Objectives

Cultural

- 1. Continued acquisition of cultural knowledge:** You will complete readings / viewings such as excerpts from literary readings, web pages, journalistic prose, films, TV reports, images, surveys, maps, and government documents that will serve as a point of departure for our discussions. Through these texts, you will learn factual information about France today.
- 2. Continued development of analytical abilities:** Acquiring cultural knowledge is just the first step in a learning process that includes, more importantly, *interpretation* of that knowledge and *application* of it. For instance, we will examine facts about the French school system today, yet we will then discuss how teaching and is represented in a film/novel written by a middle school teacher from a Paris suburb. We will thus work on continued development of your skills in "reading" culture.
- 3. Continued development of the ability to make cross-cultural comparisons:** We will use the study of another culture to better understand our own culture(s). It is by seeing how another culture functions that we can better see how relative our own culture(s) is (are). For instance, we will contextualize our understanding of cultural and political phenomena in France by comparing them to their equivalents in other cultures and, at times, we will directly compare French and American practices and perspectives.

Linguistic

1. Continued development of interpretive abilities: At home and during class sessions, you will read, view, and listen to numerous texts this semester, both informational and literary. Through your reading, you will grow more familiar with various written genres such as descriptive, narrative, and persuasive writing in French and how one constructs a text in a particular genre. By viewing things such as film clips, TV programs, song videos, and listening to your professor's and colleagues' spoken French, you will continue to develop your abilities in comprehending spoken French and in noting the subtleties (both verbal and non-verbal) of oral communication in French.

2. Continued development of presentational abilities: Informal and formal assessment in this course, both written and oral, will allow you to develop your confidence and accuracy in presenting, debating, and defending your ideas in French. Informal writing will take place as you prepare course assignments and take notes during class sessions and will help you develop more fluency in French writing. Through four formal written assignments, you will gain practice in expository and persuasive writing and two of these assignments will serve as a tool for your oral presentations. By contributing to each class discussion and ongoing small group activities, you will continue to develop fluency and accuracy in spoken French.

3. Continued acquisition of grammar and vocabulary: Our study of contemporary French culture will require comprehension and use of specific grammatical and lexical content in French. Course assignments from *La grammaire à l'œuvre*, class sessions focused on comprehension and use of key grammar concepts, and ongoing in-class brainstorming of key words and expressions relevant to course themes will facilitate this course objective. In addition, your own deliberate efforts to incorporate new vocabulary and grammar points in your writing and oral participation will maximize your learning in this area!

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Preparation for class (15% of final grade): You will receive a grade once per module based on the degree to which you demonstrate ongoing, complete preparation for class. Three elements will contribute to this element of your grade: 1) Taking notes prior to each class as you prepare course readings in your 8.5 X 11" bound notebook (see separate handout)--**please bring your bound notebook with you to each class**; 2) Completing Discussion Board postings by 9 a.m. (day of class) on our Learn @ UW site for select reading assignments; and 3) Completing QUIA grammar assignments in a timely fashion. Your notebook will be collected once per term (unannounced) to verify that you are preparing adequately for each class; for online work, each time you post/complete work, the date/time/content is logged and, in the case of QUIA assignments, the percentage correct for many exercises is displayed for your professor. You are allowed one non-completed element of preparation for class (1, 2, or 3 above) per module without penalty.

2. In-class participation (10% of final grade): Your commitment to contributing actively to our class discussion is essential. Your participation will be evaluated once per module based on the following criteria: Active/relevant contributions to whole-class discussions, active/relevant contributions to small group activities, and effort to speak only in French. *Please speak exclusively in French from the time that you arrive in the classroom.*

3. Quizzes (25% of final grade): There will be one 20-minute in-class quiz for each of the four course modules. These quizzes will assess your knowledge/comprehension of both cultural and linguistic elements relevant to each module. Make-up quizzes will only be given in the case of excused absences and must be completed within three business days after your return to class.

4. Writing Portfolio (30% of final grade): You will complete four formal writing assignments, one per module. For each, you will participate in an in-class Writing Workshop to help you formulate initial ideas for your text, and then you will draft and later revise your work (two drafts per assignment). The use of the Complete Version of Microsoft Word (including French language tools to check spelling, accents, etc.) is strongly advised for these assignments, and each must be typed and double-spaced.

3. Oral Presentations (20% of final grade): For the second and fourth modules of the course, there will be in-class “**talk shows**,” or group panel presentations, at the end of the module. You will participate in the presentation as part of a field of panelists; your personal presentation will last 3-4 minutes. When your group is not presenting, you will participate informally as a member of the talk show “audience.” Each talk show will be preceded by a formal writing assignment that will serve as a tool to help prepare you for the related oral presentation.