

## French 312 : Creative Writing in French

### Course Description and General Goals

This course departs from the premise that reading, writing, and speaking are not just linguistic skills but complementary communicative acts. In other words, because the way we read influences the way we write (and vice-versa) we will approach the study of reading and writing several types of contemporary French texts together. Likewise, collaborating in small groups and as a larger cohort using spoken French will be an important mechanism to feed the creative writing process. In this course, stylistic and grammatical elements of several written genres will be analyzed in terms of *why* certain linguistic devices are used in particular genres and what *effects* they have on textual meaning. After analyzing and gaining familiarity with these features, you will use them as tools in creating your own French texts. Through participation in this course, you will become a more competent writer of French, develop your abilities to speak in French in advanced ways, and will learn how to function as a member of a writing community.

### Course Objectives

- Through reading and analyzing contemporary French texts of various genres, you will become more sensitive to relationships between form and content—in other words, you will formulate answers to the question of *why* certain linguistic devices are used in particular textual genres.
- Through participating in discussions, brainstorming and peer-review, you will develop your abilities to speak in French in advanced ways. This includes: Offering constructive criticism, complimenting, agreeing and disagreeing, seeking additional details, hypothesizing, making detailed descriptions, comparing, etc.
- Through creating written texts, you will gain experience in writing for communicative purposes in French in a variety of genres.
- Through brainstorming, conferencing, and peer-review with your peers and the instructor, you will learn to be part of a writing community.
- Through completing tasks requiring the use of tools, both print and online, in preparing French texts, you will gain familiarity in finding and using resources needed to produce engaging and accurate writing.
- Through goal-setting and self-reflection in terms of your efforts, difficulties, and accomplishments in the course, you will become more aware of the process of language learning and your own identity as a developing foreign language learner.

**Assignments and Evaluation:** A variety of elements contribute in different ways to the various objectives of this course, including:

1. **Portfeuille** (50% of final grade): For each course module, you will complete one part of your writing portfolio (each part is called a “Composant”). In the case of Modules 1 and 2, there are two short Composants to write (1-2 pages each). In the case of Module 3, there are four shorter Composants to write (approximately ½ to 1 page each). For the final Module (Module 4), the final Composant, a short story, will be a longer piece of writing (7-10 pages). During each module, you will complete the portfolio assignments by participating in a reading and writing cycle: Reading a text for a particular genre of writing, studying and discussing the linguistic devices found in that text, brainstorming your ideas for writing a text of the same

genre, drafting a first “Brouillon” of your text, giving and receiving feedback from colleagues on the drafts, meeting individually with your professor to discuss your first draft, and finally sharing your final draft with your colleagues and professor by reading it aloud at the conclusion of each module. It is important to note that the texts we will read and discuss are examples of each genre studied, and the purpose of the writing assignments is not to copy the author’s style but to use it as a source of information for this genre’s textual “moves” and to develop your own text and authorly voice accordingly. Your portfolio assignments will be typed (double spaced), and you should use care to be certain that both drafts are free of careless mistakes (e.g., spelling errors, missing accent marks) that can be avoided by using Microsoft Word spell check in French.

The Portfolio will be graded at two points in the semester—mid-semester (**March 26th**) and semester’s end (**May 16th** at the latest). For Composants 1-8, you choose the writing samples that will be graded: one from Composants 1-2, one from Composants 3-4, and three from Composants 6-8 (for a total of 5 graded writing samples). The last Portfolio assignment (Composant 9) is a short story and a required component of Portfolio. Grading will be based on task completion, vocabulary and content, correctness of form, and style (i.e., the degree to which your text respects the conventions of the genre). You will need to post all drafts of each Composant of the Portfolio on our Learn @ UW site in the Dropbox.

2. **Analyse des textes** (15% of final grade): At the beginning of each of the four course modules, you will complete a reading in French and answer a series of questions about the text, its content, and its linguistic forms. You need to bring your Analyse to class, as it will help you contribute to discussion of the text/s. Your response to one question from each Analyse will be posted on our Learn @ UW Discussion Board, and this is due by 10:00 a.m. for the due date of the assignment. You are not required to type the responses to the other questions, and they will be graded for completion or non-completion, general clarity of responses, and potential of the content to feed class discussion.

3. **Outils linguistiques** (15% of final grade): For each course module, you will be asked to identify how linguistic and stylistic features in particular types of texts impact the text’s meaning. This will be accomplished by concentrating on specific linguistic and stylistic devices and by studying how those devices can be used in writing. For each “Outils Linguistiques” assignment, you need to bring it to class, as it will help you contribute to the group discussion. You are not required to type the responses, and they will be graded for completion or non-completion.

4. **Blog Reflections** (10% of final grade): You will type entries in French or English (your choice) and post them in your private Wordpress.com blog per the dates stated in the Course Calendar. The purpose of the blog is informal written reflection on your linguistic goals and progress throughout the semester toward those goals. Each entry will be on a specific question or series of questions. The minimum length of each entry is 100-150 words or 10-12 complete sentences. These entries will be graded for completion or non-completion and level of reflection evidenced rather than grammar, style, etc. However, high quality, error-free writing is always appreciated ☺ How to set up your Wordpress.com blog:

5. **Participation and Preparation** (10% of final grade): Your commitment to preparing course assignments in a timely fashion, coming to each class with all materials ready to use, and contributing actively to the writing community are essential to your progress and that of your colleagues. Coming to class unprepared will result in an inability to participate either individually or in the small group activities that will recur in each class session. Every module you will complete a self-evaluation of your participation and assign your own participation grade. Your professor will provide written feedback on your participation and may adjust your self-assessments of participation (scoring) if she deems it overly generous or harsh.