



Writing in French: Tools & Techniques

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: French 3505W

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: French

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: xxx

Course Description

This class is designed to introduce students to the techniques and tools required for both academic and personal writing. Over the course of the semester, students will learn how to write a variety of different types of texts including: the description, the *compte rendu universitaire*, the journalistic portrait, and other textual genres. The course consists of an analytic component in which students will be asked to study a text corresponding to a specific style. Students are then asked to explore the writing techniques employed in each type: reformulation, synthesis, rhetorical figures, persuasive language, expressing an opinion via judgment or values, impersonal language, inverted questioning of the reader, etc. and subsequently write in those styles.

Students will be expected to complete numerous writing assignments during the semester. These exercises will be collected and graded on a regular basis, with the possibility for students to revise and improve each project. Course objectives include: learning how to write different types of documents, with different content, using different styles, applying the knowledge acquired in the grammar/methodology course, mastering the stylistic tools and techniques for writing in French (e.g., the use of hyperbole, metaphor, personification, diction, symbolism) acquiring the ability to think in French and write directly in the target language without translating.

Course Objectives

- To train and prepare students for a variety of written exercises/assignments. This includes organizing and structuring ideas, adopting specific stylistic tones and rhetorical

methodology as well as initiating the students to the different systems of thought to which they might need to adapt as they approach writing projects they have been tasked with completing.

- To improve both their oral and written French skills (comprehension and expression), with an emphasis on written expression and to help students express their thoughts in grammatically correct linguistic register-appropriate, stylistic coherent and adaptive French.

Methodology

Written expression will be the primary pedagogical focus of the course. Extensive and adaptive feedback will be provided for written assignments; one written assignment will be handed in for corrections every week. In-class activities will highlight areas in which students may progress and improve a particular written stylistic approach or augment the variety of formulas at their disposal for expressing ideas in the French language. There will also be several graded written assignments over the course of the semester to ensure students' acquisition of the material.

Course Prerequisites

Students must have a minimum level of B1 (Threshold or Intermediate) in the Common European Language Framework or have completed the equivalent of FREN 1004 in the University of Minnesota system.

Required Reading / Materials

- Aron Thomas. *La Réécriture du texte littéraire*. Semen, n°3, February 1987.
- Bouillaguet Annick. *L'écriture imitative: pastiche, parodie, collage*. Paris: Nathan, 1996.
- *Dictionnaire des genres et notions littéraires*. (Collection). Paris: Albin Michel, 1997.
- Engélibert, Jean-Paul and Tran-Gervat Yen-Maï. *La Littérature dépliée*. Reprise, repetition, réécriture. Rennes, 2008.
- Genette Gérard. *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982.
- Jeandillou Jean-François. *Esthétique de la mystification: tactique et stratégie littéraire*. Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1994.
- Maurel-Indart Hélène. *Du plagiat*. Paris: PUG, 1999.
- Schmitt Michel P and Viala A. *Savoir lire: précis de lecture critique*. Paris: Didier, 1994

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
Homework, participation, attendance	25%
Final exam essay	75%
Overall grade	100%

Course Content

Unit 1

Course Introductions and Diagnostics

- Introductory writing assignment

Unit 2

Language Register

- Adapting written language to specific contexts and audiences

Unit 3

Reformulating and Condensing Text

- The *résumé* and the *synthèse* (combining multiple, at times contradictory arguments in a synthetic fashion); activities which will train students to develop skills for rewording and/or simplifying complex notions

Unit 4

Sous-Entendus and Presupposition

- Projections and fictional writing; expressing/creating works of the imagination

Unit 5

Expressing Subjectivity and Values in Writing

- Formulating an opinion; argumentative techniques; constructing essays

Unit 6

Objectivity I: Neutrality and Objectivity in University *Comptes Rendus* and a *Syntheses*

- Expressing neutrality and eliminating bias; defensive writing for criticism

Unit 7

Objectivity II: Newspaper Articles / How to Write for a Piece for a News Source

- Efficiently presenting information without bias; stylistic devices for communicating objectivity

Unit 8

Different Forms of Dialogue and Different Types of Reported Speech

- Indirect discourse, dialogue construction, stylistic tools for varying reported speech

Unit 9

Rhetorical Figures and Argumentation Tools

- Constructing arguments; advanced argumentative essays; model essays/emulating stylistic methods

Unit 10

Persuasive Techniques

- Expressions for convincing and dismantling opposing arguments

Unit 11

From Description to Argumentation

- Model essays

Unit 12

The Methodology for Revisions and Editing Work

- Adopting a critical approach; eliminating repetition/redundancy; editing techniques and methods

Unit 13

Course Conclusions and Discussion

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](#).