



LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Writing in French: Tools & Techniques (intermediate)

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MONT 1302W

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: French

Contact Hours: 45

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.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to improve students' written expression and reading comprehension so that they can better communicate in various contexts in the French language. To that end, students will acquire different tools that will enable them to identify and grasp specific information from written documents with the ultimate goal of ameliorating their own written production. The sessions that focus on written expression and reading comprehension will be based on documents and activities that push the students to acquire reflexes for improved learning of the French language and of its specificities in written form.

Methodology

This course is designed to be adaptable to the needs of students as they develop over the course of the semester. This course also will rely on students' acquisition of grammatical rules and their use in context.

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, and acquiring the ability to think in French and write directly in the target language without translating.

Course Prerequisites

Students must have a minimum level of A2 (Threshold or Intermediate) in the Common European Language Framework or have completed the equivalent of FREN 1002 in the University of Minnesota system.

Required Reading / Materials

Contemporary texts from journals, newspapers, and short fiction will be utilized and will vary each semester.

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	

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
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 and attendance	10%
Essays during the semester	50%
Final essay exam	40%
Overall grade	100%

Course Content

Session 1

Course introduction: *La vie en France*

Activities:

- Reading comprehension of documents about life in France and retranscription of information.

Topics:

- The present tense, adverbs of time, daily life

Session 2

Returning to the past

Activities:

- Making comparisons, describing situations in the past.

Topics:

- Comparisons, reviewing past formation (grammar), expressing habitual action.

Session 3

The World of work

Activities:

- Understanding a current situation, explaining cause and consequence.

Topics:

- Articulators for expressing cause and consequence, vocabulary for the working world and for student life.

Session 4

Future projects

Activities:

- Letter or email-writing, describing future goals.

Topics:

- Letter and email-writing, asking questions, reviewing future formation (grammar point).

Session 5

The French Curriculum Vitae

Activities:

- Understanding key aspects of the French CV, CV-writing

Topics:

- The vocabulary for CVs in French, CV-writing techniques.

Session 6

Biographies and autobiographies

Activities:

- Identifying salient features of a text, writing one's own self-portrait.

Topics:

- Autobiographical writing techniques; noun gender, descriptive vocabulary.

Session 7

Stories

Activities:

- Reading a story, learning how to summarize the main ideas.

Topics:

- Summary (resume)-writing techniques; expressing notions of time and space.

Session 8

Stories II

Activities:

- Using punctuation.

Topics:

- Reading comprehension techniques, punctuation.

Session 9

An incredible tale!

Activities:

- Writing a story, enriching one's language/style with varied qualifiers.

Topics:

- Story-writing techniques, qualifiers.

Session 10

An incredible tale! II

Activities:

- Writing a story, connecting ideas.

Topics:

- Story-writing techniques, logical connectors.

Session 11

French orthography

Activities:

- Understanding the special features of French orthography.

Topics:

- Important orthographical rules.

Session 12

French orthography II

Activities:

- Understanding the special features of French orthography.

Topics:

- Orthographical rules, homonyms.

Session 13

French accents

Activities:

- Understanding the rules for accents in French.

Topics:

- Techniques for avoiding errors with accents.

Session 14

French accents II

Activities:

- Understanding the rules for accents in French.

Topics:

- Techniques for avoiding errors with accents.

Session 15

Mixed words

Activities:

- Understanding the construction of words, sentences, and texts in French.

Topics:

- Sentence-formation techniques; French syntax.

Session 16

Creative writing workshop

Activities:

- Writing in French using different techniques that draw upon the imagination..

Topics:

- Review of French syntax and sentence formation.

Session 17

Discussion Forums

Activities:

- Exploring forums and understanding their characteristics; understanding eyewitness accounts and personal anecdotes and learning how to respond..

Topics:

- Techniques for responding to personal accounts, giving advice, expressing a problem.

Session 18

SMS Language

Activities:

- Exploring the language used in SMSs; understanding and using the most common expressions..

Topics:

- Techniques for transitioning between SMS language and syntactically correct language.

Session 19

Wishes

Activities:

- Understanding and expressing wishes; classified ads.

Topics:

- Expressing wishes, review of the present conditional and the imperative, responding to a classified ad.

Session 20

Community work and projects

Activities:

- Understanding and describing societal problems.

Topics:

- Techniques for logically connecting ideas (review of logical linking words), community work.

Session 21

Reading a newspaper/news source

Activities:

- Using logical connectors.

Topics:

- Techniques for logically connecting ideas (review of logical linking words), news article-specific vocabulary.

Session 22

Writing a newspaper article

Activities:

- Communicating/reformulating read information.

Topics:

- Reported speech, news article-specific vocabulary.

Session 23

Opinions I

Activities:

- Expressing one's opinions on different topics; understanding, explaining and summarizing articles, argumentation.

Topics:

- Review of the present subjunctive; news article-specific vocabulary.

Session 24

Opinions II

Activities:

- Expressing one's opinion on different topics; understanding, explaining and summarizing articles, argumentation.

Topics:

- Review of the present subjunctive; news article-specific vocabulary.

Session 25

General review

Activities:

- Reading an article, review of logical connectors.

Topics:

- General review, vocabulary linked to the various covered topics.

Session 26

Final Exam

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](#).