

FRENCH 1510 –ADVANCED WRITTEN AND ORAL FRENCH – FRENCH HEROES AND MYTHOLOGIES

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ADVANCED LANGUAGE COURSES

In the language program of the French Studies department at Brown, FR1510 follows FREN 0600. The class is designed to help students improve both their writing and speaking skills via presentations, debates, conversation, and discussion based on a variety of topics.

French advanced language courses intend to encourage students to develop and refine their ability to present and structure their ideas in a foreign language. The main objective is therefore to have students acquire a better command of French while offering them the opportunity to discuss and reflect on a specific theme or issue.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIMS

There is an intrinsic difficulty in defining what constitutes a hero: some heroes are real historical figures, while others are purely fictional ones. The reasons why they are heroes in the first place can vary tremendously from one figure to the next: both Louis Pasteur and Joan of Ark can be safely designated as heroes, but what do they have in common except this heroic status?

This course will question the concept of heroism and its place in the French culture and national ideal. We will explore various French heroic figures that have attained mythical status (such as D'Artagnan, Astérix, Capitaine Némó, Jean Valjean, or Joan of Arc, for instance). We will also look at representations of World War II in French cinema and the crisis in heroism that it often stages. When appropriate, our study of these primary sources will be completed by readings and discussions of theoretical texts written by prominent French thinkers who reflected on the question of heroes and nationalism (such as Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida); these texts will help us think critically about national heroes and myths in and outside of the French context.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has three main objectives:

- To develop and improve your ability to formulate arguments and communicate ideas in a foreign language.
- To introduce and familiarize you with central heroic French figures, and to trace an evolution of these figures up to today's debates and arguments about the place of heroes in a national culture.

- To encourage you to think critically about national heroes; to give you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with writings of prominent French thinkers on the topic.

MATERIALS TO BUY AT THE BROWN BOOKSTORE/ALLEGRA COPY CENTER:

Required:

- Gosciny et Uderzo. *Astérix et Cléopâtre* (BB)
- Edmond Rostand. *Cyrano de Bergerac* (BB)
- Course pack (Allegra)

Optional:

- Contrastes. Grammaire du français* (BB)
 - Alexandre Dumas, *Les trois mousquetaires*, Jules Verne, *20 000 lieues sous les mers*, Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Victor Hugo, *Les misérables* (tome 1) (BB).
- We will only read excerpts from these books (in the course pack), but I have asked the Brown Bookstore to order a few copies in case some students want to buy them.

ASSESSMENT

This class is designed as a language course, which means that emphasis is put on improvement of oral and writing skills.

Most of our class-time will consist in discussions about the materials assigned; your participation is therefore crucial both to your progress and the dynamic of the class.

There will be two oral exams whose grade will count for 25% of the final grade.

Written assignments will be of three kinds:

- three 5 pages papers (including the final paper). Once I have corrected a first version of these papers, you will rectify and adjust your writing in consequence and hand in a second version (the dates for the second versions are specified in the calendar on the last page of this handout).
- two in-class exams
- carnets de bord: students regularly hand in short texts written on their carnet (the dates to hand in the carnets are in the calendar). Writing in the carnet is primarily a means of communication: I do not correct grammar (unless you ask me to), and I do not grade the texts either. However, I do give a general grade for them at the end of the semester. The carnet assignments are informal questions designed to provide an opportunity for a discussion outside of classic academic grounds.

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

5 “devoirs” (3 papers, 2 in-class exams): 50%

2 oral exams: 20%

Participation: 20%

Carnets de bord: 5%

Individual work: 5%

ABSENCE POLICY

This course being based on communication and in-class discussions, unexcused absences will have an impact on the participation grade. In addition to this, if a student has more

than three unexcused absences (unexcused absence = without a note from a dean or a doctor), his or her final grade will go down from one letter (an A would become a B, a B would become a C, etc...).

PLAGIARISM

You are obviously encouraged to do research and to document your arguments with external sources; but remember to quote them properly. When you cite somebody else's work, you should acknowledge your source and cite them accordingly (see MLA manual of style, on reserve at the Rockefeller Library).

Academic achievement is ordinarily evaluated on the basis of work that a student produces independently. Students who submit academic work that uses others' ideas, words, research, or images without proper attribution and documentation are in violation of the academic code. Infringement of the academic code entails penalties ranging from reprimand to suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University.
[Academic code of conduct](#), Brown University.

In addition to this, students will be expected to write their papers without any exterior help; this being a language class, you are graded according to *your* language skills and improvements. Getting help from another party will be considered as an infringement of the Brown academic code, and will entail the corresponding consequences.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All assignments and readings are detailed on our MyCourses webpage. This schedule only provides an outline of the course's units; you will have to check on MyCourses for a detailed listing of the homework and for the "fiches de travail" that accompany the texts and movies that we will discuss.

Printed materials are either available at the Brown Bookstore (BB) or in the Course pack (CP); films are accessible on MyCourses. You can also view the Dvds at the Science Library.

Introduction

January 27th: introduction

January 29th: What is a hero? (BNF website and handout)

Unit 1. French Mythologies

February 1st: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*: "Iconographie de l'abbé Pierre" (CP).

February 3rd: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*/ *Les trois mousquetaires*, Chapitre I (CP).

February 5th: *Les trois mousquetaires*, Chapitre IV.

February 8th: *Les trois mousquetaires*, Chapitre V.

February 10th: *Les trois mousquetaires*, Chapitre VII.

February 12th: Devoir 1 due. *Les Misérables*, introduction in class.

Unit 2. Two fictional heroes: Jean Valjean and Captain Némó

February 15th: *Les Misérables*, extrait 1 (CP)

February 17th: *Les Misérables*, extrait 2

February 19th: *Les Misérables*, extrait 3

February 22nd: NO CLASS

February 24th: Jules Verne: le capitaine Némó. *20 000 lieues sous les mers*, extrait 1 (CP).

February 26th: Jules Verne: le capitaine Némó. *20 000 lieues sous les mers*, extrait 2.

March 1st: in-class exam (Devoir 2)

Unit 3. Héroïsme on stage: *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand

March 3rd : *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Act I (BB)

March 5th: *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Act II

March 8th: *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Act III

March 10th: *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Act IV and V

March 12th: No class, Oral 1 (on unit 1, 2, 3)

March 15th: *Cyrano de Bergerac*, 1990 (film adaptation). In-class introduction to Astérix and the myth of “nos ancêtres les gaulois”

Unit 4. Héroes and national figures: Les gaulois/Jeanne d’Arc.

March 17th: *Astérix et Cléopâtre* (BB)

March 19th: *Astérix et Obélix: mission Cléopâtre*, 2002 (film)

March 22nd : Devoir 3 due (on Cyrano). Jeanne d’Arc: excerpts from Le procès de Jeanne d’Arc/BNF handout

March 24th: *Les lieux de mémoire*: Chapter on Joan of Ark

March 26th: *The Messenger: the Story of Joan of Ark*, 1999 (film, Luc Besson)

SPRING BREAK. Read and comment upon Notre premier livre d’Histoire, 1950.

April 5th: In-class debate: hero and nationalism.

April 7th: In class exam (Devoir 4)

Unit 5. World War II in cinema: questioning French heroism

April 9th: two military figures: Pétain and de Gaulle. De Gaulle: *L'appel du 18 Juin*, excerpt from *Mémoires de guerre* (CP).

April 12th: Lucie Aubrac, *Ils partiront dans l'ivresse*. Excerpt (CP)

April 14th: *Lucie Aubrac*, 1997 (film)

April 16th: *Indigènes*, 2006 (film)

April 19th : *Un héros très discret*, 1996 (film)

April 21st : *Lacombe, Lucien*, 1974 (film)

April 23rd: Foucault on *Lacombe, Lucien* and the question of heroism (*Cahiers du cinema*, CP)

Conclusion. Debates around heroes and nationalism

April 26th: Devoir 5 due

April 28th: Derrida on nationalism: *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, chapter 3 (CP)

April 30th: Contemporary debates: around Zinedine Zidane (articles, CP)

May 2nd: Contemporary debates: Guy Môquet's letter and Sarkozy's education policy (articles, CP)

May 5th: Oral 2 on Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida.

FR1050: CALENDRIER DU SEMESTRE

LUNDI	MERCREDI	VENDREDI
	27/01 Présentation du cours	29/01 Qu'est-ce qu'un héros?
1/02 Mythologies	3/02 Mythologies	5/02 Journal de bord 1 3 Mousquetaires
8/02 3 Mousquetaires	10/02 3 Mousquetaires	12/02 Devoir 1.1 Les misérables
15/02 Les misérables	17/02 Les misérables	19/02 Journal de bord 2 Les misérables
22/02 Pas de cours (long weekend)	24/02 Devoir 1.2 20 000 lieues sous les mers	26/02 20 000 lieues sous les mers
1/03 Devoir 2: Examen en classe	3/03 Cyrano	5/03 Cyrano
8/03 Journal de bord 3 Cyrano	10/03 Cyrano (film)	12/03 Oral 1 (pas de cours) Last day to request a CPR
15/03 Cyrano (film)	17/03 Astérix (livre)	19 Mars Astérix (film)
22/03 Devoir 3.1 Jeanne d'Arc (procès)	24/03 Jeanne d'Arc (Les lieux de mémoire)	26/03 Joan of Arc (film de Besson)
29/03 SPRING BREAK	31/03 SPRING BREAK	2/04 SPRING BREAK
5/04. Devoir 3.2. Débat : héros et nationalisme	7/04 Devoir 4: Examen en classe	9/04 Pétain/de Gaulle
12/04 Lucie Aubrac (texte)	14/04 Lucie Aubrac (film)	16/04 Indigènes (film)
19/04 Journal de bord 4 Un héros très discret (film)	21/04 Lacombe, Lucien (film)	23/04 Foucault sur Lacombe, Lucien
26/04 Devoir 5	28/04 Derrida, le monolinguisme de l'autre	30/0 Débats contemporains: Zidane
3/05 Débats contemporains: Guy Môquet	5/05 Oral 2 (pas de cours)	