

**OXFORD COLLEGE of Emory University**  
**Humanities Division**

**Français 314Q**  
**Qu'est-ce que l'interprétation?**

Automne 2015  
les lun, mer, et ven, 8h15-9h20  
Language Hall 102

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**Prerequisites:** French 203, a score of 4 or 5 on the AP French exam, or equivalent experience. Please see the instructor if you have any questions about your preparedness for the course.

**Introduction and course objectives:**

From the *Oxford College Catalog*: French 314 is “an introduction to the reading and interpretation of a variety of cultural media, including poetry, drama, prose fiction, political writings, films, painting, and architecture.” It does so through the careful reading of a set of texts with special attention to the conventions and assumptions of each genre, as well as how each text affirms or resists these conventions. The course's orientation is thus primarily generic (rather than historical or thematic), but we will also attempt to show the evolution of French literary and cultural practice and the relevance of age-old themes to the contemporary world.

The objectives of the course are as follows: To develop students’ skills as critical readers of the texts under study, that they may know how literary texts mean what they mean, to help students acknowledge the cultural prisms – their own as well as that of the authors -- that influence literary meaning, to interrogate how artistic forms influence our understanding of abstract concepts, and to imagine what connections can be drawn between fiction and reality, from the page, stage or screen to the “real world.”

The course also aims to improve language skills. It is hoped that by the end of the course, students will be confident readers, attentive to nuance and style, while also improving their conversational fluency, pronunciation, as well as grammatical and lexical accuracy both orally and on the page.

This course is part of the Humanities, Arts, and Language component of Oxford's general education program. It is also a core requirement of both the minor and the major in French at Emory College, as its reading and writing practices are base competencies for upper-level courses.

**Ways of Inquiry:**

This course is part of Oxford College’s Ways of Inquiry program. Students taking such courses “understand and question the way knowledge is sought by actively learning and practicing the discipline’s approach to inquiry” (INQ vision statement). In this course, you will have the opportunity a) to reflect on the nature of interpretation of a literary text – what counts as “evidence,” and the extent to which that differs from one genre to another, from one era to another, b) to examine who you are as a reader of a text in French: how your own

life experiences and language skill interfere with and enhance your understanding of a text, and c) to interpret a variety of texts with greater independence as the semester goes on.

**Texts to purchase:**

- Schofer, Peter et al. *Poèmes, Pièces, Prose: Introduction à l'analyse de textes littéraires français*. Oxford (U.K.): Oxford University Press, 1973. ISBN 9780195016437.
- *Le Petit Robert Micro*. Paris: Le Robert. Any edition, newer is better. (2011 ed.: ISBN 978-2849028919)
- Recommended: *Collins-Robert College French-English Dictionary*. New York: HarperCollins. Any edition, newer is better. (2011 ed.: ISBN 9780062233301)

**Also:** Other texts will be made available online, and you will independently read a novel of your own choosing. This novel may be checked out from the library or purchased, as you prefer.

**Assessment:**

Présence, préparation, participation (40%)

This is a discussion-based course which functions best when each student comes to class prepared to carefully engage with the texts and the ideas, worlds, and cultures that they come from and create.

You should **read well**: There will be daily readings from *Poèmes, Pièces, Prose* or from other sources. The introductory material in each edition will help you identify and situate authors and texts. Use of other secondary sources is not ordinarily required for daily discussions; instead, you are asked to carefully read, and reread, texts in order to be able to discuss them thoughtfully. It is not necessary to understand every word – remember to rely on context and other lexical strategies in your first reading, before going back and rereading more closely sections that you identify as particularly important. Poems should be read ALOUD at least once.

You should **question well**: Keep track of comprehension questions that you come across: important words that you didn't understand, sections that didn't make sense, or anything else. No question is too basic. Beyond that, you should be seeking and developing interpretive questions that you can bring to class. Class members will be responsible for leading discussion and will typically post questions in advance. It is suggested that notes be jotted down before class to ensure that you can actively engage in discussion. In any case, there are no incorrect answers, and students should never hesitate to venture a response or contribution – however tentative – as it is especially by this activity that literary texts come alive.

You should, therefore, **participate frequently**: Active participation in class discussions is indispensable for successful completion of the course. In practical terms, 10 points are assigned for in-class participation each day, according to the following approximate scale:

- 10: you are present, fully engaged, well-prepared, and participating willingly in small- and large-group discussions.
- 8-9: You mostly meet the above standards but there is room for improvement.
- 6-7: Infrequent participation or evidence of poor preparation.
- 5 or less: Infrequent participation AND evidence of poor preparation. Evidence of disengagement (cell phone use, working on other homework, sleeping...).
- 0: absent.

Participation points are also deducted for arriving late, leaving early, or leaving and returning. Please also refer to the separate document *Standards for Mutual Respect*, incorporated by reference into this syllabus.

TWICE only during the semester, you may turn in a written response to a discussion question or questions (1 page long, due at the next class) in lieu of presence for a maximum of 7.5 points. Absences beyond two forfeit all points.

NOTE: Some class sessions may be replaced by one-on-one meetings with me; missing such a meeting without giving advance notice will count as an absence.

#### Travaux écrits (30%)

You will write several essays showing your developing skills as readers and questioners of the texts under study. Early in the term, I will offer a question or two that your essay will answer, and we will discuss together the process of persuasively answering it. Over the course of the semester, you will write longer and more complex essays and you will have learned to find good questions yourselves. Written work will be graded according to the following approximate rubric:

- A: clear, coherent, and compelling argument that closely engages with the text and fully addresses the assignment parameters, written with careful attention to correct expression in French.
- B: the paper has a clear argument that is only partially supported, only partially addresses the assignment, OR is written in comprehensible French, but there are sufficient errors to suggest a rushed composition.
- C: more than one of the issues named under “B;” argument difficult to determine, issues in expression that partially interfere with understanding of the paper.
- D: more than one of the issues mentioned under “C.”
- F: the paper fails to even remotely address the prompt, shows a complete lack of effort.

Early in the term, you may resubmit these essays with corrections for an improved grade. Please format your work according to the separate document *Mise en page des travaux écrits*, posted on the course website. Essays submitted by e-mail are forgotten about.

#### Exposés (15%)

Each student will also do several oral presentations over the course of the semester. These will also show your developing interpretive skills and will allow you to share your ideas with your classmates in clear and persuasive French.

#### Examen final (15%)

A final exam will ask two or three essay questions over the works studied. It will additionally feature one or more texts that are new to you which you will be asked to read and interpret. The final exam is scheduled for **2:00-5:00pm on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> (the fifth and last day of the final exam period)**, and it must be given at its scheduled time – please note it now.

#### **Grading Scale:**

93-100%: A; 90-92: A-; 88-89: B+; 84-87: B; 80-83: B-; 78-79: C+; 74-77: C; 70-73: C-; 68-69: D+; 60-67: D; 59 or less: F

**A word on academic integrity:**

Students are expected to be familiar with, and to strictly abide by the Oxford College Honor Code. In the context of this course, please be aware that the following are considered “unauthorized assistance,” and therefore constitute academic misconduct (see Honor Code, art. 1, A.3.):

- 1) The use of online or automated translators in ANY written or oral work.
- 2) Having a more advanced student or native speaker correct or complete assignments. (I want to see YOUR French, mistakes and all.)
- 3) The recycling of your own or other people’s work.
- 4) Quoting or paraphrasing the words of another person without crediting that person. (French 314 does not require outside research in any writing assignments. However, if students do include secondary sources, they must explicitly cite this material using MLA style.)

Collaboration on reading or other informal assignments is encouraged as long as all parties benefit (i.e. asking a friend if they understood a certain passage, etc.)

The normal penalty for a first offense of academic misconduct is a grade of ‘F’ in the course.

**Kindly note the following:** “Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.”

**If you have** a documented disability, please arrange for the Office of Access and Disability Resources (Murphy Hall, <ods.emory.edu>) to send me a letter detailing any necessary accommodations, then see me to discuss it.

**If celebrating religious holidays** will pose a conflict with major class activities, please let me know well in advance so that we may make alternate arrangements.

**Pour le bien-être de tous...** please refrain from eating or chewing gum, silence and stow cell phones, music players, tablets, and laptops; participate with enthusiasm, ask questions when you have them, and do all you can to contribute to the learning experience.

## Programme général provisoire

### semaines I-IV: poésie

*lectures:* poèmes choisis

*travail écrit 1:* quelle interprétation de « Chanson d'automne » est la plus fidèle?

*exposé 1:* quels sont les *éléments poétiques* les plus importants dans un poème choisi?

*travail écrit 2:* utilisez ces *éléments* pour développer un argument.

### semaines V-VII: théâtre

*lectures:* Corneille, *Horace*

Anouilh, *Le Voyageur sans bagages*

*exposé 2:* quelle est l'importance d'une scène choisie?

*travail écrit 3:* qui est le héros de *Horace*?

*travail écrit 4:* question au choix sur *Le Voyageur sans bagages*.

### semaines VIII-XII: récit en prose

*lectures:* Flaubert, « Un cœur simple »

Sartre, « Le mur »

Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* (extraits)

Germain, « L'Aveu »

roman personnel

*travaux écrits 5-6:* analysez le style narratif de deux de ces textes.

*exposé 3:* quel est le style narratif du roman personnel?

### semaines XIII-XVI: genres hybrides, cinéma

*lectures:* Veinstein, *Cent quarante signes* (extraits)

*L'Enfant* (film de J-P. et Luc Dardenne)

*Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse* (film de A. Varda)

*travail écrit 7:* interprétation du roman personnel

*exposé 4:* présentation orale sur roman personnel

*examen final:* quelques questions “réponse brève” sur les textes du programme et analyse d'un texte inconnu

**autres projets, au cours du semestre:** Vous menerez deux fois la discussion en classe et vous ferez une critique d'un article de revue traitant un texte du programme.