

OXFORD COLLEGE of Emory University
Humanities Division

Français 314

Qu'est-ce que l'interprétation?

Fall 2011
MW 2:00-3:15pm
Seney Hall 208

Instructor: Matthew Moyle, Ph.D.

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hours: daily 9:30-10:30am
MW 3:30-4:30pm
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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, and it is considered a “writing-rich” course. (Completion of the course with a “C” or better thus fulfills the College's continuing writing requirement.) 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.

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.

- A very good French-English dictionary (Collins-Robert is the instructor's favorite).

Strongly recommended: a French-only dictionary (*Le Micro Robert*, e.g.) will be helpful for you now and in future French coursework.

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.

Attendance:

Active participation in class discussions (and therefore, regular attendance) is indispensable for successful completion of the course. 10 participation points are given for each class day and presence is the *sine qua non* for earning these points. 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.

Preparation and Daily Homework:

This course will ask you to complete several sorts of out-of-class activities on a regular basis: these are summarized below but others may be added:

Lectures: There will be daily readings from *Poèmes*, *Pièces*, *Prose* or from other sources. It is crucial to have carefully read each assigned text before class. The introductory material in *PPP* will help you identify and situate authors and texts. Use of other secondary sources is not required for this course; instead, you are asked to carefully read, and reread, texts in order to be able to discuss them thoughtfully. The syllabus has been devised with the goal of allowing ample time for this detailed preparation. Plan to read shorter texts twice: once for comprehension, underlining vocabulary difficulties in order to return to them later; and a second time to analyze, appreciate, and reflect. Texts in verse should be read ALOUD at least once. It is not necessary to understand every word- remember to rely on context and other lexical strategies in your first reading.

Questions de discussion: Before each class, discussion questions will be distributed. (In many cases, they will be those following the texts in *PPP*). These questions are meant to guide your reading and provoke in-class discussions. It is therefore 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.

Questions de compréhension: Mark down any of your own questions, too, important words that you didn't understand, or anything else that you didn't follow. (No question is too basic.)

Essais: You will write several essays interrogating the form and theme of a given text or excerpt. 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. Essays must be typed and double-spaced, and are not accepted by e-mail.

Exposé: Each student will do at least two oral presentations over the course of the semester.

Exams:

A mid-term and final exam will be given, consisting of short-answer and essay questions over the works studied. The final exam will additionally feature one or more texts that are new to you which you will be asked to read and interpret. Exams must be given at their scheduled time – please note their dates now.

Evaluation:

Presence, participation
and preparation: 40%

Essays: 30%

Exams: 20%

Exposés: 10%

Grading Scale:

93-100%

90-92

88-89

84-87

80-83

78-79

A

A-

B+

B

B-

C+

74-77

70-73

68-69

60-67

59 or less

C

C-

D+

D

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) French 314 does not require outside research in any writing assignments. However, if students do include secondary sources, they must explicitly cite this material and in most cases are urged to paraphrase rather than copy and paste.

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.

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss necessary accommodations, please contact me during the first week of classes as well as the office of Access and Disability Resources (<ods.emory.edu>).

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