Visions fantastiques: using a notion that refers to the supernatural, the imaginary or the inexplicable as its starting point, this course explores and questions concepts that are at the core of our common human experience, past and present. Why is the fantastique such an enduring genre? How do authors exploit the cracks that appear in our representations of reality, and to what end? What are the political, philosophical, historical or sociological messages they convey? Through a survey of many different kinds of fantastiques works (fairy tales, comics, theatrical plays, philosophical essays, sci-fi films, etc.), FRE 207 offers in-depth, small-group discussions and critical analyses of the themes they tackle, such as colonialism and identity, our relationship to time and to nature, science and progress, or madness and reason.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:
The objective of FRE 207 is to review and reinforce crucial grammatical structures of the French language in the context of a semester-long journey through fantastique material, during which you will continually improve your expressive (oral and written) skills while learning relevant methodological and interpretative techniques that will allow you to understand, analyze and interpret meaningfully various cultural artifacts. At the end of the semester, your writing in various styles (narrative, argumentative, descriptive) will have improved along with your oral confidence; you will have significantly honed your critical and analytical skills; you will be able to better understand not only French-speaking narratives, but also our contemporary society and its challenges as a whole.
Sample Reading List and Course Materials:
In addition to Contrastes, which provides grammatical reinforcement and clarifications, FRE 207 will use works by a great variety of authors from different times and places: from Montaigne to Tahar Ben Jelloun, from Patrick Chamoiseau to Guy de Maupassant, from Charles Perrault to Eugène Ionesco… We will also watch six films:

- Jean Cocteau, La Belle et la Bête, 1946
- Albert Lamorisse, Le Ballon rouge, 1956
- Coline Serreau, La Belle Verte, 1996
- Georges Méliès, Voyage dans la lune, 1902
- Chris Marker, La Jetée, 1962
- Emmanuel Carrère, La Moustache, 2005

Assignments
FRE 207’s graded assignments include 3 exams, 2 compositions, and a final project. The final project, conducted in pairs, will consist in a presentation that analyzes how, drawing on the resources of the fantastique, a francophone work of art represents and problematizes one or more of the themes discussed in class. In addition, you will do a very short (5 min.) in-class presentation of one of the works discussed in class; this assignment is factored in the presentation grade. Finally, you will also engage in online conversations on Canvas with your peers on a weekly basis to further discuss the topics addressed in class; these conversations are factored in the participation grade.

Grading:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance, Participation, Homework</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams (3)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compositions (2)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
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Testimonials
“Take this course!!! If you took AP French in high school you will be totally fine. […] You read a lot of fairy tales/fictional stories that are all super interesting and prompt pretty cool discussions. By the end of the semester you will be discussing the meaning of life and the border between dream and reality in French! I didn’t love French in high school but I genuinely enjoyed each day in this class.”

“I highly recommend taking this course! I found the readings and films to be very engaging, and the discussions were enjoyable as well. The workload is very manageable, but I still think I was able to improve my reading, writing, and speaking skills.”

“The quality of the classes was amazing! All of the stories we read (maybe minus one or two) were really interesting and prompted great discussions. The weekly grammar lessons were super helpful without being overbearing.”

“It’s a great introductory course, especially for first–years! The work was very manageable and I enjoyed it a lot.”

“Great course. In–class discussions were engaging, even when readings were occasionally dry. The workload is agreeable: at most 10 hours even on the weeks when compositions are due. The course also has its fair share of grammar practice, which is quite useful to have on a concrete week–by–week basis.”

“Readings were very, very good. Films were also essential in bringing a visual aspect to the class. Overall excellent.”

“I am a much better speaker, listener, reader, and writer than I was going into the course. I was constantly challenged to exit my comfort zone when it came to French and was given helpful guidance in making improvements.”

“Very good course to take. If you are an AP student, this course will be not be too difficult. A little effort goes a long way and the readings and movies are fun.”

“The readings and visuals were probably the highlight of the course. The theme was really fun to explore, as we read fairytales and modern retellings, sci–fi and fantasy genre fiction, and stories that bordered between madness and reality. They sparked insightful discussions and allowed me to draw connections with my other classes as well. The two longer books, Tintin and Le Roi se meurt, were both great as well.”

“Take this course! Super helpful in improving French and much more interesting than you would think.”