Speak Up! An Introduction to Topics in the Francophone World

FRE 208

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FRE208 is a hybrid, discussion-based course, organized around guest speakers from the francophone world (ambassadors, journalists, artists, professors, etc.) and interactives classes that aim at discussing current and relevant topics related to the Francophone world. This course fosters and reinforces complex oral skills that will allow students to lead conversations, debates and interviews, and in doing so, to become proficient French speakers. The course is divided into sections, each of them dedicated to a French speaking region (Haiti, Senegal, Ivory-Coast, Morocco, Benin, Quebec, Louisiana, Mayotte, etc.)
FRE208 will examine a wide range of authentic and current material that will allows students to reflect and express complex opinions on a relevant and inclusive selection of topics:

*French vs Francophone languages,*
*The History of Francophony (French Colonization vs soft-power)*
*French language and wars,*
*Street art, Festivals and Francophone artists,*
*Economic systems in the Francophone World,*
*Women in the Francophone World,*
*Language and diplomacy,*
*Language and politics,*
*French and the job market,*
*Immigration in the Francophone World,*
*Etc.*

This course promotes and fosters critical viewing, reading and analysis of all material that will allow students to gain transcultural and translingual competences.

**Learning Objectives and Outcomes:**

- Gain a complex command (oral and written) of syntactic categories and complex sentences in situational contexts,
- Gain command of domain-specific vocabulary,
- Discuss, debate and analyze French/Francophone social, political and economical issues.
- Communicate with French speakers guests on current issues (Emphasize authentic communication and strengthen extended oral output - whole message skills).

By the end of the semester, students will be able to express complex opinions on multiple topics and be proficient French speakers, and will have a deeper understanding of what it means to speak French in a global society.

**Sample Reading List and Course Materials:**

Wide range of primary sources (Interviews, tribunes, podcasts, photography series, political speeches, caricatures, historical documents, francophone countries’ constitutions, advertisements, newspaper articles, films, paintings, etc.) that address current, relevant and inclusive topics.

The course will also discuss movies and documentaries:

- *Les Zébrures* (2019),
- *Le Cboix de Théo* (Thomas Cauvin, 2019),
- *Noire de…* (Ousmane Sembène, 1966),
- *War of words* (Elizabeth Pearson, Steven Reiner, 1998)
- *Sbagha Bagha* (2019)
- *Le Bijou sur le Bayou Teche* (2013),
- *Etc.*

**Assignments**

Assignments in this course are project based and anchored in real world issues. The main objectives of the assignments are for the students to use their newly acquired syntactic and lexical skills to establish authentic communication with native speakers, address current topics, express complex opinions and support critical thinking.

- 3 written productions:
  - **Production n°1**: interview (+written report) of a French/francophone guest chosen by the student from list.
  - **Production n°2**: reflective piece on a topic studied in class.
  - **Weekly posts**: weekly contribution (a paragraph) to a discussion board to reflect on a specific theme/topic discussed in class.
- Self evaluation quizzes (not graded)
- 2 oral presentations :
  - “**Revue de la Presse**” : critical analysis of a newspapers article on a topic of your choice
  - “**Event: presentation and analysis**” : presentation and discussion of one of the event organized during the semester.
- 1 final project
Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance, Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compositions (3)/ 2 rewrites</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation(s)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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Testimonials:

“I think this class was phenomenal in terms of challenging my previously–held views and encouraging a broader, more comprehensive view of the French–speaking world. […] One of the most successful parts of the course was its structure: I like that we had one week per Francophonie country; and it was nice to have a blend between regular class time and speakers / panels.” (Sp 19-20)

“Readings and visuals were very high quality and they greatly contributed to my enjoyment of the course. The materials in this course presented subject matters clearly and were very engaging.” (Sp 19-20)

“Definitely take this class if you can! It’s become one of my favorite courses during my entire time at Princeton (I’m now a senior). In–class discussions are really engaging and informative; and of course, having so many guest speakers is an amazing opportunity to learn about different Francophonie countries in a personal way.” (Sp 19-20)

“Definitely take this course! I loved it, I learned a lot. The course content is very interesting and the course is not difficult. It will push you to think and develop your language skills.” (Sp 19-20)

“I got much better at expressing myself more smoothly in French! I feel far more confident in my French ability now. The final paper also forced me to sharpen my French writing skills, and my ability to understand French has drastically improved.” (Sp 19-20)

“This course was amazing. I felt that having guest speakers, the readings provided, and the discussion style of the class worked particularly well.” (Sp 19-20)

“I really enjoyed the format of the classes and felt that we all had ample time to speak and get comfortable with the topics in French.” (Sp 19-20)

“Great course. Informative, engaging, wonderful professor.” (Sp 19-20)

“Really great classes and the subject matter was really informative." (Sp 19-20)

“I liked the format of the course. I really liked the idea of having speakers visit us.” (Sp 19-20)

“I would definitely take this class if you don't know much about the francophone world. You learn about many different francophone regions, get to talk with francophone leaders and intellectuals and will complete a research paper on any topic that interests you.” (Sp 19-20)

“This was undoubtedly one of the best courses I took at Princeton. The subject was interesting, and we had great discussions in class. I could also feel myself improving in my abilities to communicate in French.” (Sp 19-20)

“I appreciated that we could self direct our papers as it made them much more enjoyable to research and write. It definitely helped me developp my writing skills to be more sophisticated.” (Sp 19-20)