

**FRENCH 333: CONTEMPORARY FRENCH CANADA  
FALL 2009**

**Dr. Miléna Santoro  
ICC 421C**

**Phone: 687-4139**

**Email: santorom@georgetown.edu**

**Office Hours M 11-12 and T/R 2-2:30, or by appt.**

**GOALS**

This course is designed to help you acquire an introductory knowledge of the cultural wealth of the society of Québec and French-speaking Canada today. To this end, our discussions and readings will cover a vast array of topics, including geography, certain important historical events, individuals and movements, the language issue, separatism, American and French influence, ethnic diversity and immigration, current social and economic conditions, and especially the extraordinary creative energy at work in all domains of cultural activity in Québec since the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. By the end of the course, you should have a basic understanding of the events and individuals that have shaped the destiny of this island of French-speakers on the North-American continent, and of its dynamic and diverse culture.

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the course are to increase your cultural literacy, and to cultivate your writing and speaking skills through essay-writing, classroom discussion, oral presentations and group work.

Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to:

1. Participate actively in all aspects of the class, but most especially in discussions. Come to class prepared, and ready to ask questions or discuss your readings. Repeated absences can only undermine your progress and that of your colleagues, and will negatively impact your participation grade.
2. Read attentively the texts assigned, and complete preparatory work as requested. You will develop research skills, watch and listen to Québécois films and/or news in French, and analyze other multi-media resources to enrich your understanding of the Québec cultural identity.
3. Present one oral exposé on a pre-assigned topic in the course of the semester. This may require some research, and should be accompanied by a bibliography and vocabulary list. Use of power point or other computer-generated support is not required, but if you plan to do so, you need to inform the instructor three days in advance so appropriate technology is available to you.
4. Write two essays on the literary works studied, from topics assigned by the instructor, or an alternative subject with instructor approval. This type of assignment will enhance your writing skills and will give you practice in presenting your readings of a text in a coherent and well-argued fashion.
5. Complete one independent reading on which you will write a summary report. The choice of reading is open (see sample titles listed below under "Materials"), and so students are encouraged to seek out other genres and types of readings than those considered in class, although other works by the authors we study may be chosen. This activity will enrich your knowledge of the French-Canadian experience and breadth of creative expression.

6. Complete one group project to be presented to the class. This project will involve web-based research on non-urban regions of Québec using the “Toile du Québec” and will permit you to gain a better feel for the lifestyle and opportunities that these regions offer to tourists and locals alike. This project will also help you understand the tourism industry, which is central to the Québec economy.
7. A take home exam based on the course materials will be due December 18.

## METHODOLOGY

While at times there will be presentations by the instructor of various important issues or questions, this course is not a lecture course. Students will be encouraged to participate in classroom discussion either in an open forum or in pairs or small groups, beginning with assigned questions and eventually moving towards open-ended debate. The goal is to maximize student involvement, which will be in part accomplished through oral presentations of important topics by students.

For each class, you will complete the readings before coming to class, so as to make classroom discussion productive and interesting for all concerned. All assignments must be completed and handed in BY THE DUE DATE, or you risk being penalized on your grade for that assignment. This rule applies whether or not you are in class that day. Electronic assignments are accepted, but I expect you to give me a hard copy IN ANY CASE so I may write in my comments and hand them back to you. Extensions are only given when requested in advance and only in exigent circumstances.

The writing assignments will be designed to provoke critical thinking, and also contextualization of the readings. The papers will be approximately 5 pages in length, and will be due after the class has finished discussing the texts in question. The independent reading and summary report will be due in early December. This assignment is designed to allow you to choose for yourself a text that interests you, to read it carefully, and think about what it adds to your understanding of French-Canadian or Québécois culture.

## EVALUATION

Participation 40%

Written work 30%

Exposé 10%

Group project 10%

Take-home final 10%

### Remarks on the Oral Exposés

Each presentation will last a maximum of 10 minutes, and will deal with a topic from a list that will be circulated in class at the beginning of the semester. Both content (research quality, clarity and accuracy of information) and linguistic proficiency and expression (pronunciation, grammatical precision, vocabulary, intonation and pace) will be considered in the assignment of the grade. If you will be using audio-visual or computer aids, you will need to inform me 3 days in advance or arrange for CETS support yourself.

If you are nervous about such assignments, come to see me in advance and I will be happy to help you prepare by answering your questions and offering suggestions where appropriate. Additionally, links to web resources are available on the course website.

### Remarks on the Written Work

In the course of the semester, you will write papers on at least 2 of the major literary texts we study. These papers will be graded based on content (ideas, tone, research, originality) and on form (structure, coherence, grammar). Occasionally, the grades given for each of these elements are very different. In such cases, the final grade comes from the average of the grades for form and content.

All assignments must be computer-typed in French, double-spaced, with your name, a title, and all the diacritical marks (accents) typed in (NOT handwritten). To assist you in proofreading for minor mistakes, use spell-checker software. All work is to be prepared **independently**, unless you are explicitly informed otherwise by the instructor. DO NOT ask for help from native speakers, as this constitutes a violation of the HONOR CODE. Every time you hand in work, I expect it to be of optimal quality, without spelling mistakes and as grammatically correct as possible. If your best effort, however, results in a grade of B- or better, I will allow rewrites. You must hand in the first version with the revision in a timely fashion (usually 1 week). The final grade for an assignment will be raised (via averaging the two results) so long as you have corrected your mistakes, revised your content, and not made egregious new errors.

NOTE: I am delighted to assist those having difficulty in the preparatory stages of their writing. Please contact me or come to see me for help before the due date, so I can best assist you. I am always willing to help those who want to learn to write better!

### Remarks on the Independent Reading

The written assignment that follows from your reading will have two parts: first, you will give a 4-page synopsis or "résumé" of the main ideas of the text, paying close attention to what this text contributes to an outsider's understanding of French-Canadian or Québécois culture, keeping in mind what we have covered in class; second, you will devote one page to a personal reaction to the text(s), with a list of words you had to look up and their meanings. These two parts should be presented separately, not in one long narrative.

RESPECT THE HONOR CODE IN ALL YOUR WORK FOR THIS CLASS. WHEN IN DOUBT, CHECK WITH ME OR USE SOURCES SUCH AS *How to do Honest Work in College*.

### **MATERIALS**

#### **Obligatory texts:**

Volkswagen Blues (1984) by Jacques Poulin;

Le Désert mauve (1987) by Nicole Brossard;

Le Bonheur à la queue glissante (1998) by Abla Farhoud;

Films to see outside of class: *Le confort et l'indifférence*; *Bon cop, bad cop*; *Tout est parfait*; *La Grande Séduction*

#### **Suggested titles for Independent Readings:**

Agnant, Marie-Célie: La dot de Sara (novel)

Arcand, Denis: Le Déclin de l'empire américain (film)

Baillargeon, Paule: Le Sexe des étoiles (film)

Boucher, Denise: "Les Fées ont soif" (play)

Brault, Michel: Les ordres (film)

Brossard, Nicole: "La lettre aérienne" et "De Radical à intégrales" (essays) ou Elle serait la première phrase de mon prochain roman (essay)

Chen, Ying: Les Lettres chinoises (short novel)

Chouinard, Denis: L'ange de goudron (film)  
Desautels, Denise: Ce Fauve, le bonheur (novel) or Pendant la mort (poems)  
Desjardins, Richard: L'Erreur boréale (documentary)  
Dupré, Louise: La Memoria (novel)  
Gauvin, Lise: Lettres d'une autre (short epistolary novel, on reserve)  
Godbout, Jacques: Le Sort de l'Amérique ou Alias Will James (documentaries)  
Godbout, Jacques: Les Têtes à Papineau (short novel)  
Hémon, Louis: Maria Chapdelaine (short novel)  
Hénault, Dorothy Todd: Les Terribles vivantes (film)  
Lapierre, René: "Avant-propos: Traverser l'Amérique," "Les Desperados de l'Amérique" et "1960-1990: photos de la Révolution tranquille" (essays)  
Masse, Jean-Pierre: L'Autre Amérique (film, see Mme Santoro)  
Micone, Marco: "Gens du silence" (a play from Trilogia)  
Ouellette-Michalska, Madeleine: Chez les termites (short novel)  
Poirier, Anne-Claire: Les Filles du Roy (documentary)  
Pool, Léa: Emporte-moi (Set me free, film) ou A corps perdu (Straight for the heart, film)  
Poulin, Jacques: Les Grandes marées ou Le Coeur de la baleine bleue (short novels)  
Rochon, Esther: Coquillage (short SF/F novel)  
Tremblay, Michel: "Les Belles soeurs" (play)

Or 2-3 short stories taken from one of the following (with prior approval of instructor):

Assiniwi, Bernard, ed.: Contes adultes des territoires algonkin  
Beaugrand, Honoré: La Chasse-galerie  
Brulotte, Gaëtan: Le Surveillant  
Carrier, Roch: Les enfants du bonhomme dans la lune  
Emond, Maurice: Anthologie de la nouvelle et du conte fantastiques québécois au XXe siècle  
Gallays, François, ed. Anthologie de la nouvelle au Québec  
Lord, Michel, ed. Anthologie de la science-fiction québécoise contemporaine  
Proulx, Monique: Les aurores montréalaises  
Roy, Gabrielle: La Rivière sans repos

On reserve you will find the useful textbook: Weinmann and Chamberland, La littérature québécoise des origines à nos jours. This may help you narrow down your choices from the list above.

FREN 333: PLAN DU COURS

DATE	THÈME	PRÉPARATION / LECTURES
09/03	Introduction au cours: Géographie/Histoire	<i>Crac</i>
09/08- 09/10	Les Chansonniers et l'identité nationale ; La langue et la tradition orale (le joual)	Poème : Lalonde, « Speak White, » Chansons : Charlebois, « Mon pays, » ; French B, « Bill 101 » ; Desjardins, etc. NB : Commencer roman : <i>Volkswagen Blues</i> (VB)
09/15- 09/17	La langue, la politique, le séparatisme 1960-aujourd'hui	Le texte des référendums Chasse au trésor Voir: <i>Le Confort et l'indifférence</i>
09/22- 09/24	Jacques Poulin	VB : jusqu'à la page 104
09/29- 10/01	Jacques Poulin	VB : 105-219
10/6-10/08	Jacques Poulin Les femmes et le féminisme	VB : 221-320
10/13- 10/15	Nicole Brossard	Première dissertation à rendre le 10/13. DM : jusqu'à la page 51 (« Le Désert mauve »)
10/20- 10/22	Nicole Brossard	DM : pp 55-178
10/27- 10/29	Nicole Brossard, suite et fin L'immigration et la diversité ethnique	DM : pp 179-fin (« Mauve, l'horizon ») Préciser lectures indépendantes
11/3	Abla Farhoud	BQG : jusqu'à la page 89 Deuxième dissertation à rendre le 11/03
11/10- 11/12	Abla Farhoud La vie urbaine	BQG : 91-167 Vidéo de Sol (en classe avec photocopies) ; voir film : <i>Bon cop bad cop</i>
11/17- 11/19	Les jeunes L'éducation	Voir : <i>Tout est parfait</i> Chanson : « M'accrocher ? »
11/24	Les régions et l'économie	Voir : <i>La Grande séduction</i>
12/01- 12/03	Le tourisme québécois	Lecture indépendante à rendre le 12/01 Présentations en groupes à préparer : la plannification d'un voyage avec des recherches internet etc.
12/08	Présentations sur les voyages plannifiés	Noël au Québec!
	Take-home exam	A rendre le 18 décembre