French Culture, Fall 2013
Required texts: Henry Sayre, Discovering the Humanities (either edition)
Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary
Albert Camus, L’Étranger (The Stranger)
Other materials on Blackboard or at Cal Copy as assigned.

Catalog Description: HUM 310. French Culture (3) [GE]. Prerequisite: Completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.C., Humanities required for nonmajors. Literature and culture stemming from France. Literary, artistic, and intellectual achievements. Traditions and influences to include contributions of the Francophone world.

E-mail / Internet: I make regular use of e-mail and the Internet in this class. Announcements, program changes, and class materials are distributed via e-mail or are placed on Blackboard for you to download. Therefore, it is necessary -- as necessary as your buying the textbook -- that you have a current e-mail address and check it at least once a week. I’ll go over materials in class as well, of course, but you may well miss them or receive them late if you’re not routinely on-line. It’s not a bad idea to check for last-minute announcements before coming to class, either. Finally, don’t be concerned if you don’t always receive a reply to any e-mail that you may send to me; I might deem it worth a collective response rather than an individual one, as the issue you’ve raised might concern the whole class.

Workload: Three exams (lowest one dropped); one required paper; several pop quizzes, given randomly and often at the very start of class (to encourage prompt attendance). Typically, exams are short-answer format, with some lecture slides to identify. One make-up session for a missed exam is offered the last week of term, with different content and method, so think carefully if you decide to pass on a regularly scheduled exam.

Grades: All grades averaged together (less the lowest exam). Extra credit: students may write additional reflection papers on any other film/documentary screened in the classroom (following my guidelines); each earns you a further grade step (+/-) on a letter-graded assignment.

Films: Besides some documentaries, I show a couple of cinematic works that I consider important and informative works of art. These provide the topics for your essay assignments. They are films made by adults, for adults, and some carry R ratings for sex and violence. If, for whatever reason, you feel unable to watch what I’m presenting to the class, let me know and I’ll arrange an alternate assignment for you, though this may well require some legwork on your part. Consider yourself warned and make your decision to view such films accordingly.

Office hours: You’re encouraged to meet me in my office during the semester. This may be to follow upon a poor exam result or just to discuss humanities, politics, or whatever else is on your mind – so drop by.

Attendance & class participation: I take attendance regularly, if not always at every class session. Perfect attendance earns you an extra grade step on a letter-graded assignment at the end of term (like doing another EX CR). Two unexcused absences is the official limit; after that you may lose one full letter grade per missed day (A to B, B to C, etc.), at my discretion. I also use attendance and general class comportment to help me determine where to place someone who’s on the cusp of two grades. Only doctor-certified illness or documented legal concerns constitute excused absences, though if you have a problem (i.e., a work conflict), let me know and I’ll try to accommodate you.

You can only do better by attending regularly and taking good notes. Much of my lecture material corresponds to the textbook, but I do introduce other ideas as well, so be aware that anything touched upon in my lectures or in the reading is fair game for an exam question. Before each exam, I’ll briefly go over essential material. For all those reasons, you’re encouraged to exchange e-mails and phone numbers with a few peers; you’ll have a way to catch up if you miss class, and -- who knows? -- you may make a few new friends.

Study guides: These are luxury that no instructor is obliged to provide. If you want to do well on exams, you need to pay attention, take good notes, read the material, and review diligently all that accumulated knowledge. Right before a test I provide a brief list of points that you should know – but that is a gift to you and is delivered when convenient for me. It is certainly not an entitlement, nor is reviewing it a substitute for the kind of hard work expected of college students. I do not post my lecture notes on Blackboard.

Class conduct: While in class, you’re expected to conduct yourselves as professionals. Informed questions and polite attention make for good participation; eating lunch, talking to your neighbor, checking e-mail, or chatting on the phone distracts both your colleagues and myself and will not be tolerated. Mobiles off! No laptops, texting, or phone use once class is in session; doing so will result in your being obliged to leave and take an absence for that
day. Late arrivals or those who have to leave early, please sit at the back and enter or exit quietly. Drinks and snacks are fine, but no full-scale meals -- and if you spill anything, clean it up!

Advice on the readings: To help ground yourself in the various eras covered, you should read the timeline and the summary materials at the beginning and end of any chapter. Read all material within the assigned pages. Also, the page numbers refer to blocks of information that may fall slightly outside them, so if the discussion appears to start or stop in medias res, look back or forward to find where the paragraph actually begins or ends. Don’t be put off by seemingly lengthy readings; often they include several pages of plates interspersed with text. Last of all, “plates” = “pictures” -- simple enough.

Student health, etc. Please let me know as early as possible if you need special accommodation for exams (SDS) or religious holidays, or if you have any other private concerns.

Please read the following statements, which explain standard university policies on classes such as ours:

Courses that fulfill the 9-unit requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. Your three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary, more complex and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses.

This is an Explorations course in the Humanities and Fine Arts. The Humanities and Fine Arts encompass works of the imagination, such as art, literature, film, drama, dance, and music, and related scholarship. Students better understand human problems, responsibilities, and possibilities in changing historical contexts and diverse cultures, and in relation to the natural environment. Students acquire new languages and familiarize themselves with related cultures. They gain the ability to recognize and assess various aesthetic principles, belief systems, and constructions of identity. Students acquire capacities for reflection, critique, communication, cultural understanding, creativity, and problem solving in an increasingly globalized world.

Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth:

1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments;

2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures;

3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance;

4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.
Course plan, 1st edition: All assignments and activities subject to change (modification / addition / deletion) if we get behind or find new topics to consider. Readings are due on the day assigned.

         (8-28) **No class – Jury Duty!**

II:      (9-2) **Labor Day – no class.**
         (9-4) *The Song of Roland,* relics & pilgrimage, Romanesque architecture. Sayre 136-37, 142.
         (9-6) Capetian France & the Norman Conquest: the Bayeaux Tapestry. Sayre 144-45.
         Viewing: *Art of the Western World: A White Garment of Churches* (pt. 1).


IV:      (9-16) Boccaccio, the Black Death, & the End of Feudalism. Christine de Pizan’s *City of Ladies.*

V:       (9-23) Montaigne – the *essai:* “Of Cannibals.” Marguerite of Navarre, the *Heptameron* (BB).
         Viewing: *Art of the Western World: The Renaissance In the North.* Exam review.
         (9-27) Exam 1. See study guide.


VII:     (10-7) French folk music of the *Moyen-Age.* The Baroque Court: Versailles, Rubens, & Poussin.
         Sayre 308-14.
         (10-9) Baroque theater & opera. Molière, Corneille, Racine.


IX:      (10-21) *Les Philosophes:* Descartes, Diderot, Rousseau, & Voltaire. Sayre 341-44.
         (10-23) *L’amour fou:* Antoinette (Madame Deshoulières); the Marquis de Sade. Read at your own risk!
         Molière papers due today.

         (11-1) Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary.*


XII:     (11-11) **Veteran’s Day – no class.**
         (11-13) Exam #2. Bring pencil & scantron (Grademaster 25420).
         *Madame Bovary* papers due today.
(11-22) Picasso, surrealism, & cinema. Sayre 429-35, 446.

(11-27) Viewing: *No Exit (Huis Clos)*.
(11-28) Thanksgiving Break – no class.

(12-6) Le Corbusier & modern architecture.
France in popular culture: fashion, music, sports, & BD.

*L’Etranger* paper due Monday. Final review Friday.

XVII (12-13) **FINAL EXAM, 10:30-12:30. See study guide.** Cocteau papers due.
Course plan, 2nd edition: All assignments and activities subject to change (modification / addition / deletion) if we get behind or find new topics to consider. Readings are due on the day assigned.

I:  
(8-26) Course outline and policies. Thinking about art: Gislebertus, Last Judgment.
(8-28) **No class – Jury Duty!**

II  
(9-2) **Labor Day – no class.**
(9-4) The Song of Roland, relics & pilgrimage, Romanesque architecture. Sayre 152, 171.
Viewing: *Art of the Western World: A White Garment of Churches* (pt. 1).

III  
(9-9) Eleanor of Aquitaine & Courtly Love; the Troubadours & the Medieval Romance.
(9-13) Aquinas, Scholasticism, & the rise of the University – la Sorbonne. The Radiant Style.

IV  
(9-16) Boccaccio, the Black Death, & the End of Feudalism. Christine de Pizan’s *City of Ladies*.
(9-20) New French literature: Rabelais, *Gargantua & Pantagruel* (BB)

V  
(9-23) Montaigne – the essay: “Of Cannibals.” Marguerite of Navarre, the *Heptameron* (BB).
Viewing: *Art of the Western World: The Renaissance In the North.*
Exam review.
(9-27) **Exam 1. See study guide.**

VI  
Viewing: *La Reine Margot* (dir Patrick Chireau, 1994).

VII  
(10-7) French folk music of the *Moyen-Age.* The Baroque Court: Versailles, Rubens, & Poussin.
Sayre 333-37.
(10-9) Baroque theater & opera. Molière, Corneille, Racine.

VIII  

IX  
(10-23) *L’amour fou*: Antoinette (Madame) Deshoulières; the Marquis de Sade (BB).
Read at your own risk!
Molière papers due today.

X  
Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary.*

XI  

XII  
(11-11) **Veteran’s Day – no class.**
(11-13) Exam #2. Bring pencil & scantron (Grademaster 25420).
Madame Bovary papers due today.

(11-22) Picasso, surrealism, & cinema. Sayre 464, 466.

(11-27) Viewing: *No Exit* (*Huis Clos*).
(11-28) Thanksgiving Break – no class.

(12-6) Le Corbusier & modern architecture.
France in popular culture: fashion, music, sports, & BD.

*L’Etranger* paper due Monday. Final review Friday.

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