



FR 323: CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

IES Abroad Paris Centre French Studies

DESCRIPTION: The creative writing workshop is a place for sharing the pleasure of writing, of reading, and of discovering texts. It is a practical class open to everyone, and not a theoretical class or a course aimed at specialization. This course is intended for students who wish to improve their stylistic skills in French while developing their creative potential. Students will discover that they can express themselves on a variety of subjects, all while inventing simple and imaginative narratives.

CREDITS: 3

CREDIT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: French

PREREQUISITES: 4 semesters of university-level French or equivalent

SUPPLEMENTARY COSTS: Additional costs will be invoiced to the student's IES ABROAD account. These charges will cover printing costs and other expenses. Prices will vary depending on the course.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: This course insists on focusing on the playful aspects of writing. Varied texts will be read for inspiration and as a source of useful vocabulary. The exercises take inspiration from various sources and constraints (imposed words, photographs, imposed structure, message, copy and paste techniques, etc.). On the basis of the proposed context, students will produce short texts in class with guidance from the professor. These texts will be read in class; other texts devised on the same theme will be written at home and returned every week to the professor (progressive evaluation). The written exercises will also develop semantic skills (study of vocabulary adapted to the cultural issues developed in the texts) and grammatical skills (complementary revision of one specific point every week, triggered by the structure of each individual text). Each student will be able to focus on his or her weak points; the professor will post information on specific grammar and vocabulary points on Moodle.

We will study a novel, *Le géant et le gigot*, by Christian Oster, winner of the 1999 Medici Prize. The author will visit the class to discuss his work. A visit of a writer's house in Paris is also planned.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- 30% — 7 highest grades from a minimum of 9 creative writing assignments done during the semester
- 20% — 2 vocabulary and grammar tests
- 40% — Final Exam
- 10% — Participation

Participation

Students will read their text out loud and will comment on other students' writing during workshops

Mid-term exam:

None (continuous assessment throughout the semester)

Final exam

Write a text using all of the techniques learned in class (portrait, description, dialogue, etc.). Students will write a story and will bring life to fictional characters by expressing personal opinions

Creative writing texts

The texts will increase in word count as the semester progresses (150 words at the beginning, 350-400 words by the end)



COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- I. Comprehension**
 - A. By the end of the course, students will be able to understand most spoken communication of a medium difficulty level (media, cinema, speeches, music, conversations, etc.) related to realistic, daily situations, as well as understand discussions about more abstract themes (discussed in class)
 - B. Students will be able to understand French speakers from various regions, having had previously limited contact with foreigners, and will also be able to understand the majority of idiomatic expressions and slang

- II. Reading**
 - A. Students will be able to read and understand a wide variety of articles, historical texts, and diverse literary works by utilizing what they have learned in class
 - B. Students will be able to read and understand university-level texts with minor assistance

- III. Writing**
 - A. Students will be able to write with ease when it comes to daily French writing skills (notes, text messages, letters, mails, online forums, etc.)
 - B. Students will be able to write about a variety of texts and recount, describe, compare, and analyze a myriad of subjects
 - C. Students will be able to correct their own writing and the writing of their peers

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is mandatory for all sessions, including visits. Absences and lateness will affect your ability to master class content. In addition, your final grade will be lowered for each absence.

Example:

- Final grade: A-
- 1 absence = A-, 2 absences = B+, 3 absences = B, 4 absences = B-

Being more than 15 minutes late to a course counts as an absence. 3 late arrivals (less than 15 minutes) count as an absence.

If a student misses more than 25% of class time, s/he will receive an F in the course.

Assignments and presentations missed because of absences will be given the grade of F.

When absences occur, students must inform their teacher and the French Studies Academic Coordinator as soon as possible (mfedon@iesabroad.org). In some instances (sickness with doctor’s note for example), absences may be excused. If a student believes that an absence should be excused, they must contact Meghann or Seth.

Students should always inform their professor of their absence, as well as Meghann (mfedon@iesabroad.org).

CONTENT:

Week	CONTENT	Activities
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Week 1	LISTES 1. LISTS, 1 text written in class, 1 text written at home 2. Grammatical: Articles, contracted articles, negative articles 3. Vocabulary: everyday objects, preferred objects 4. Culture: Reading of a text by Georges Pérec, « Je me souviens ». Reading of Christian Oster's novel and tale over the course of the semester <i>Le Cœur du Problème, Le Géant et le Gigot</i> <i>Mythologies, Roland Barthes. J'aime, je n'aime pas.</i>	General principles of the class Reading of a novel (written comprehension) Grammar and vocabulary reinforcement
Week 2	PORTRAITS 1. Functional: PORTRAITS 2 texts Telling a story while describing a person, in a positive and negative way 2. Grammatical: negative articles, colloquial « c'est/ il est », negative form of « c'est/il est ». 3. Vocabulary: Describing a person 4. Culture: reading of a text from Raymond Queneau, Exercices de Style <i>Le Cœur du Problème: page 1-10</i>	Grammar and vocabulary reinforcement Comment on a photograph Inventing a story based on a photograph Expressing judgments Read the novel over the course of the semester
Week 3	1. Functional: DESCRIPTION of a place (2 texts)	Working on a photograph. Expressing the passage of time.

	2. Grammatical: prepositions, « depuis », « pendant » 3. Vocabulary: spaces, places, expressing one's reactions with nuances Novel reading: page 10-204. Culture: in-class reading for inspiration: personal reading: <i>Le Cœur du Problème</i> page 10-20 <i>Le Géant et le Gigot</i>: page 10-20	Inventing a story in a chosen setting Choosing a "mood" Creating a new context
Week 4	1. Functional: NARRATIONS (2 texts) 2. Grammatical: imperfect, <i>passé composé</i>, personal pronouns (I) 3. Vocabulary: « Parental heritage », 4. Culture: Reading of a text by Frederic Beigbeder, « Héritage parental » Personal reading: <i>Le Cœur du Problème</i> page 20-30 <i>Le Géant et le Gigot</i> : Page 20 to 30	Presenting oneself through others, using constraint to free imagination Document reading (written comprehension) Grammar and vocabulary reinforcement VOCABULARY TEST #1
Week 5	1. Functional: "Short stories" Write a short press article (2 texts)	Humoristic or detached presentation

	2. Grammatical: imperfect, passé composé, personal pronouns (II) 3. Vocabulary: press article, media, synonyms to do... 4. Culture: reading of French newspapers in search of Short stories Personal reading: <i>Le Cœur du Problème</i> page 30-50 <i>Le Géant et le Gigot</i>: page 30 to 40	Comparing time dimensions French humour vs American humour
Week 6	1. Functional: Letters (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) 2. Grammar: subjunctive, conditional 3. Vocabulary: Letters for various occasions 4. Culture: In-class reading Half-way through: objectives Personal reading: <i>Le Cœur du Problème</i> page 50-70 <i>Le Géant et le Gigot</i>: page 40 to 50	Expressing wishes, desire, personal regrets Reading a document (written comprehension)
Week 7	1. Functional: DIALOGUES (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) 2. Grammar: Adjectives and possessive pronouns, inversion of subject-verb after dialogue 3. Vocabulary: synonyms of the verb <i>dire</i>	Creating characters Grammar and vocabulary revision Exploring nuance

	4. Culture: In-class reading: Christian Oster, dialogue in <i>La Princesse enrhumée</i>. Personal reading: <i>Le Cœur du Problème</i> p. 70-90. Prepare for a class outing to the cinema No course on November 1	
Week 8	Mandatory film screening (during class hours) 1. Functional: HAIKUS and poems (5-6 texts) 2. Grammar: Cause, purpose, consequence (I) 3. Vocabulary: Nominalization 4. Culture: In-class reading: Verlaine, "Mon rêve familial", <i>Poèmes saturniens</i> <i>Lu by Gilles-Claude Thériault</i> — source: litteratureaudio.com Personal reading: <i>Le Cœur du Problème</i> pp 90-110 Prepare questions for Christian Oster	Reading a document (written comprehension) Grammar and vocabulary revision What is a writer? Who writes novels? How? Prepare for C. Oster visit
Week 9	1. Functional: Fables (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) 2. Grammar: Cause, purpose, consequence (II) 3. Vocabulary: Synonyms of the verb <i>faire</i>. <i>Le Géant et le gigot</i> – Christian Oster + <i>Le Roi de n'importe où</i> 4. Culture: VISIT with Christian Oster, discussion about fables (reserve the date)	Conjuring of a sacred practice Reading a document (written comprehension) Grammar and vocabulary revision

Week 10	Recipes 1. Functional: RECIPES (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) 2. Grammar: imperative and infinitives 3. Vocabulary: good manners 4. Culture: In-class reading: Jean Cocteau, « Bonnes manières ».	Reading a document (written comprehension) Grammar and Vocabulary test #2
Week 11	1. Functional: Oulipo LITERARY GAMES (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) http://www.pascalkaeser.ch/jeuxlitt.pdf The exquisite cadaver, <i>acrostiche</i> poetry 2. Grammar: Adjectives and indefinite pronouns 3. Vocabulary: the Oulipo constraints 4. Culture: the Oulipo writers http://www.pascalkaeser.ch/jeuxlitt.pdf	Invent a story in a chosen context Selecting atmosphere and ambiance Creating a new context
Week 12	Synopsis, pre-poems, haikus, <i>caviardage</i> (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) 1. Functional: And if ... 2. Grammar: conditional, prepositions 3. Vocabulary: projections	<i>Caviardage</i>: Lucien Suel, prépoème Philippe Bertahaut Reading a document for inspiration: Annie Saumont short stories INCIPIT from Ludovic Janvier Gisèle Prassinou

	4. Culture: Annie Saumont, short story collection « <i>Ca va passer</i> ». Jeu : « Les conditions » (variant on the exquisite cadaver)	
Week 13	1. Functional: INCIPIT brief short stories (1 text written in class, 1 text written at home) 2. Vocabulary: short stories 3. Grammar: general revision, workshop review 4. Culture: possession and <i>détournement</i>	General review for the final exam
Week 14	Written exercises utilizing everything we've learned in class (portrait, description, dialogue, etc.) Inventing a story, creating characters, expression personal opinions Using grammar in context Vocabulary: overview of everything covered in class Culture: Synthesis of everything covered in class	

VISITS:

- 1 writing workshop at Rue Daguerre.

REQUIRED READING:

At home:

- Christian Oster, *Le Géant et le Gigot*, Éditions l'École des Loisirs, 2014, et son dernier roman, *Le Cœur du Problème*, Éditions de l'Olivier, septembre 2015).

Texts studied in class: Extracts will be posted on Moodle

- Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, le Seuil, 1970
- Frédéric Beigbeder, *Héritage parental*, in *Un Roman français*, prix Renaudot 2009, éditions Grasset, 2009.
- Cioran, *Sur les Cimes du Désespoir*, éditions le livre de Poche, 1991

- Jean Cocteau, "Petite Lettre à la dérive", in *L'Almanach de cocagne*, 1919
- Frédéric Forte, sélection de haïkus pour activité oulipienne, Astrolabe 2012
- Ali Ghalem, *Une femme pour mon fils*, Éditions Syros, 1988.
- Pierre-Jean-Jouve, *Mélodrame*, Mercure de France, 1957
- Haikus, anthologie du poème court japonais, Poésie/Gallimard 2002
- Charles Juliet, *Dans la Lumière des Saisons*, éditions POL 2005
- Pascal Kaeser (Oulipo) Rencontres du 3e groupe, in *Jeux littéraires* 2006, <http://www.pascalkaeser.ch/jeuxlitt.pdf>
- Christian Oster, *La Princesse enrhumée*, l'École des Loisirs, 2005
- Georges Pérec, *Je me souviens*, Éditions Hachette.1978,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNhN77tyep8><http://ateldec.chez.com/00002000/...>
- Jacques Prévert, *Inventaire, Paroles*, 1946
- Raymond Queneau, *Exercices de Style*, Éditions Gallimard, 1947
- Annie Saumont, *C'est rien ça va passer*, Julliard, 2001
- Paul Verlaine, mon rêve familial, in *Poèmes Saturniens*, 2ditions Alphonse Lemerre, 1866.