

## **FREN 2382—Introduction to French Literature (in English)**

### **SYLLABUS & SCHEDULE**

**I. Brief Course Description:** French 2382 is a course on the cross-cultural tradition of French and Francophone Literature (from the Renaissance to the present) designed to focus on how beliefs, values, and other dimensions of culture explore and inevitably alter human experience and most notably our concept of nature. These diverse literary expressions are designed to provoke an exploration of ideas that foster in turn intellectual and aesthetic creation, thus provoking a more nuanced and profound understanding of the universal quest to make sense of the human condition and the natural world in which we live and are a part of.

### **II. Instructor:**

Dr. Suzanne LaLonde; email: [suzanne.Lalonde@utrgv.edu](mailto:suzanne.Lalonde@utrgv.edu) webpage: [Frenchutrgv.us](http://Frenchutrgv.us);  
Office Hours: M/W 8:30-9:15; 12:15-1:30; 3:00-3:30; MAIN 1.516; 882-8891/8227

### **III. Required texts in English found in:**

**"French Nature Writing and the Nature of Writing" PDF file on Black Board or on Frenchutrgv.us; prepared by Dr. LaLonde FRENCHUTRGV.US (SYLLABI & BOOKS)**

Authors include: Ronsard, Montaigne, de la Fontaine, Pascal, Voltaire, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Zola, Cocteau, Camus, Sartre, Lévi-Strauss, Weil, Césaire, Fanon, Giono, and Le Clézio.

### **IV. Core Component Area & Description:**

1/ Although it may appear at first glance that this course focuses narrowly on French Culture and hence endorses an ethos of hegemonic cultural dominance, nothing could be further from the truth. By studying French and Francophone Literature—poetry, excerpts of novels and intimate literature (autobiographies, letters, and essays) and movie versions of novels and plays—from the Renaissance to the present, students are exposed to a wide range of portraits of the human condition across cultures. 2/ For instance, both Montaigne and Chateaubriand expose readers to Indigenous American cultures, contrasting them to the narrow-mindedness and hypocrisies of Western cultures; Pascal and Rousseau struggle to define their religious beliefs in a society defined by religious wars and the march toward secularization; Sartre and Camus (Pied-Noir born in Algeria) explore a colonization of nations, minds, and bodies; while Le Clézio (Franco-Mauritian) exposes the challenge to preserve cultural identity amidst rampant globalization. 3/ In short, these texts provide a telescopic view of the human condition as one contemplates the nature of nature, emphasizing the universal search and yet individual quest for meaning despite oppression and close mindedness.

## **V. Intended Student Learning Outcomes:**

**A. Critical Thinking:** Students will learn about various expressions of human values in the diverse French and Francophone Intimate Literature traditions. By comparing and contrasting these expressions of human values, students will naturally develop critical thinking skills. Moreover, they will be equipped to engage in a critical analysis of their own cultural traditions.

**B. Communication Skills:** Students will engage in interpretive exercises that draw upon broad-minded ideas from different cultural traditions and explored in diverse forms of Intimate Literature. More specifically, students will learn to articulate informed personal reactions to pieces of literature and engage in a dialectical analysis of ideas during oral and written expression.

**C. Social Responsibility:** By studying culturally and genre diverse Intimate Literature pieces, students will be exposed to and in turn grasp cultural diversity and intercultural experiences. Students will also learn that literature serves as a political tool to instruct and bring about cultural change. The link between ethics and behavior becomes obvious while reading these texts, since they reveal uncomfortable narratives and descriptions of injustices and social inequalities, hence underscoring the importance of civic engagement in society.

**D. Personal Responsibility:** Considering that the French and Francophone Literature pieces studied in this course transcend a specific culture, students develop an awareness of a wide range of human values and beliefs. Moreover, these texts provoke students to move beyond a state of indifference and prejudice toward that which is different from their own cultural tradition. Inevitably, students learn the art of ethical decision-making, since the ethical is based not on an elimination of complexity and ambiguity, but rather on an exploration of ideas and choices (informed from many different traditions and cultures) and the assumed responsibility for one's actions and their consequences.

## **VI. End-of-the-Semester-Project to be Presented in Class in lieu of a Final Exam**

(Designed to address Social & Personal Responsibility Objectives)

Working with a partner, students will create a "Biography/Story of Nature" written and video project. It should be a creative attempt to understand a particular natural phenomenon. Professor's expectations of students: 1/  They should use different media: expository writing, photographs, videos, and recordings, as well as strive to present topics in novel ways. 2/  They should present a story to their professor on the date indicated on the schedule. 3/  They should create a video that tells the story with images. 4/  They should base the thematic content of their story and videos from at least five of the authors' ideas studied in class. 4/  Questions that might be explored: Where do the Romantics find solace from the rapidly changing industrial society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? How can Existentialism be viewed as a form of Humanism or does it project a portrait of humanity imbued with despair through symbols of nature? What are some examples of a colonization of the mind, body, and nature? And, how does globalization align itself with post-modernism?

At the heart of the matter, this final course artifact follows the very examples of literature studied in this course. Namely, students become writers of a piece on nature (a story and accompanying video) and consequently, an implicit self-portrait of nature is revealed. The project not only invites students to contemplate with a wide-angle lens the universal struggle to understand the human condition and our relationship to nature, but it also holds us accountable to produce our own personal reading of the human condition. This step toward a creative personal experience inevitably translates into an ethical statement (designed as a counterforce to post-modern nihilism), since "only in the self can the drama of truth occur" (Kierkegaard).

### **VII. Grading System and Assignments:**

Your final grade will be based on the following breakdown:

**\*\*Final Project—20%—Final Video Research Project**

**\*\* Presentation of Final Project in Class—6%—Day of Final Exam**

**\*\*Weekly Homework—These assignments will not be collected and graded, but we will review the material, which will eventually be evaluated on the quizzes. In short, MAKE SURE YOU DO YOUR HW OR YOU WILL FAIL YOUR QUIZZES, WHICH IS WORTH NEARLY HALF YOUR GRADE!**

**\*\*Weekly Quizzes—48%—13 quizzes, but 12 counted (lowest quiz dropped)**

**\*\* Attendance and Active Participation—26%—Your professor will take attendance at the beginning of each class; if you are unable to attend class, you must contact her electronically. Active participation, that is the formulation of ideas and opinions regarding pieces of literature will determine participation grade. (1 pt for showing up; 1 pt. for participating actively.**

### **VIII. UTRGV Policy Statements:**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time.

**Brownsville Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at

[accessibility@utrgv.edu](mailto:accessibility@utrgv.edu). **Edinburg Campus:** Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at [accessibility@utrgv.edu](mailto:accessibility@utrgv.edu).

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:** Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (<http://my.utrgv.edu>); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Online evaluations will be available Nov. 18 – Dec. 9, 2015. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV's attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY: As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE: In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student's time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

COURSE DROPS: According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the "3-peat rule" and the "6-drop" rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

### IX. Course Subject Schedule:

In short, HW due on Mon; Quizzes on Weds; on some weeks, your professor will collect the HW instead of giving a quiz and count your HW as a quiz grade.

Text and HW assignments found on BB and/or frenchrgv.us (syllabi & books zone)

Week Date	Material Covered in Class and Therefore Homework for Students to complete
1- 08/28 08/30	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Introduction to the Class--Syllabus B. Introduction to students' responsibilities C. Introduction to the Humanities</p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Study for Quiz 1 (Q1) in class on syllabus B. Prof seminar: Introduction to French Literature/Renaissance</p>
2- 09/04 09/06	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read: Chap. 1: <b>"The Deep Well of Nature"</b>: 16th Century/Renaissance B. Do HW #1 Review—<b>Ch. 1</b>--Excerpts from Ronsard and Montaigne</p> <p><b>*WEDS*</b></p> <p>A. Prepare "I-Video" and upload on BB class site. Video consists of: 1) _____ show on the video that you have completed your hw; 2) _____ create an autobiography about yourself (10 characteristics); 3.) _____ indicate what animal you'd like to be and give ten reasons why. (This video project is in anticipation of your final video project on nature.) (Q2)</p>
3- 09/11 09/13	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read Chaps 2 &amp; 3 <b>"The Beasts of Nature" &amp; "The Mechanization of Nature"</b>: 17th Century Excerpts from de la Fontaine &amp; Pascal (*Note: You don't need to read Perrault or Descartes) B. Do HW #2 Review- <b>Chs. 2 &amp; 3</b></p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Study for Q3 B. Prof seminar introduction to the 18th century-Enlightenment</p>

<p>4- 09/18 09/20</p>	<p>MON A. Read "<b>Nature and Society</b>": B. 18th Century B. HW #3 Review: <b>Ch. 4</b>--Excerpts from Voltaire and Rousseau</p> <p>WEDS A. Q4 B. Prof seminar introduction to the 19th century--Romanticism</p>
<p>5- 09/25 09/27</p>	<p>MON A. Read "<b>The Allure of Nature</b>": 19th Century B. Complete HW #4 Review Ch. 5--Chateaubriand's Atala</p> <p>WEDS A. Q5 B. Prof seminar introduction to the 19th century--decadence</p>
<p>6- 10/02 10/04</p>	<p>MON A. Read "<b>The Fall of Humanity in Nature</b>": 19th Century B. Do HW #5</p> <p>WEDS A. Q6 B. Prof seminar introduction to Realism</p>
<p>7- 10/09 10/11</p>	<p>MON A. Watch Zola's "La Bête Humaine" (movie version by Jean Renoir) B. Do HW #6</p> <p>WEDS A. Q7 B. Prof seminar introduction to Surrealism</p>
<p>8- 10/16 10/18</p>	<p>MON A. Watch Cocteau's version of "La Belle et la Bête" (See text for link.) B. Do HW #7 Surrealism</p> <p>WEDS A. Q8 B. Prof seminar introduction to Existentialism</p>

<p>9- 10/23 10/25</p>	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read <b>"Existentialism and Nature"</b>: 20th Century B. Do HW #8 on Ch.9-Excerpts from Camus and Sartre</p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Q9 B. Prof seminar on Primitivism and Deracination</p> <p><b>C. "Biography of Nature" project proposal due! (One page summary)</b></p>
<p>10- 10/30 11/01</p>	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read: <b>"Primitivism and Deracination"</b>: 20th Century B. Do HW #9 on Ch.10-Excerpts from Levi-Strauss and Weil</p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Q10 B. Prof seminar introduction to Colonization</p>
<p>11- 11/06 11/08</p>	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read: <b>"Colonization and the Wretched of the Earth"</b>: 20th Century B. Do HW #10 on Ch.11-Excerpts from Césaire and Fanon</p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Q11 B. Prof seminar introduction to Eco-criticism</p>
<p>12- 11/13 11/15</p>	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read: <b>"Gardens of Paradise"</b>: 20th Century B. Do HW #11 on Ch.12-Giono's The Man Who Planted Trees</p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Q12 B. Prof seminar introduction to Globalization</p>
<p>13- 11/20 11/22</p>	<p>MON</p> <p>A. Read: <b>"Globalization: The Death of Nature and Humanity"</b> 20th Century B. Do HW #12 on Ch.13-Le Clézio's excerpt from The African</p> <p>WEDS</p> <p>A. Q13 B. Workshop for final exposé-partner work.</p>

14- 11/27 11/29	Workshop for final exposé (presentations)
Last Day of Class MON 12/06	<b>Written story for final exposé due.</b>
12/11 1:15-3: 00	<b>A. Final projects due! (no final exam)</b> <b>B. In-class student-project presentations</b>

**In summary, this is a list of your responsibilities as students:**

- Prepare weekly readings from the "French Nature Writing..." (FNW) Reader.
- Answer the questions in the weekly HW that are posed by your professor either in BB or [frenchrgv.us](http://frenchrgv.us)
- Be prepared to show your professor your answers to your HW, which means you should read the texts and respond to the questions carefully and thoughtfully.
- Be prepared to take the weekly quiz, which is based on the readings, the HW assignments and your professor's seminars.
- Be prepared to participate in class discussions and pose questions.
- Prepare with your partner your "biography-story of nature", which should be at least three pages long (12 font Times Roman).
- With one partner, present your "biography-story of nature" exposé on the day we are assigned to take a final exam. (no final exam).

Finally, do not fall behind in your work; devote at least three hours a week to prepare the above, and if you have problems with the texts, I will gladly assist you in class or during my office hours.