

Advanced Intercultural Seminar

Last Updated: Sun, 01/04/2026

Course prefix: FREN

Course number: 4500

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
27873

Instructor First Name: Brigitte

Instructor Last Name: Stepanov

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course integrates cross-cultural research and reflection of current issues in the French-speaking world. Intended for students who have some study-abroad experience in a French-speaking country. Conducted in French.

Course learning outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Research historical, social, political, and cultural contexts
2. Improve their oral fluency (both spoken French and aural comprehension) in expressing opinions, interpreting situations, and solving problems
3. Improve their written French and reading comprehension in French
4. Understand the intersecting traditions, customs, and histories of French-speaking countries in the world
5. Gain a cognitive awareness of how communication and interaction is developed and maintained cross-culturally
6. Employ cognitive flexibility to better categorize new cultural information
7. Understand the importance of cross-cultural empathy and meta communication and apply this knowledge to real-life settings

Required course materials:

Sebbar, Leïla. *La seine était rouge*, isbn. 9782742785575.

Duras, Marguerite. *La douleur*, isbn. 9782070441099.

Guizou. *Permacomix*, isbn. 9782374252506.

All other needed materials will be posted on the Home Page of our Canvas Site.

Grading policy:

Attendance + participation (in-class discussion, including leading discussion and "mini" presentations) - 25%

Canvas Discussion Posts - $6 \times 3\% = 18\%$

Translation/Traduction - 12%

Midterm Paper (in class) - 15%

Final Project (This includes the proposal of the project, the creation of the project itself, the oral presentation of the project and bibliography) - 30%

Description of Graded Components

Participation: Active participation in class and engagement with the assigned materials are vital. Please come to class prepared by having read/watched/listened to the assigned readings/film/music. Before class: Prepare the films/songs/texts at home by watching/reading them, using a dictionary and researching vocabulary/key terms, and completing the assignments as advised in the calendar. Access additional materials and resources on Canvas. Please bring any readings and notes to class.

Participation will be graded on the following scale:

High degree of preparedness and active participation = 10 points

Moderate degree of preparedness and participation = 9 points

In class and making an okay contribution = 7 points

In class, but silent or ill-prepared = 4 points

Unexcused absence = 0 points

Canvas Discussion Posts: ~Biweekly Canvas Discussion Posts are due before Wednesday's class (but you may post them at any point before then). Please post a reflection on the materials (either Monday's or Wednesday's) of the week by including at least 2 remarks. Please compose responses in complete sentences, 150-200 words in length. These reflections are also an opportunity for you to include links to other materials; please cite these materials clearly and include links to websites, images, articles, etc. Think about the context of your sources (if you find a newspaper article, consider whether the journal has a well-known political orientation; if you select a TV interview, try to see if it comes from a private or public channel, etc.). You will be graded on content, the format of your reflection

(length and citation of materials), and your writing.

Midterm: Writing exercise conducted in class pertaining to class material.

Translation/Traduction: This assignment is a translation exercise that puts into practice intercultural competency.

It is composed of four parts: finding an excerpt in either French or English; translating it into the other language; writing a meta reflection on the choice of text and translation process (and translating the meta reflection itself).

Final Project: The final project will focus on an intercultural topic chosen in the final weeks of the course.

It is composed of:

1. A creative component: this component consists of something that you create digitally or physically and show to the class
2. A research component: this component consists of presenting a PPT (with bibliography) about what you have created and how it relates to your intercultural topic, expounding on the theory behind your practice (supported by secondary sources).

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100% ("Excellent")
B	80-89% ("Good")
C	70-79% ("Satisfactory")
D	60-69% ("Passing")
F	0-59% ("Failure")

Attendance policy:

You are required to attend class when it convenes, and I will be recording attendance in each class. Exceptions are allowed for Institute-approved absences (for example, those documented by the Registrar) and situations such as hospitalization or family emergencies (documented by the Office of the Dean of Students). Absences and/or excessive tardiness will affect your participation grade – since it is worth a large part of your final grade, please do attend class! If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what happened in class that day and to catch up on the work that you missed.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence