

FREN 4250/8803 Syllabus

Reading *Les Misérables*, Section A, 3 credits

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

This course offers a complete reading of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, approached as a major literary and ethical inquiry into justice, social inequality, and moral responsibility in nineteenth-century France. Through close reading, discussion, and film adaptations, students will explore how the novel stages enduring questions of conscience, law, and human dignity. The course will also examine selected adaptations across media, including cinema, anime, and the Broadway musical, to consider how the story is reinterpreted in different cultural and artistic contexts.

The course is conducted in French, and students are expected to read carefully, take notes, and come prepared for discussion.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

- Read and comprehend prose of moderate to advanced difficulty
- Analyze Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* as a major literary work engaging with ethical questions central to the human condition, including justice, responsibility, and moral conflict.
- Conduct close readings of *Les Misérables* and articulate informed, perceptive analyses of its literary form, narrative strategies, and ethical dimensions.
- Situate *Les Misérables* within its broader nineteenth-century French social, cultural, and historical contexts.
- Formulate and express well-supported critical arguments in accurate spoken and written French.
- Strengthen proficiency in core language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) through sustained engagement with literary and cultural materials.

Required Course Materials

1. Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (Required)

Primary edition (required for this course):

Le Livre de Poche (Pocket Book), Edited by Nicole Savy and Guy Rosa, 1998/2016, 2 volumes (Tome 1 + Tome 2) ISBN-13: 978-2253096337 + 978-2253096344

This is the edition used in class. It includes helpful introduction, notes and contextual documents designed to support your reading. These should be available at the GT bookstore.



A second acceptable edition is:

Folio Classique, Edited by Yves Gohin, 1999, 2 volumes (Tome 1 + Tome 2)

ISBN-13: 978-2070409228 + 978-2070409235

Important Guidelines for Purchasing

- You must purchase both volumes of the same edition. If you plan to buy it online, take into account delivery time and buy the complete 2-volume set from the same publisher.
- Do not purchase abridged or simplified versions of the text. Many editions are incomplete or lack critical notes.
- If you are unsure about your edition, please consult the instructor before purchasing.
- Both editions listed above are typically available at the Georgia Tech bookstore; if ordering online, allow sufficient delivery time.

Using an incomplete or inappropriate edition will create unnecessary difficulties in your reading and coursework. When in doubt, ask before purchasing.

2. Bernard Swysen, *Victor Hugo*, 2014. (Recommended purchase)

Publisher: Kennes les 3 As

ISBN-13: 978-2872656189

Additional Materials/Resources: Films (see Canvas)

Les Misérables, by Jean-Paul de Chanois, 1ère époque et 2ème époque, 1958

Les Misérables, by Robert Hossein, 1982

Les Misérables, by Claude Lelouch, 1995

Les Misérables, by Billy August, 1998

Les Miserables Shōjo Cosette, by Nippon Animation, 2007

Les Misérables, by Tom Hooper, 2012

Jean Valjean, by Éric Besnard, 2025

Les Misérables, by Fred Cavayé, 2026

Les Misérables, Broadway musical, 2026

Grading Policy:

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

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

According to policy, grades at Georgia Tech are interpreted as follows:

A	Excellent (4 quality points per credit hour)
B	Good (3 quality points per credit hour)
C	Satisfactory (2 quality points per credit hour)
D	Passing (1 quality point per credit hour)
F	Failure (0 quality points per credit hour)

See <http://registrar.gatech.edu/info/grading-system> for more information about the grading system at Georgia Tech.

Assignments	Weight (% , points, etc.)
• Attendance & Participation	15%
• Homework / Weekly Discussions	10%
• Class Notes	5%
• Oral Presentation	15%
• Mini Quizzes (2)	15%
• Mid-term Project	15%
• Final Creative Project	25%

Description of Graded Components

Class participation: Class participation is central to the success of this course and to your own learning. Active, thoughtful, and consistent engagement will be rewarded with a high participation grade. You are expected to prepare all assigned materials before class; bring notes, questions, and/or reflections; contribute regularly to class discussions; engage respectfully with classmates' ideas. Participating to class discussion does not mean there are "right" or "wrong" answers or comments, rather it is to have thoughtful contributions that either add to the discussion/debate or move it in a new direction or build on other comments. It can also be to ask questions on the reading material, ask your classmates' opinion on a very specific aspect of the text, make a comment on a detail you find inexplicable or amusing.

Homework / Weekly Discussion: You will complete 11 Weekly Discussions over the semester. Discussions/responses should be posted by 11:00PM on Mondays every week. Follow the specific prompt and instructions on Canvas. Write in full sentences and organized paragraphs. You may include images, quotes, or video links to enrich your post. Before you submit, please ensure the accuracy of your French by verifying agreements, researching appropriate vocabulary, and attending to grammar. On 1–2 occasions, this assignment will be completed during class time.

Note on AI and translation tools: All submissions must be your own work. For these discussion posts, the use of AI-based tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot) or translation tools (e.g., Google Translate) is not permitted. See policy on Generative AI below. Unauthorized use constitutes a violation of course policy. Note: I can identify when such tools are used. However, you can use Word to do a spellcheck and review your agreements and sentences before submitting your work.

Class Notes: You will submit a complete PDF of your course notes at the end of the semester. Your notebook should function as a comprehensive learning resource, including: vocabulary and key terms; lecture content and discussions; notes on films, readings, and class debates; personal reflections and connections. Format requirements: clearly dated entries; organized sections with headings; legible and structured presentation; can be handwritten on paper or on Ipad (submitted as a single PDF). More details on Canvas in “Assignments”.

Oral Presentation (with PowerPoint): During the semester, each student will deliver one oral presentation on an assigned topic. Objectives: present a clear and well-researched argument, situate your topic in its broader cultural and/or historical context, highlight key elements for class discussion, engage your audience and facilitate dialogue. Expectations: organized structure (introduction, development, conclusion), effective use of visual materials (slides, images, clips), delivery in French. More details on Canvas in “Assignments”.

Mini Quizzes (2): Two short in-class quizzes will assess your understanding of key concepts, vocabulary, and materials studied in class.

Mid-term Project: Video Essay (Critical Analysis): The Midterm Project is an analytical assignment designed to assess your ability to synthesize course materials. You will create a short video essay that offers a critical analysis of a theme or topic of your choice.

Objectives: practice close analysis (textual or visual); explore the relationship between form and meaning; present ideas through a combination of voice, image, and/or text.

Graduate projects (8803) should meet all undergraduate expectations while also developing a more complex and sustained argument, engaging with secondary sources or critical frameworks, and demonstrating greater originality and intellectual independence. More details and guidelines on Canvas in “Assignments”.

Final Creative Project: The Final Creative Project is an opportunity to conceive, develop, and present an individual creative or artistic work accompanied by a critical reflection engaging with the materials, themes, and questions explored in class.

Possible formats:

- Short film
- Video essay
- Comparative Analysis Project
- Multimedia project

- Close Reading / Close Viewing Dossier

All projects must be accompanied by a critical reflection in French (written), articulating your intentions, creative and intellectual process, and the project's relationship to the themes and concepts explored in the course.

Graduate projects (8803) should meet all undergraduate expectations while also demonstrating a more advanced level of conceptual development, critical engagement, methodological rigor, and intellectual independence. More details and guidelines on Canvas in "Assignments".

Completion of 9 of the 11 weekly discussions + oral presentation + mid-term project + 2 quizzes + final creative project is mandatory to pass the course.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required and constitutes a significant component of your final grade. Attendance will be recorded in Canvas at each class meeting.

You are expected to:

- Attend all scheduled class sessions (Tuesdays and Thursdays)
- Arrive on time and remain for the full duration of the class
- Come prepared, having completed all assigned readings and tasks
- Participate actively in class discussions and activities

Absences, late arrivals, early departures, and repeated disruptions (e.g., leaving the room during class) will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade.

Absences

You are expected to attend all classes unless you have a documented, excused absence (e.g., illness, official university activity, or other serious circumstances; See: Institute-Approved Absences section). In case of absence, you are responsible for all material covered. You should contact a classmate to obtain notes and stay up to date. Absences do not exempt you from completing assignments or meeting deadlines unless otherwise arranged.

Participation

Participation is a central component of this course and of your learning experience. Active participation includes: contributing thoughtfully to class discussions, asking questions and offering interpretations, demonstrating preparation and attentiveness. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers; what matters is being engaged with the class and class material. Please silence and put away cell phones during class.

Regular attendance combined with consistent, thoughtful participation will result in a strong grade in this category.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS

[Core IMPACTS](#) is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum. If you are teaching a course that counts towards Core IMPACTS, you should include a syllabus statement about the Core area and associated [career competencies](#). [This resource](#) developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Online Education at Georgia State University includes template syllabus statements for each of the Core IMPACTS areas that you may adapt for your course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Institute-Approved Absences

As per Georgia Tech policy, you are permitted to be absent from class to participate in athletic events, official field trips, and religious observances. For planning purposes, please provide me with written notice of your upcoming absence at least two weeks before the event, and ideally within the first two weeks of class. When I receive this notice, you and I will discuss opportunities to make up work you will miss in your absence. Please see <http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/> for more information about receiving official notice from the Registrar about the nature and timing of your upcoming Institute-approved absence.

Excused Absences and Student Responsibilities : In the event of a medical emergency or an illness that is severe enough to require medical attention, students are responsible for contacting the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible to report the medical issue or emergency,

providing dated documentation from a medical professional and requesting assistance in notifying their instructors. I will honor any request from the Office of the Dean of Students to excuse a medical emergency or illness and allow make-up of the work missed, including homework, quizzes, presentations, examinations, or other class assignments.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

This is an advanced-level course conducted entirely in French. Students at the beginner level should enroll in a course appropriate to their current proficiency.

No prior background or specialized knowledge of the course topics is required.

Extra Credit Opportunity

An optional extra credit opportunity will be offered in connection with a live performance of the Broadway musical adaptation of *Les Misérables* in September. I will organize a group field trip to attend the performance. Participation is voluntary. Additional details, including logistics, expectations, and the extra credit assignment, will be provided on Canvas.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Collaboration and Group Work

Collaboration is permitted only when explicitly authorized by the instructor. This includes in-class group work and designated group projects, for which all members will receive the same grade unless otherwise specified. In all other cases, assignments must be completed individually. All work submitted for individual credit must be written in your own words, and all quizzes and in-class assessments must be completed independently.

Use of Outside Resources

This course is designed so that course materials (documents provided in Canvas + readings, lectures, discussions) are sufficient for successful completion of assignments. Unless otherwise specified, the use of external sources is not required. If you choose to consult additional materials, they must be properly cited.

Use of Generative AI

The use of generative AI tools—such as ChatGPT or similar systems—is not permitted for completing assignments in this course.

Not permitted:

- Generating or drafting responses to assignments or discussion posts
- Writing, translating, or editing your work
- Producing ideas, arguments, or analyses that you submit as your own

Permitted (with caution):

- Brainstorming or exploring general questions *before* beginning your own work
- Clarifying concepts in a preliminary, exploratory way

However, all submitted work must reflect your own thinking, writing, and language production. Any use of AI-generated content without proper acknowledgment constitutes a violation of course policy.

Guidelines for Maintaining Academic Integrity

To ensure that your work remains your own, follow these guidelines:

- Do not copy or paste text from AI tools into your assignments
- Do not compose your work alongside or within AI-assisted writing environments
- Do not rely on AI tools for phrasing, translation, or sentence construction

As a general rule: if a tool contributes directly to the wording or structure of your submission, it should not be used.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

As a general rule, extensions, late assignments, and rescheduled exams are not permitted.

Exceptions will be granted only in cases of documented Institute-Approved Absences (See: Institute-Approved Absences).

Missed exams or assignments will receive a grade of F (0) unless covered by an approved, documented absence.

Assignments must be submitted on Canvas by the specified deadline. Assignments submitted after the deadline without prior approval will be penalized by one full letter grade per day (e.g., A → B → C). Assignments submitted more than 48 hours late may not be accepted. If you miss a class, you are still expected to submit any assigned work by the original deadline indicated on Canvas.

Submitting work later on the same day may result in a penalty. Failure to submit on the assigned date will result in a grade reduction as outlined above.

Important Note: All written assignments (Weekly Discussions, Projects, etc.) must be submitted on Canvas by the deadlines provided. It is your responsibility to keep track of all due dates and submission requirements.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

Institute leadership will determine specific plans in case closing of campus is necessary, working to maximize the educational experience and success of the students while allowing some flexibility for faculty members to respond in a manner consistent with their course format and teaching style. Should it become necessary for the Institute to modify campus operations for one (1) to two (2) days, it is the expectation that, where possible, courses will continue as scheduled via digital delivery. However, instructors have the option to cancel classes with a plan for make-up instruction once campus has reopened. For courses typically taught in person, Digital Learning Day is a day of instruction leveraging online delivery (either synchronous or asynchronous) due to the modification of campus operations.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

To support a focused and engaged learning environment, the use of mobile devices in this class is strictly limited.

General Policy: Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class. Texting, emailing, web browsing, or engaging in non-class-related activities is not permitted. Laptops should not be used unless explicitly required for a class activity.

Note-Taking: Students are expected to take notes using a notebook (preferred), or a tablet with a stylus

This policy is designed to enhance your learning experience and that of your classmates. Research on learning shows that unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means that one student's use of a mobile devices (laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc.) can distract another student, thus disrupting their ability to learn. In addition, students using mobile devices often become engaged in matters that are not related to the class they are attending. Further, research indicates that students taking notes on laptops tend to process less as they take notes, and the depth of their learning suffers.

Expectations: You are encouraged to remain fully present during class discussions, engage actively with course content and your peers, and contribute to a respectful and distraction-free classroom environment.

Additional Course Policies

- **Food and drink in the classroom:** Food, drinks, and gum are not permitted during class sessions.
- **Freedom of expression and guidelines for discussion:** You are encouraged to share your perspectives, experiences, and interpretations in relation to course topics. At the same time, our goal is to engage in critical, thoughtful, and respectful discussion. All participants are expected to: listen actively and respectfully to others, engage with differing viewpoints in a constructive manner, and contribute to an inclusive and intellectually rigorous environment.
- **Preparation for guest speakers:** In case we have a guest speaker invited, please come prepared to participate actively in discussion and ask thoughtful and relevant questions.
- **Recording class activities:** In order to preserve class integrity, student privacy, and a safe environment to express opinions, recording of any kind is not permitted without prior instructor approval. This includes: audio recordings, video recordings, use of wearable or smart recording devices. Students are encouraged to take notes instead.
- **Wearable and Recording Devices:** The use of wearable recording technologies (e.g., smart glasses such as Meta Glasses) is not permitted in the classroom.

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:

Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at success.gatech.edu/tutoring, email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources:

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#) website. Specific information for [current graduate students](#) includes

- [Academic Resources](#) such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- [Student Resources](#) such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- [Professional Development](#) such as the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events”

Other useful resources

- **Student Assistance Services:** The Office of the Dean of Students provides a number of services to assist students with medical and personal emergencies. To access these services during regular business hours, students and/or their families may notify the office at (404) 894-2565. In the event of an after-hours emergency, individuals should contact the Georgia Tech Police Department at (404) 894-2500 and request that the “Dean on Call” be contacted. There is an emergency “Dean on Call” at all times to assist students in need.
- **Center for Mental Health Care & Resources:** <https://mentalhealth.gatech.edu/> ; Crisis services: If you're experiencing significant mental health difficulties and need immediate support, their staff is available during business hours (8 a.m.-5 p.m.). Call 404.894.2575 or visit them in Suite 238, Smithgall Student Services Building, 353 Ferst Dr NW, Atlanta, GA 30313.
- **Belonging & Student Support:** <https://support.belonging.gatech.edu/>
- **Stamps Health Services:** <https://health.gatech.edu> ; 404-894-1420
- **Veteran’s Resource Center:** <http://veterans.gatech.edu/> 404-385-2067
- **Georgia Tech Police:**404-894-2500.

Student Well-Being:

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. This course recognizes that academic success is closely connected to your health and well-being. If you are experiencing challenges that may affect your ability to succeed in this course, you are encouraged to reach out for support. You may contact me to discuss possible accommodations or adjustments, and I will do my best to help within the framework of course policies. Georgia Tech offers a wide range of resources to support students, including counseling services, health services, and wellness programs. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#)). Seeking support is a sign of strength and an important step toward maintaining balance and success during the semester.

How to Succeed in This Course

1. **Start with the syllabus.** Read it carefully and refer back to it throughout the semester.
2. **Read the text carefully and consistently.** This course is based on the sustained reading of *Les Misérables*. Success in this class depends on careful, regular reading. Do not wait until the last minute! Read progressively, take notes, and revisit passages. This is the most important component of your learning experience.
3. **Attend and participate actively.** Your presence and engagement are essential and will be rewarded.
4. **Take notes (by hand, ideally).** Writing by hand helps you process, learn, organize, and retain ideas more effectively.
5. **Work in French.** With the exception of private communication, all course work is conducted in French.
6. **Prepare consistently.** Complete readings and assignments before class so you can contribute thoughtfully to discussions.
7. **Use Canvas regularly.** Canvas is the central platform for this course. Check it regularly for announcements, assignments, deadlines, and materials. Each module contains required readings as well as additional resources (articles, images, media) to support and deepen your understanding.
8. **Maintain academic integrity.** Always cite your sources and ensure that all submitted work reflects your own writing and analysis.
9. **Reach out.** This course invites you to engage, explore, and develop your voice in French in a supportive and dynamic environment. Ask questions, come to office hours, and stay in communication. I am here to support your progress and success in the course!
10. **Finally, Reading *Les Misérables* is a true reading experience.** At times, it requires the reader to become what Victor Hugo calls an “athlete” of reading, capable of embracing its breadth, depth, and scale, and sustaining engagement across its many pages. Do not be intimidated. Dive into the adventure! In the nineteenth century, readers across the world (including in the United States) read *Les Misérables* with passion as soon as copies (and translations) became available. Whether this is your first encounter with *Les Misérables* or a return to a familiar text, you are warmly invited to join this shared journey of reading, discussion, and discovery!