

# Chelsea Tanous

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## French Conversation: La conversation française

Instructor:  
Email:

Office:  
Office hours:

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for students who have completed the first two years of French (or the equivalent) and are interested in developing their French oral communication skills.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will gain a basic understanding of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Hymes, 1966) and its application to their conversation in French. Students will learn the discursive conventions necessary to communicate with francophone speakers in formal and informal contexts. They will practice listening to a diversity of voices and perspectives both in class and through homework and course projects. They will practice speaking through in-class discussions, audio self-recordings, and formal and informal presentations.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- communicate effectively and appropriately in French with their peers and other members of the francophone community
- comprehend, analyze, and discuss authentic news articles and videos
- formulate questions on familiar and unfamiliar topics
- analyze and synthesize information from a variety of authentic sources into cohesive formal and informal presentations
- develop and present a formal presentation relevant to their field of study

### MATERIALS

Students are encouraged to use the list of French-language newspapers, magazines, and news network video sources posted on the course website.

### GRADES

Grades will be calculated based on the following distribution:

Participation	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance</li><li>• Active in-class contribution</li></ul>
Homework	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• News articles</li><li>• Voice recordings</li></ul>
Presentations	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-class presentations (10% each), including printed materials</li></ul>
Final Project	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-class presentation, including printed materials</li><li>• Engagement in and responses to other students' presentations</li></ul>

### Participation:

The course participation grade includes both attendance and active contribution to in class activities, participation in group and class discussions, and completion of in-class assignments. Daily attendance is required for this course. Students are required to attend **both** final presentation days.

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## **Homework:**

For each class, starting in week 4, students will find one recently-published article or video related to the day's topic. If the article is not available online, they must scan and upload it to the course website so that it is available to all students and to the instructor. Students should be prepared to discuss their article with a group of their classmates; they must give a synopsis and open the floor for discussion. These presentations will be informal and conversational in tone.

Students will also be required to record themselves once per week in order to receive feedback on their pronunciation. These recordings will be submitted digitally to the professor at the end of each week.

## **Presentations:**

Students will give two five-minute presentations to the full class. These will be informal, conversational presentations in response to a current event related to the class theme. One or both of these presentations must be based on a news bulletin in the form of a video. All news sources must be French. Students will submit a copy of the news article and any visual aid on the day of their presentation.

## **Final Project:**

The final project for this course will be a formal, oral presentation such as would be presented in an academic conference related to the student's field of study. This will ensure students are able to apply their own background knowledge to the analysis and presentation of their topic. Students will present for eight minutes and must be prepared to respond to questions after their presentation. Students will submit a written copy of their presentation, including any visual elements (PowerPoint, Prezi link, etc.), the day of their final presentation. These will not be graded as a paper, but as support for the oral presentation.

Students will be expected to ask a minimum of two questions about the topics presented by their peers; this will be included as part of the final presentation grade. One of these questions may be prepared in advance based on the topics that will be presented, but the other must be developed and posed as a real-time response to the final presentations. Students will submit a written copy of the question they have prepared.

## **CODE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and any other form of academic dishonesty. [University Academic Misconduct Statement]

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you are registered with the [Office of Disability Services], please make a meeting with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that we can implement for this course. [University Disability Statement]

## **INCLUSION STATEMENT**

A critical component of intercultural communication is the ability to be receptive to new perspectives and opinions. It is my intention to welcome and encourage diverse perspectives in this course with the goal of fostering intelligent, multifaceted discussions; to encourage and support students in and outside of class regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, socio-economic class, age, religion, and disability; and to present materials that are respectful of diversity. Your suggestions for adaptations or improvements to this course for your benefit or for that of other students or student groups would be welcomed and appreciated.

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## PRELIMINARY COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Class Activities
Week 1	Introduction to French Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of course goals, student objectives, and sequence of classes and topics</li><li>• Communicative competence: course rationale</li></ul> <i>Complete questionnaire and select topics for final weeks of class</i>
Week 2	Spaces for Conversations: French Cuisine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French phonetics overview (vowels, consonants, nasals, liaisons, and elisions)</li><li>• French conversational contexts: food and drink</li></ul> <i>Students sign up for two three-minute presentations</i>
Week 3	Content for Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French phonetics overview (stress and intonation)</li><li>• News video analysis</li><li>• Communication strategies: strategic competence</li></ul>
Week 4	Music and Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French pronunciation: songs and poetry</li><li>• Analysis of pronunciation and intonation</li><li>• Current issues in French music</li></ul> <i>Student presentations begin</i>
Week 5	Literature and the Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French pronunciation: sight-reading</li><li>• Perspectives on literature and the visual arts</li></ul>
Week 6	Cinema and Popular Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French communication: gesture</li><li>• An overview of French cinema and its influence</li></ul>
Week 7	Festivals and Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French communication: rituals and cultural knowledge</li><li>• Perspectives on sports and sporting events</li><li>• Current festivals and cultural events</li></ul>
Week 8	Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French communication: strategic competence revisited</li><li>• Current and historic scientific advancements</li></ul> <i>Students sign up for final presentation topic and date</i>
Week 9	French Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French interaction: regional accents and vocabulary</li><li>• French departments and their relationships</li></ul>
Week 10	France and the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French language: anglicismes</li><li>• Nationalism and l'Académie Française</li></ul>
Week 11	International Relations and the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French perspectives: language ideology and “standard French”</li><li>• The French language in the francophone world</li><li>• French international relations</li></ul>
Week 12	Current Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French perspectives: TBD (the environment, social issues, immigration, etc.)</li><li>• Final presentation practice (dyads) and peer feedback</li></ul>
Week 13	Final Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final presentations, day 1 (as needed)</li></ul>
Week 14	Final Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final presentations, day 2</li></ul>

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Student Materials [to be posted on the course website]

Please bear in mind when choosing articles to present in class that each source comes with its own interpretation of events and political positioning. Choose articles and videos from different sources. Compare bulletins on the same topic from different sources. Analyze headlines and taglines. Be critical!

The online newspapers and magazines have been classed by political leaning (as available) according to the following two articles:

1. a study posted in 2016 by Bordeaux Sciences Po  
<http://www.integrersciencespo.fr/index.php?article15/orientations-politiques-de-la-presse-etrangere-et-francaise>
2. an article in the *Marianne* about the political lean of the French media  
<https://www.marianne.net/politique/la-couleur-politique-des-medias>

Audio and video news sources

- News bulletins
  - Journal de 20h de TF1: <https://www.tf1.fr/tf1/jt-20h/videos>
  - Journal de 19h45 de M6: [https://www.6play.fr/le-1945-p\\_1058](https://www.6play.fr/le-1945-p_1058)
  - Journal de 20h de franceinfo: <https://www.francetvinfo.fr/replay-jt/france-2/20-heures/>
- Online and televised news
  - Les infos et programmes internationaux de TV5Monde: <http://www.tv5monde.com/>, <https://www.youtube.com/user/tv5monde>
  - France24: <https://www.france24.com/fr/direct>, <https://www.youtube.com/user/france24>
  - Arte: <https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/info-et-societe/>
- Radio websites
  - Europe 1 (public équilibré): <https://www.europe1.fr/emissions/Europe-1-matin>
  - France Inter (public gauche): <https://www.franceinter.fr/>

Online newspapers and magazines

- Libération (gauche): <https://www.liberation.fr/>
- Le Nouvel Observateur (gauche): <https://www.lexpress.fr/>
- Marianne (gauche): <https://www.marianne.net/>
- Le Monde (centre gauche): <https://www.lemonde.fr/>
- Le Parisien ("neutre"): <http://www.leparisien.fr/>
- Le Figaro (droite): <http://www.lefigaro.fr/>
- L'Express (droite): <https://www.lexpress.fr/>
- Le Point (droite): <https://www.lepoint.fr/>

Youtube channels

- Documentaires société: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYFI5PGUw\\_34XaA3SGDkQOO](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYFI5PGUw_34XaA3SGDkQOO)
- L'antiseche: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeOp9CWBaW2tVIBAzCobzow>
- C à vous: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cavousofficiel>
- On n'est pas couché: <https://www.youtube.com/user/onpcofficielle>
- La quotidienne: <https://www.youtube.com/user/laquotidiennef5>
- Faut pas rêver: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FautPasReverOfficiel>