

# AP<sup>®</sup> French Literature

## Syllabus 2

### Course Overview

The AP<sup>®</sup> French Literature course is designed to introduce students who have advanced language skills to the formal study of a representative body of literary texts in French. AP French Literature students are required to take the College Board's AP French Literature Exam.

The AP French Literature course has the following objectives:

- proficiency in the fundamental language skills that enable the students to read and understand prose and verse of moderate difficulty and mature content, as well as to formulate and express critical opinions and judgments in correct oral and written French
- ability to read and analyze critically and to discuss perceptively representative works of French literature.

Classes include close reading and extensive discussion of texts with particular attention to character and theme, structure and style, and to how these elements are related to overall interpretation. To reach these goals, students will learn the techniques of literary analysis as well as a basic vocabulary of critical terms, both of which they need to use appropriately when studying French literary texts. Class discussion and essay writing in French are important components of this course.  
[C2, C3]

**C2**—The teacher uses French almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.

**C3**—The course teaches students the techniques of literary analysis.

### Required Readings

#### Novels

Duras, *Moderato cantabile*

Maupassant, *Pierre et Jean*

Voltaire, *Candide*

#### Plays

Césaire, *Une tempête*

Corneille, *Le Cid*

Molière, *L'école des femmes*

#### Poetry

Apollinaire: "Le pont Mirabeau," "Les colchiques," "Mai," "Automne"

Baudelaire: "Correspondances," "Hymne à la beauté," "L'invitation au voyage,"

“Chant d’automne,” “Spleen” (“Quand le ciel ... ”), “Recueillement” (From *Les fleurs du mal*)

Du Bellay: “Heureux qui comme Ulysse a fait un beau voyage,” “Si notre vie est moins qu’une journée”

Labé: “On voit mourir toute chose animée,” “Je vis, je meurs: je me brule et me noye”

La Fontaine: “Les animaux malades de la peste,” “Le chêne et le roseau,” “La mort et le bûcheron,” “Le loup et l’agneau”

## Course Planner

Since most students enter the class with only three years of preparation, the course is organized so that most of the first semester covers poetry. As the students’ vocabulary and reading skills develop, we begin studying plays and novels. In this way, all of the works from the required reading list are included in full text form. [C1]

**C1**—The course is structured to allow students to complete the entire AP French Literature reading list in text form.

A rough schedule of the school year is as follows:

### First Semester

#### First Quarter

Week One: *À la folie...pas du tout*, literary terms

Week Two: Louise Labé

Week Three: Louise Labé/Joachim Du Bellay

Week Four: Joachim Du Bellay

Week Five: Apollinaire

Week Six: Apollinaire

Week Seven: Apollinaire

Week Eight: *Candide*

Week Nine: *Candide*

No Quarter Exam

#### Second Quarter

Week One: *Candide*

Week Two: Jean de La Fontaine

Week Three: Jean de la Fontaine

Week Four: Jean de La Fontaine

Week Five: *Une tempête*

Week Six: *Une tempête*

Week Seven: *Une tempête*

Week Eight: Charles Baudelaire

Week Nine: Charles Baudelaire

Semester Exam: AP French Literature Released Exam (multiple-choice objective section)

## Second Semester

### Third Quarter

Week One: Charles Baudelaire

Week Two: Charles Baudelaire

Week Three: *L'École des femmes*

Week Four: *L'École des femmes*

Week Five: *L'École des femmes*

Week Six: *Pierre et Jean*

Week Seven: *Pierre et Jean*

Week Eight: *Pierre et Jean*

Week Nine: *Moderato cantabile*

Quarter Exam: AP French Literature Released Exam (multiple-choice objective section)

### Fourth Quarter

Week One: *Moderato cantabile*

Week Two: *Moderato cantabile*

Week Three: *Le Cid*

Week Four: *Le Cid*

Week Five: *Le Cid*

Week Six: AP Practice, author reviews

Week Seven: AP Exam

Week Eight: Films

Week Nine: Course evaluation

No Semester Exam

## Teaching Strategies

Since 2003, every student of AP French Literature is given a Windows® Mobile-based Pocket PC handheld computer or PDA to use for the year. Each of the PDAs is loaded with the Microsoft Reader program, the Microsoft Reader French-English and English-French Pocket Dictionaries, and electronic versions or “e-books” of all of the non-copyrighted works on the required reading list.

Students can open any book by clicking on its title. Once open, they can read the book, search the text, add bookmarks, highlight passages, or add notes or annotations. If while reading, a student runs across an unfamiliar word, he can click on it to search the French-English Pocket Dictionary and read the entry for that word.

The students still receive copies of traditional texts of all of the works. The e-books are not intended to be replacements, but rather supplements, [C1] particularly for the students coming directly from third year, to help make the challenge of reading advanced texts less daunting.

**C1**—The course is structured to allow students to complete the entire AP French Literature reading list in text form.

After many of the assigned readings from the novels and plays, for example after certain acts of a play or chapters of a novel, the students take short 10-point quizzes. The format for these quizzes is either true/false or quote quizzes on which the students must match selected quotes with the character who said them (from a provided list of characters). These assessments are merely intended to make sure the students have done the required reading and are prepared at least on a preliminary level to discuss the works. Classroom discussion and the resulting compositions are really the heart of the course. [C6]

**C6**—Class discussion and essay writing in French are essential components of the course.

I introduce the first few poems by projecting them on a SMART Board. I model how to begin analyzing the poems by identifying the various stanzas (*quatrains*, *tercets*), rhyme schemes (*embrassées*, *croisées*), and examples of various literary devices (*métaphore*, *apostrophe*, *litote*). After talking about *la forme*, we begin discussing *le fond* and how the structural elements emphasize or reinforce the author's intent or the meaning of the poem. [C3, C5] With the subsequent poems, I have individual students go to the SMART Board and identify these elements themselves, often having them use different colors to mark specific devices or rhyme schemes.

**C3**—The course teaches students the techniques of literary analysis.

**C5**—The course includes close reading and extensive discussion of texts, with particular attention to character, theme, structure, and style, and to how these elements are related to overall interpretation.

The poems are displayed from either the *Poésie française* Web site or from the e-book versions of the text in Microsoft Reader. Using Microsoft Reader has the advantage of allowing the student to access the French-English Pocket Dictionary for unfamiliar expressions by using the “Lookup” function.

During the first semester, the students write their compositions at home and may use dictionaries. During the second semester, all of the compositions are written in class without dictionaries to simulate the AP Exam testing conditions. Early in the year, two or three class periods may be dedicated to a single poem (one period identifying the structure and one to two periods discussing the meaning). After discussing the structure and meaning of the poems, I have the students write drafts of *explications du texte* in class. [C5, C6] I have access to a mobile cart of 15 wireless laptop computers with a printer, so during the first semester I encourage the students to write drafts and make revisions on the computer. This is an attempt to address lingering language deficiencies some students may have coming directly from French III and to help make them familiar, and eventually comfortable, with this style of writing. At the beginning of the year, they are also given a handout of useful expressions to help logically organize the ideas presented in their essays (see Appendix A: Termes de composition).

## Student Activities

### Activity 1: *À la folie... pas du tout*

As the first activity of the school year, I show the film *À la folie... pas du tout* (*He Loves, He Loves Me Not*). The movie tells the same story from the points of view of two different characters, first of Angélique, a young art student, and then of

Loïc, a cardiologist. After watching the film, we discuss in French the importance of narrative voice and its effect on our understanding of the events and the characters. We then discuss the importance of an author's choices. [C5] I highlight the importance of not only what information is given, but also what information is withheld. The students are asked to reflect not only on what is explicitly stated, but also on what is unsaid and the inferences we are forced (or led) to draw. We end by discussing the relevance of symbols, such as the name *Angélique, le cœur*, and Loïc's profession.

**C5**—The course includes close reading and extensive discussion of texts, with particular attention to character, theme, structure, and style, and to how these elements are related to overall interpretation.

After discussing the film, the students are given a handout of various literary terms adapted from *Toute la Poésie* and letters.net Web sites (see Appendix B: Termes littéraires) and we begin applying them to our first poem, usually a work by Louise Labé. [C3, C4]

**C3**—The course teaches students the techniques of literary analysis.

## Activity 2: Student AP Exam Review Sheets

Within two to three weeks of the exam, after we have completed reading all of the required works, [C1] each student selects a different author and prepares a one-page review sheet on that author. Each review sheet must include:

**C4**—The course teaches students a basic vocabulary of critical terms.

- Major characters lists (for plays and novels)
- 3–5 major or relevant quotes from the author's work
- 3–5 major themes
- 3–5 key vocabulary terms

**C1**—The course is structured to allow students to complete the entire AP French Literature reading list in text form.

The teacher then collects each of the review sheets, checks them for spelling and content (a grade can be given, if desired), and distributes copies to all of the students. This has proven to be an effective way of reviewing all of the works and authors before the AP Exam (especially for those works studied primarily in the First Semester) and providing the students a quick guide to key information. In addition, each of the students becomes a kind of “resident expert” on one of the authors and serves as a resource to other students as they review for the AP Exam.

## Teacher Resources

### Books

Carlier, Christophe. *Profil Bac: Profil d'un œuvre : Pierre et Jean de Guy de Maupassant*. Paris: Hatier. 1999

Curial, Hubert. *Profil d'un œuvre: Fables Jean de La Fontaine*. Paris: Hatier. 2001

Dumeste, Marie-Hélène. *Profil d'un œuvre: Candide de Voltaire*. Paris: Hatier. 2001

Morhange-Bégué, Claude, and Pierre Lartigue. *Profil d'un œuvre: Alcools de Guillaume Apollinaire*. Paris: Hatier. 1993

## Videos

*He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not (À la folie... pas du tout)*. DVD. Directed by Laetitia Colombani. 2003; Culver City, CA: Columbia Tristar, 2003.

*Molière: L'École des femmes*. DVD. Directed by Éric Vigner. 1999; Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2002.

*Pierre et Jean*. DVD. Directed by Michel Favart. 1973; Paris, France: LCJ/Warner Home Video France, 2001. Note: only available in PAL/SECAM Zone 2 European format

## Web sites

Films for the Humanities & Sciences (Films Media Group), <http://www.films.com>  
Web site that offers educational videos on VHS and DVD.

**FNAC**, <http://www.fnac.com>  
French Web site for books and videos.

**Lettres.net**, *Lexique des termes littéraires*, <http://www.lettres.net/lexique/>  
Web site for French study and teaching offering definitions of literary terms.

Toute la Poésie, *Approche théorique du poème*, [http://www.toutelapoesie.com/dossiers/theorie\\_du\\_poeme/approche\\_theorique\\_du\\_poeme.htm](http://www.toutelapoesie.com/dossiers/theorie_du_poeme/approche_theorique_du_poeme.htm)  
French poetry site, including technical explanations of meter, rhyme, and stanzas.

Turner, Milton Alan. *AP French Literature Links*, Saint Ignatius High School, <http://www2.ignatius.edu/faculty/turner/apfrlit.htm>  
A Web page created for students as well as other teachers of AP French Literature.

Turner, Milton Alan. *AP French Literature E-Text Project*, Saint Ignatius High School, <http://www2.ignatius.edu/faculty/turner/etexts.htm>  
A Web page created for students and teachers on using electronic texts or e-books of the public domain works on the required reading list.

Webnet, *Poésie française*, <http://poesie.webnet.fr/>

## Software

Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft Reader for Desktop and Notebook PCs, <http://www.microsoft.com/reader/downloads/pc.asp>

Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft Reader for Pocket PC, <http://www.microsoft.com/reader/downloads/ppc.asp>

Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft French-English and English-French  
Pocket Dictionaries, [http://www.microsoft.com/reader/downloads/  
dictionaries.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/reader/downloads/dictionaries.asp)

Microsoft Corporation, French Text-to-Speech Package (French) for Microsoft  
Reader for Desktop and Notebook PCs, [http://www.microsoft.com/reader/  
fr/downloads/tts.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/reader/fr/downloads/tts.asp)