

FRN300 Contemporary France

1st and 2nd quarters, Junior

Instructor	IMAI YUKO
Style of class	Seminar
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	To be advised

Course Description

Using a seminar format, we will read texts written in simple French, increasing the students' ability to read and understand French and giving them basic knowledge about contemporary France. The aspects of French culture that Japanese people tend to know are things like art and cuisine, but encountering the society and culture of France from various aspects will help them understand what contemporary France is really like.

Course Objectives

Students will

- (1) be able to translate short, simply structured French sentences using a dictionary
- (2) be able to hear and understand French spoken at normal speed
- (3) learn basic knowledge about the society and culture of contemporary France

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that students will acquire the habit of learning French independently with the use of dictionary and that they will understand France and the characteristic attitudes of the French people.

Prerequisites

Completion of French I, II, III, and IV

Class Materials

La société française, Alma Publishing, 2008.

Course Methods

This course will be conducted in a seminar format using a textbook. At each class session, the students will first hear the pronunciation of the text as it is read aloud by a native speaker. Then the students will practice pronunciation by reading the text aloud and translating it into Japanese at each natural stopping point. Then the students will work on the exercises in the textbook, including true-false questions and quizzes, and employ materials distributed by the instructor to confirm their knowledge of social and cultural problems in France.

Evaluation/Assessment

Base points:

Preparing for each class and making an effort to complete the homework (grammar exercises) for each class

Final exam:

Responding to test questions based on textbook sections dealt with in class

Grading

60% Participation and preparation

40% Final exam

Course Schedule

Week 1: Orientation, viewing a video

Week 2: The Land and Regions of France (1)—The Land

Understanding the characteristics of the mainland of France (the part located in Continental Europe) and the parts located outside Europe, referred to as Overseas Departments and Overseas Territories.

Week 3: The Land and Regions of France (2)—The Characteristics of France’s Regions

Understanding the population and land area of France as well as the regional cultural differences based on greatly differing climates, landscapes, and historical backgrounds.

Week 4: Seasons and Everyday Life in France (1) – Four Seasons

Understanding the characteristics of the four seasons in France, especially as compared to the seasons in Japan

Week 5: Seasons and Everyday Life in France (2) – The Seasons as Experienced in the Home

Understanding the characteristics of French home life as it changes season by season, especially with regard to the use of heating and cooling devices.

Week 6: Elementary and Secondary Education in France (1)—Kindergarten, Elementary School, Middle School

Understanding the age at which French children attend kindergarten, as well as French system for elementary and middle school, including what is taught and what activities children participate in after school

Week 7: Elementary and Secondary Education in France (2)—The *Lycée* and the *Baccalauréat*

Understanding the French secondary education system, including what is taught, and high school graduation exam, the *baccalauréat*

Week 8: Higher Education in France (1)—French Universities

Understanding the characteristics of French universities, which are very different from Japanese universities

Week 9: Higher education in France (2)—*Les Grandes Ecoles* and other Specialized Professional Education

Understanding the unique French institution of *grandes écoles*, institutions of higher education with special rights and privileges, as well as the technical schools that correspond to Japan’s two-year colleges; entrance exams, what is taught, and where graduates find work

Week 10: Eating in France (1)—French gourmet cuisine

Understanding the high-priced, special cuisines (regional cuisine, *la nouvelle cuisine*) that are different from what French people eat in their everyday life

Week 11: Eating in France (2)—Everyday meals

Understanding what French people eat in everyday life and what attitudes and manners they emphasize in connection with food

Week 12: French Politics (1)—French people and politics

Understanding the French people’s high level of interest in politics and the reasons for notable changes in recent years

Week 13: French Politics (2)—The left wing and the right wing in France

Understanding the differences between the two means of reforming society, both of which are traditional in French politics

Week 14: French People and Work (1) -- Hiring and Unemployment

Understanding the working environment in France and its background, including working hours, paid vacations, the retirement age, and the unemployment rate, etc.

Week 15: French People and Work (2)—Human Relations in the Workplace

Understanding the reasons for the frequency of strikes in France

Preparation and Follow-up

- Preparation: Read the relevant chapter in the textbook ahead of time (about 3 hours)
- Review the class: Review what was covered in class and do the homework (about 3 hours)