

**Modern Languages Update on Recommendations for Action (2007)
Fall 2009**

1. Develop standardized rubrics for oral and written assessment.

2008 Update: We are currently reviewing several assessment rubrics and hope to have standardized rubrics in place by the end of Spring 2009.

2009 Update: Current rubrics exist for French, Spanish and German oral exams and presentations; written assessment rubrics are in place for senior exams (French) and senior projects (French & Spanish), as well as research papers produced in upper division Spanish courses. French and Spanish faculty is collaborating on the creation of standardized rubric forms for both oral and written assessment across the majors.

2. Investigate alternative oral assessment modes, such as software or Internet-based tools.

2008 Update: Further research on these assessment modes will be conducted in Spring 2009.

2009 Update: This process has not yet been initiated.

3. Consider alternate models for the senior culminating activity, including the possible addition of a comprehensive examination for Spanish majors and/or a revision of the current nature of the senior project. Consider adding an oral assessment component, such as an oral presentation or defense of the senior project before a committee and fellow language majors.

2008 Update: Faculty members have investigated alternate senior project models and have met with colleagues at other institutions to discuss the advantages of their models. The Spanish Program has begun to phase in a new model consisting of a portfolio of 3 distinct monographs (in lieu of one larger research paper) and is also currently considering the adoption of an exit exam, which would include an oral component.

2009 Update: The senior project has been a valuable component of the French major, and all French majors since 1992 have completed their senior project during the semester in which they register for it. Students may choose a research topic in literature, cultural studies, pedagogy or another area of French Studies in consultation with the French Program chair. Currently French majors take a comprehensive language exam in French for the purpose of assessing their level of linguistic competence and present an oral defense of their senior project to the French Program Chair. In the future, the French Program will plan to arrange the oral defense of the Senior Project so that it is presented to both French faculty members and to other interested French students.

In Fall 2008, the Spanish Program introduced the portfolio option described above;

since then, five students have chosen this option and successfully completed their senior project before or by their graduation date. The portfolios incorporate a variety of writing styles and have allowed majors the opportunity to present companion pieces to their works in which they reflect upon their learning, writing, and other creative processes, as well as their undergraduate academic career in general. The portfolios have proven to be of a similar academic quality to that of the longer research papers, but in a format that seems to be more accessible and interesting to many students. An oral defense or presentation of the senior project is still being considered but has not yet been instituted; the requirement of an exit exam is also under review.

4. Address the needs of majors in the process of preparing their senior project; to this end, evaluate the success of the newly introduced Spanish 499, Senior Project class (Fall 2007).

2008 Update: Because of the nature of the former senior project, the 499 class was not considered to have offered enough support to majors in the completion of their papers. With the change in the senior project itself, we will have to reevaluate the usefulness of the corresponding class.

2009 Update: French 499, Senior Project class, was not offered in the past year. It is always given only as a directed study, and French majors typically complete the senior project in the semester in which they register for it. Perhaps the smaller number of graduates makes it possible to meet their needs on an individual basis with the course as it currently exists.

Spanish 499, Senior Project, was offered in Fall 2007 with a modicum of success. All of the members of that class claimed (in course evaluations) to find useful the groundwork laid in that class and all finished their senior projects within the prescribed time frame; however, the bulk of the research and preparation of the projects continued to be done subsequent to the class, and supported by individual conferencing with their advisors. At this point in time, SPAN 499 is being run as a directed study.

5. Create an *Introduction to Literary Studies* course as a core requirement for the Spanish major and a prerequisite for the following literature courses: SPAN 430, 431, 432, and 433.

*2008 Update: The *Introduction to Literary Studies* course was created during the summer of 2008 and will be piloted in Spring 2009.*

*2009 Update: Currently, FRENCH 430 comprises an introduction to literary analysis in presenting the “*explication de texte*” model and literary terminology and is offered only every other year. Students are assessed in a midterm, final and final research project which require them to complete literary analyses. This component will be strengthened in the Spring 2010 offering of FRENCH 430. French faculty hope to collaborate with Spanish faculty in applying insights into improving the teaching of literary analysis skills*

in French 430 and 431.

In the Spanish Program, Introduction to Literary Studies was postponed and is currently being offering in Fall 2009 as a Special Topics course. At the conclusion of the semester, faculty will review the success of the class and determine whether it warrants inclusion as a core requirement and/or prerequisite for more advanced literature courses.

6. Revise course outlines to reflect the current syllabi, course objectives and learning outcomes, and ensure that course goals, expectations, and policies are clearly communicated to students.

2008 Update: Some course outlines have already been revised, and some remain to be reviewed by faculty.

2009 Update: This process is in the initial stages and is ongoing. Recently French 321, French Civilization II, and Spanish 386, Chicano Literature, were submitted to the General Education Committee for a review of General Education learning outcomes, which will figure more prominently in their respective syllabi. Both courses were approved for GE under the rubric of Community and Diversity (Sept. 09). Review of other courses is ongoing.

7. Investigate alternate study abroad options.

2008 Update: Dr. Capraroiu is in the process of investigating alternate options for study abroad, such as instructor-led trips and summer or winter semester study options.

2009 Update: French and Spanish faculty members are in contact with several foreign institutions and outside agencies sponsoring travel abroad and considering options for short-term January trips.

8. Incorporate innovative multi-media resources into the language classroom and the language laboratory; assess the ways in which the lab is currently used, its current materials, resources, etc.

2008 Update: Full-time and adjunct instructors have met to discuss, encourage and share strategies regarding the incorporation of multi-media resources in the classroom; it appears that technology is being utilized much more—and more effectively—than in the past. We have yet to undertake a detailed review of the language laboratory.

2009 Update: The French faculty is considering adding multi-media resources to all classes. The beginning French text, Motifs, comes packaged with a CD for individual listening practice and instructors are making use of its video component in class as well. The faculty is in the process of adopting an Intermediate French text, Bien vu, Bien dit,

with a video component for 2010. In addition, the French faculty is working on incorporating French film more integrally into the intermediate French curriculum with a supplementary text to be used as a resource for French faculty in teaching film. The film component of Intermediate French may become an essential part of the course and thus assist in recruitment to that level. The French 420, Commercial French, texts were recently changed to include Business French which offers an audio/listening component. In 2010/2011, the French faculty will investigate moving to an e-text for the beginning language series.

Spanish instructors currently use multi-media resources to varying degrees; all first and second year language texts include CDs and other multi-media components, and students are encouraged to use the resources of the “smart classroom” in daily assignments as well as special presentations.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jonathan Reed, Dean, Arts and Sciences
FROM: Gerard Lavatori, French Program Chair
RE: French Program Review Update 2008/2009 Academic Year
DATE: September 23, 2009
C.C.: Felicia Beardsley, Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences
Ann Hills, Chair, Modern Language Department

French Program Review Update 2008/2009

Mission:

The Mission of the French Program is to familiarize students with the cultural richness and diversity of the French-speaking world through intensive study of the linguistic, literary, and cultural expressions of other nations, and to prepare students for their academic, professional, and personal futures as informed world citizens.

Course Offerings:

The course offerings, as in previous years, included courses designed for specialists in French language and culture as well as service courses for general education and the Honors Program. Currently the Program serves four French minors and one declared French major, making it desirable to expand courses to the generalist population as well. It should be noted that French Majors and Minors often declare their specialization only after taking several courses at the intermediate level and that current students enrolled in French courses for General Education purposes may become French Majors or Minors in subsequent semesters.

Elementary French I and II were both offered in the Fall of 2008, but, anticipating lower enrollments with the elimination of the foreign language requirement for many majors under the new General Education program, the department reduced the number of French course offerings and is now no longer offering both French 100 and French 101 in the same semester but only on alternate semesters. Although this will probably respond to enrollment trends with the new General Education plan, it will also exacerbate the loss of students due to the concurrent loss of flexibility in scheduling for true beginners who can only start French once a year. However, the first-year sequence was also enhanced with the introduction of a newer textbook, Motifs, which includes more material of a cultural nature. This may help encourage students to continue on to the second year sequence. The gap in continued enrollment in French courses from first to second year continues to be a challenge for the French Program.

Enrollments in second and third year French were smaller than those in the first year sequence and consistent with those in previous years. Plans for the curriculum for the next year include changing the grammar-intensive second-year text, En bonne forme, to Bien vu, Bien dit, a communicative-oriented text with a substantial multi-media component. French faculty will consult before making a change for the 2010/2011 academic year.

In addition, French faculty offered courses in the Honors Program and during January Interterm. "Scripted Lives" was co-taught with a creative writing professor and film historian and included substantial feminist theory component. Student evaluations were generally positive, although there was an interest in expanding the creative writing component of the course. It will most likely be offered again in the Honors Program in a future year. French Literature in English Translation, FREN 365, proved to be a popular class in the January Interterm with 24 students enrolled. Most of them, 20, enrolled in the cross-listed section, LIT 365, stressing the importance of that cross-listing for recruitment purposes. Students appreciated the course, but some would have liked to see less readings, group work, and lectures. The class will be enhanced in the future with appropriate field trips when possible. Finally, Second Language Teaching was offered with 6 Spanish majors and two French minors enrolled. The class evaluations were overall positive, although the class may be re-designated as an optional class for Spanish majors so that those students can opt to take more classes taught in Spanish. This may affect enrollments and cause the class to be offered on a less frequent basis. The class seems to be an important addition to the French Program with its emphasis on lifelong learning and general linguistic knowledge. Since French majors and minors sometimes become ESL or English teachers abroad, it seems the class should be kept as a requirement in the French major, allowing students to learn language learning skills at a broader level with greater possibilities for more diverse career paths in the future.

Offerings:

Fall, 2008:

Elementary French I (FR 100): Ghada Mouawad (18 students)

Elementary French II (FR 101): Gerard Lavatori (6 students)

Intermediate French I (FR 210): Ghada Mouawad (3 students)

French Civilization I (FR 320): Gerard Lavatori (2 students)

Honors 300: Scripted Lives: Women in French and Francophone film and fiction: Gerard Lavatori and Valerie Stulman (12 students)

January, 2009:

French Literature in English Translation (FR 365/LIT365): Gerard Lavatori (24 students)

Spring, 2009:

Elementary French II (FR 101): Ghada Mouawad (11 students)

Intermediate French II (FR 211): Ghada Mouawad (4 students)

French Civilization and Culture II (FR 321): Gerard Lavatori (2 students)

Second Language Teaching (FR 330/SPAN 330): Gerard Lavatori (8 students)

Faculty:

French faculty currently include one full-time professor, Gerard Lavatori, teaching a reduced load of three courses per year (plus directed studies) and directing the Honors Program, and one long-time adjunct professor, Ghada Mouawad, teaching

one to two courses per semester. FREN/SPAN 330 (Second Language Teaching) is sometimes taught by faculty in the Spanish Program. Either Anthropology 340 (Language and Culture) or ENG 270 (The Foundations of Linguistics) is required of French Majors, and the classes are options for French Minors. Each is taught by faculty in Behavioral Sciences or English, respectively. In addition, French Majors are required to spend at least one semester studying in a French-speaking country and take many of their upper-division courses at study abroad centers in France. They are encouraged to spend two semesters studying abroad and are required to take French Phonetics or another linguistics course taught in French. These courses are offered only at study abroad centers. The Brethren Colleges Abroad Center in Strasburg, France, is the most common destination.

Extra-curricular offerings:

Semi-weekly French conversation hour with French exchange student, Aline Schmidt

Lecture: Women in the French Resistance, Dr. Monique Saigal-Escudero, October 22, 2009, with Honors Program.

French Heritage Night with the Los Angeles Clippers at Staples Center, March 4, 2009.

Spring, 2009, Visits to French classes by French national, Alexandre Lecomte

French and francophone culture was presented during class meetings and outside the classroom in conversation hours, lectures, and visits. During the past year, students met frequently with the French Program assistant, a student worker, for a semi-weekly conversation hour. La Verne students and faculty often express interest in this offering and it will be arranged on an open basis with the current French exchange student for the new academic year. Two French cultural events were made available to students in the classes. On October 22, Dr. Monique Saigal-Escudero of Pomona College gave a lecture sponsored by the Honors Program on her book on French Heroines, women during the French Resistance movement. The event was well attended. On March 4, a former French Program graduate, Lauren Kimball, organized a French Heritage night which brought the local French-speaking community to the Staples Center for a Los Angeles Clippers game. The event will be repeated in the spring and may be an opportunity for students to see the French-speaking community in Los Angeles. In the future, the French faculty may organize a trip to France or North Africa in the January Interterm. Students will be polled on their travel preferences during the coming year to determine logistics and feasibility.

Curricular Developments:

In order to interest more students in classes related to the French-speaking world, French faculty will work with Spanish and English and other departments' faculty to consider revising the French and Comparative Literature majors to allow for more flexibility. Currently students majoring in Comparative Literature may choose to specialize only in English and one other language. However, there may be an opportunity to bring more students into Comparative Literature if it can be

made to accommodate the interests of those who would like to study both French and Spanish literature as well as one of those plus English or another literary tradition. Discussions with English faculty should reveal whether there is any interest on their part in collaborating on revising and expanding the major. The recent 2006/2007 Modern Languages Program review recommendations focused on a combined Romance Language major which would incorporate both French and Spanish in order to expand interest in French, although it may be more efficient to expand the existing Comparative Literature major to do so.

An alternate proposal would be to work with faculty in other departments and programs, such as anthropology, art history, English, music, history, international studies, political science, and writing to develop (or include existing) courses which could be listed within the French major and which could respond to an interest in French and francophone cultural studies and focus less exclusively on literature. Evidence suggests that French Program graduates are not likely to pursue careers in teaching French per se and are drawn to the discipline for cultural enrichment and to develop linguistic skills. This may impact the Program's decision about renewing the current single-subject waiver when it is due for reconsideration.