

Syllabus
Selected Topics in French Literature
Jewish Francophonie: Culture and Literature
(French 128)

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Office: Sproul 510

Office hours: _____

Mondays: 10:00— 10:50

Wednesdays: 12:00 – 1:50

Fridays: 12:00 – 1:50

Department of French and Italian

Tel: 2-1219

Class location: H Gym 290

Time: M-W-F - 14:10-15:00pm

Required texts:

- **Class Reader (Anthology) available at Navin's, 3rd Street**

Literature:

1. Elie Wiesel: (Biography) *Nuits*.

2. Elisabeth Gille (1935-1996): (Semi-fiction) *Un paysage de cendres*. New York: Schocken Books, 1998. ISBN:2-02-032638-8. (Translated by Linda Coverdale. *Shadows of Childhood*. New York: Schocken Books, 1998.)

3. Albert Cohen: (Biography) *Le livre de ma Mère*. Paris: Gallimard, 1999. ISBN: 2-07-039356-9. (Translated by Bella Cohen. *Book of my Mother*, 1999.)

Additional excerpts included in the class reader.

Course Description:

- The course will introduce Francophone Jewish literature, history and culture, from the nineteenth century to the present. Writers will be discussed by focusing on several contexts: social, historical, intellectual and personal. Students will have to discuss and research the main historical events which have shaped the recent history of France and influenced Francophone Jewish writers. Through readings and analysis, the students will gain a broad knowledge of various events, their impact on Francophone Jewish writings and develop critical thinking.

- Students will read selected literary works which will be discussed in class.

These reading assignments will be followed by presentations done by students and written reports.

- In class, various excerpts will be shown of films and documentaries relating to materials selected for discussions.

- There will be 2 short exams and a comprehensive final exam covering material discussed in class.

Course goals and objectives:

-Students will study how French society has viewed the Jews of France since their emancipation during the French Revolution, and which events strongly affected the life of the French and Francophone Jewish communities, leaving an impact on Jewish thinking and writing.

Reading assignments:

-Some reading assignments will include background material relating to culture and history. Selected literary works will be assigned.

There will be questions to fill out for the three books assigned to read. They will be graded.

Reader: Always prepare the questions that follow each chapter.

Objectives: By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the political, cultural and historical background which shaped the writings of French and Francophone Jewish authors, and students will be familiar with the best known French and Francophone Jewish authors.

Presentations: Students will each be responsible for one one presentation done in class.

Objectives: Research and discussion.

Writing (done through assignments): Students will be assigned three papers (reports).

Objectives: Students will be able to organize a written research based on the material presented and discussed in class.

Papers will be written in French.

Final exam: There will be one final exam.

Objectives: The final exam will allow the instructor to evaluate the absorption and comprehension of the material introduced and discussed in class.

Grading:

Reports (3)	40%
Exams (2)	20%
Final:	15%
Presentation (1)	10%
Participation:	15%

I. Papers:

A. First report (Personal): Minimum 600 words. (Written in French)

History and your family or a family you know. Do you know people who have been affected by historical upheavals?

What are the events that have affected this family the most? How has this family reacted?

Collect relevant information that may wish to include with your two page report.

(Clearly identify the historical period.)

B. Second report (History): Minimum 600 words. (Written in French)

Select one of the following topics.

1. World War II. The Vichy government.

- Investigate a Jewish family living in France at the beginning and during the Second World War.

- Look into the life of a family living in the south part of France, in the Unoccupied Zone. Where did the family come from? What laws were affecting its safety? What could the family expect from the government? What could happen to its members?

2. The Magrèbian Jews. The Sephardy community.

What is the life of a Jewish family of North-African origins in present days France? What are the origins of this family (Berbère or from Spain)? What are the advantages for them to be living in France, and what are the difficulties facing that family?

3. The Jewish community in France since the second world war.

What place occupies the Ashkenazy community of France in relationship to the Sephardy community? What are the differences you can find between the two communities? and how do the two communities live and function together?

4. Other possible research papers: Anti-Semitic publications; the Résistance... (See me)

C. Third report (Literature): Minimum 600 words. (Written in French)

Select one of the following books.

1. Elie Wiesel: *Nuits*. How did WWII affect Elie Wiesel's family? Describe his family life before the war and describe the psychological evolution of his relationship with his father during their traumatic experience in Auschwitz.

2. Elisabeth Gille: *Un paysage de cendre*. In the book, the little girl was separated from her parents at an early age. Then, her doll was taken away from her. What psychological effect did these separations have on her psychological stability when she becomes an adolescent?

3. Another topic? If you select another topic, please discuss it with me first.

II. Presentations. Arguments:

Find a partner.

Together, prepare an outline and a power point presentation (Bring the presentation on a memory stick and we can use my computer, which is a Mac.)

III. Exams and Final exam:

Questions relating to material covered in class material in the reader and readings:

- a. Historical and social aspect affecting the Jewish presence in France.
- b. Jewish authors discussed in class and their works.

(Jour 1) 1ST DAY OF CLASS: Friday, Sept 28th 2007

INTRODUCTIONS

QUESTIONS (formulaire: to fill out and bring back on Monday.)

Reading assignments: (FOR MONDAY)

Reader: Part I, Section one

Week I (Monday, October 1st)
Chapter One: Following a different beat

(2) **MONDAY**

Section one: Cultural differences.

Discussion: *Formulaire* and preset notions

Reading assignments: (FOR WEDNESDAY)

Reader: Chapter I, Section two.

(3) **WEDNESDAY**

Section two: Jewish music: Klezmer music, and Judéo-Arabic music

Discussion: Differences and music.

Reading assignments: (FOR FRIDAY)

Reader: Chapter I, Section three.

Read the article: *The Jewish Presence in France*

(4) **FRIDAY** (NO CLASS. See home assignment for Monday.)

Section three: Background & History.

Chronology of events leading to the Nineteenth Century.

Discussion: The shaping of the Jewish community in Europe. Jewish presence in France.

Reading assignments: (FOR MONDAY)

Reader: Chapter II, Section one.

Week II (Monday, October 8th)
Chapter Two: Emancipation and the 19th Century

(5) **MONDAY**

Section one: Transition and changes

The organization of the Jewish communities during the Nineteenth Century.

Discussion: Jewish emancipation and the Consistoires.

Reading assignments: (FOR WEDNESDAY)

Reader: Chapter II, Section two. Meyerbeer, Fromental Halévy

(6) **WEDNESDAY**

Section two: Cultural contributions.

Discussion: Achievements in the field of opera.

Meyerbeer (*L'Africaine*) – Fromenthal Halévy (*La Juive*)

Reading assignments: (FOR FRIDAY)

Reader: Chapter II, Section two. Ludovic Halévy, Henry Meilhac

(7) FRIDAY

Section two: Cultural contributions.

Discussion: Achievements in literature and music. Offenbach (*Les contes d'Hoffmann*)

Ludovic Halévy and Henri Meilhac's theater: A springboard for operettas and operas.

Reading assignments: (FOR MONDAY)

Reader: Chapter III, Section one

**Week III (Monday, October 15th)
Chapter Three: A history of unrest**

(8) MONDAY

Section one: The Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906).

Discussion: The Dreyfus Affair. Emile Zola (1840-1902) *J'accuse*.

1st presentation: The Dreyfus Affair. How did the affair affect Dreyfus' life and that of his family?

_____ and _____

2nd presentation: A divided France. The effect of the Affair on the French (politicians and the people).

Who were the Dreyfusars (role of Zola), who were the Anti-Dreyfusar? Why?

_____ and _____

Reading assignments: (FOR WEDNESDAY)

Reader: Chapter III, Section two

(9) WEDNESDAY

Section two: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Semitic publications

1st presentation: On anti-Semitism. The XIXth century is a period of transition: Sciences, technology, a fight for "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité", and yet, it becomes a century of virulent anti-Semitism. Explain.

_____ and _____

2nd presentation: Anti-Semitic publications. Identify some of these publications, the people behind them and their purpose.

_____ and _____

Reading assignments: (FOR FRIDAY)

Reader: Chapter III, Section three two

(10) **FRIDAY**

Remettre devoir I

Section three: A divided France

The impact of the Dreyfus Affair. Separation of State and Churches

Discussion: Religious and racial targeting.

POUR LA PROCHAINE FOIS PREPAREZ-VOUS POUR L'EXAMEN

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Week IV (Monday, October 22nd)

(11) **MONDAY**

Examen I

Reading assignments:

Reader: Chapter IV, Section one. New Currents

(12) **WEDNESDAY**

Chapter Four: The Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Section one: Early Twentieth Century Jewish writers.

Chronology of events during the early Twentieth Century

New Currents

Le questionnaire de Marcel Proust.

Presentation: La Belle Epoque:

_____ and _____

Reading assignments:

Reader: Chapter IV, Section one.

Marcel Proust: *A la recherche du temps perdu*. (Read, prepare questions)

(13) **FRIDAY**

Section one: Early Twentieth Century Jewish writers and their identity

Discussion: Marcel Proust: *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

Presentation: Proust. His life and works.

_____ and _____

Reading assignments:

Reader: Chapter IV, Section two.

Week V (Monday, October 29th)

(14) **MONDAY**

Section two: The Great War

Discussion: events surrounding WWI.

Presentation: The Great War. The Armistice and the problems the demands could lead to.

and

Reading assignments:

Reader: Chapter IV, Section three.

Emmanuel Lévinas: *Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlérisme*

Miguel Abensour: *Le Mal élémental* (Read, prepare questions)

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(15) **WEDNESDAY**

Section three: The interwar years – Fascism and racial laws

Chronology of events between the two world wars

Emmanuel Lévinas: *Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlérisme*

Miguel Abensour: *Le Mal élémental*

Max Jacob: poèmes

Reading assignments:

Reader: Chapter V, Section one: The Second World War

Chapter V, Section two. Pétain & Vichy

**Chapter Five: A World at War
World War II**

(16) **FRIDAY**

Section one: The Second World War.

Chronology of events.

Discussion: French defeat and the Vichy government.

De Gaulle and the Free French. The French Resistance.

Section two: The role of Pétain and Laval.

Presentations: World War II. Behavior and attitudes.

Select an aspect of WWII. Show the effects this aspect has had on the lives of various communities or individuals.

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and

Reading assignment:

Reader: Chapter V, Section three. Charles de Gaulle

Week VI (MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH)

(17) **MONDAY**

Section three: Charles De Gaulle

The Résistance

Débats: What pushed people to select different stands during the war.?

Reading assignment:

Reader: Chapter V, Section four. The Holocaust

Reader: Chapter V, Section five. Elie Wiesel (born in Hungary in 1928): *LaNuit*.

(Hand out : Prepare questions on *La Nuit*)

(18) **WEDNESDAY**

Section four: The Holocaust

Section five: Reading Discussion: Elie Wiesel: *La Nuit*

(19) **Friday**

Remettre devoir II

Reading Discussion: Elie Wiesel: *La Nuit*

Reading assignment:

Reader: Chapter V, Section six. “The righteous among nations”

Monday : Jour de vacances (Veteran’s Day)

Week VII (Wednesday NOVEMBER 14th)

(20) **WEDNESDAY**

Section six: “The righteous among nations”

2 presentations: Select one of the “righteous people”. What did this person do?

_____ and _____

_____ and _____

Reading assignment:

Reader: Chapter V, Section seven. Bringing war criminal to justice.

(21) **FRIDAY**

Section seven: Bringing war criminals to justice.

Discussion: Trials. (Nuremberg trials. The Barbie trial. The Papon trial.)

Reading assignment:

- Elisabeth Gille (1935-1996): (Semi-fiction) *Un paysage de cendres*. (Translated by

Linda Coverdale. *Shadows of Childhood*. New York: Schocken Books, 1998.)
(**Hand out** : Prepare, answer questions on *Un paysage de cendres*)

Week VIII (MONDAY NOVEMBER 19th)

(22) **MONDAY**

Discussion : Elisabeth Gille (1935-1996): *Un paysage de cendres*.

(23) **WEDNESDAY**

Examen II

Reading assignments:

Reader: Chapter VII, Section one. The Jews of the Maghreb

Friday : THANKSGIVING

**Week IX (MONDAY NOVEMBER 26th)
Chapter Seven: End of french Colonialism**

(24) **Monday**

Section one: The Jews of the Maghreb

Discussion: The status of the Jews in Arab countries (in the old French colonies).
The Sephardic communities of France.

Reading assignments:

Albert Cohen (1895-1981): *Le livre de ma Mère*.

(**Hand out** : Prepare, answer questions on *Le livre de ma Mère*)

(25) **WEDNESDAY**

Discussion: Albert Cohen (1895-1981): *Le livre de ma Mère*.

(26) **FRIDAY**

Discussion: Albert Cohen (1895-1981): *Le livre de ma Mère*.

Reading assignments: Ionesco, *Rhinocéros*.

**Week X (Monday December 3rd)
Chapter Eight: Contemporary Jewish Francophone Literature**

(27) **MONDAY**

Remettre devoir III

Discussion: A variety of inspirations

(28) **WEDNESDAY**

Discussion: Eugene Ionesco. *Rhinocéros*

(29) **FRIDAY** **Dernier jour de cours**

Final exam. Date: THURSDAY DECEMBER 13TH . 1:00 – 3:00