

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
Department of Romance Languages and Literatures

# FRENCH A

Fall 2007

Website: <http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~frencha>

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**N.B.: There will be no three-hour final examination during the Examination Period, but brief exams at the end of the Reading Period.**

**BIENVENUE!!!**

All of us staffing French A **welcome** you to our Fall semester program.

**OBJECTIVE:** We have designed a complete first-year course which will enable you to communicate fully in French within a surprisingly short time using all four language skills:

## Reading and listening comprehension

You will be using a “talking” textbook on CD-ROM created for this course. Through this avant-garde teaching tool, more than thirty native-speakers from all over the francophone world will provide you with listening comprehension opportunities as well as training in discourse strategies of the highest quality. In the context of an entertaining story we will introduce high-frequency vocabulary and provide practice in all aspects of French grammar. In addition, you will gain extra aural exposure by studying an outstanding contemporary film this semester. Reading selections of gradually increasing difficulty will be studied, starting with a story by Dominique Renaud until, at the end of the year, you will be able to read **in the original** one of the most famous and influential plays of the 20th century, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Huis Clos*, and discuss its central philosophical message in French.

## Speaking and Writing

Our small sections allow us to focus on students' active use of French from the beginning of the course on. Discussions, debates, improvisation activities and guided use of new grammatical structures will promote oral proficiency. Writing skills will be honed through regular brief writing assignments. Instructors will collect a certain number of these and return them promptly, either meticulously corrected or marked with symbols for correction by you. Sprinkled throughout the year will be numerous opportunities to write and perform brief original *scènes dramatiques*. At the end of the second semester, such a *scène dramatique* will be videotaped to allow you to demonstrate your progress. The best of these recordings will serve as models to inspire future French A generations.

**TEXTBOOKS:** available at Schoenhof's Foreign Book Store, 76A Mount Auburn St.

- **French A, *Dis donc! Coursepack***, available at Flash Print (formerly Gnomon Copy), 99 Mt. Auburn Street.
- **Dominique Renaud, *En quête sur un bateau-mouche***, LIRE LE FRANÇAIS, Version originale, CLE International
- **Le Nouveau Bescherelle, *La Conjugaison pour tous***

### SCHEDULE:

Sections will meet four days a week in order to provide you with a near-immersion exposure to French and ensure ample opportunity for practice. On the fifth day half of you in each section will generally be individually tested in the classroom by means of a five-minute private conversation in French with the instructor.

### EXAMINATIONS AND GRADING:

In addition to the five oral tests (see above), there will be six 10-minute written examinations, (no mid-semester hour examination) and a 40-minute final examination. The semester grade will consist of:

<b>a) 5 oral tests*</b> .....	<b>20%</b>
<b>b) 4 best written tests*</b> .....	<b>25%</b>
<b>c) class participation</b> .....	<b>10%</b>
<b>d) homework</b> .....	<b>25%</b>
exercises in Workbook.....	5%
3 (50-word min.) compositions (personalized applications of grammar points) and a longer <i>Journal</i> (100 words/day).....	20%**
<b>e) final examination</b> .....	<b>20%</b>

\* If you have fewer than four/five grades because of unexcused absences, we will count 0 for the missed tests. Oral tests will be progressively more difficult and weighted more heavily.

Oral tests: #1=1%, #2 = 3%, #3 = 4%, #4 = 5%, #5 = 7%

\*\* Compositions must represent your own work and not have been corrected by a helpful friend or tutor.

### GRADE SCALE:

A	95-100	C	74-76
A-	90-94	C-	71-73
B+	86-89	D+	68-70
B	83-85	D	65-67
B-	80-82	D-	60-64
C+	77-79	E	0-59

### STUDY HINTS:

Drawing on our past experiences with students enrolled in French A, we have put together this general introduction both to give you an overview of our course and to share with you some practical advice, not only so that you can use class and study time to your best advantage, but also so that we can do what we enjoy most: teaching you to use French creatively.

For those of you who never studied French before, the first few weeks of French A will seem like a barrage of strange sounds, structures and vocabulary which vanish from memory as soon as you finish your work. Others of you with some background in French may be looking forward to an easy debut: please be warned that after the first three weeks or so the gap in levels is usually filled. It is essential for all of us that you establish a serious study routine from the outset of the course: we estimate that you will need to spend at least one and one-half hours per day of study. It is your responsibility to study the lessons in ***Dis donc!*** prior to the class meeting for which they are indicated on the Syllabus. Assimilating grammar and memorizing vocabulary are the duller aspects of language learning; we haven't yet discovered a way to make this part of the course intrinsically "fun," but we hope the suggestions below will help you develop this basic groundwork as fast and as painlessly as possible.

1. Respond to every problem your instructor poses in class, no matter who is called on to answer. You can respond mentally and then check your accuracy when the answer is given. If you do this regularly you will have hundreds more practice opportunities than if you merely sit and wait your turn.

2. From the very beginning of the course, think in French, using whatever French you have learned. This can be done at any time when you do not need to use your mind for other things, e.g. while brushing your teeth, waiting in line for lunch or dinner, etc.

3. **Study out loud.** In reading silently, you use only your visual memory; if you study out loud you at least quadruple your study efficiency, by adding auditory memory and motor memory, the latter being the most efficient of all.

For extra **LISTENING COMPREHENSION PRACTICE** avail yourselves of the following films that will be in the Language Resource Center, 6th floor of Lamont Library:

***La Bonne Année, Les Vacances de M. Hulot, Pépé le Moko, La Scène du crime, Ma Nuit chez Maud, Choice of Arms*** among others.

4. **Don't fall behind.** Even though steady, day-by-day work is the best way to learn any subject, it is true that in many courses you can get yourself out of a jam by some high-pressure, last-minute cramming. Not so with a foreign language, especially when the objective is conversational fluency. Cramming for an oral exam would be about as sensible as cramming for a swimming test.

5. **Attend classes regularly,** even if you can't always come perfectly well prepared each time. Coming to class is important because your instructor has designed class activities that you cannot do on your own. Although you can study the conversation, the exercises, and the vocabulary with the Cd-ROM, your instructor wants you to put it all together in a free, communicative context: in open-ended questions and answers, in skits, in role play - in short, in situations where you make creative use of the foreign language to express your own thoughts and feelings.

6. When in class and when working on-line mimic and imitate.

7. Avoid the use of English in the classroom.

8. Avoid theoretical discussions in class. Learning **about** the language belongs before or after class. Class time should simulate a "total immersion" atmosphere as closely as possible.

9. It is perfectly safe to make mistakes in our classrooms, but it will be to your credit if you make a different one each time.

10. Above all: Parlez français! Don't be like the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water until he had learned how to swim.

Bon courage!

the French A staff

*(suggestions made by M.Prokop of the University of Alberta and K. Poliner have been incorporated.)*

### ABBREVIATIONS:

The following abbreviations will be used in the Syllabus.

<b>LRC</b>	<b>= Language Resource Center</b>
<b>EBM</b>	<b>= Enquête sur un bateau-mouche</b>
<b>JdF</b>	<b>= Jean de Florette</b>
<b>OT</b>	<b>= Oral test</b>
<b>P1</b>	<b>= Préparation 1</b>
<b>PP</b>	<b>= Préparation préliminaire, (for instructors only)</b>
<b>WT</b>	<b>= Written test</b>

<b>LUNDI</b>	<b>MARDI</b>	<b>MERCREDI</b>	<b>JEUDI</b>	<b>VENDREDI</b>
Sept. 17 <b>SECTIONING ON-LINE ENDS 5p.m.</b>	18 Congé (☺ free day!)	19 First meeting: Introduction (PP)	20 P-1	21 P-1
24 P-2 <b>LRC</b>	25 P-2 <b>LRC</b>	26 P-3	27 P-3	28 <b>OT no. 1a</b>
Oct. 1 P-4 <b>WT1</b>	2 P-4	3 P-5	4 P-5 Un premier poème	5 <b>OT no. 1b</b>

8	<b>Congé</b>	9	P-6	10	P-6 Une belle chanson	11	P-7	12	<b>OT no. 2a</b>
15	P-7	16	P-8 un autre poème	17	P-8 Introduction to <u>EBM</u>	18	P-8 <u>EBM</u> , p. 3  <b>Composition subjects handed out</b>	19	<b>OT no. 2b</b>
22	P-9 <b><u>WT 2</u></b>	23	P-9 <u>EBM</u> , top p. 4	24	P-9 <u>EBM</u> , bottom p. 4, 5	25	P-9  <b>Composition #1 due</b>	26	<b>OT no. 3a</b>
29	P-10 <u>EBM</u> , top p. 6	30	P-10 <u>EBM</u> , bottom p. 6	31	P-10 <u>EBM</u> , p. 7	Nov. 1	P-10 <u>EBM</u> , p. 8	2	<b>OT no. 3b</b>
5	P-11 <b><u>WT 3</u></b>	6	P-11 <u>EBM</u> , top p. 10  <b>Composition subjects handed out</b>	7	P-11 <u>EBM</u> , bottom p. 10	8	P - 12 <u>EBM</u> , p. 11	9	<b>OT no. 4a</b>
12	<b>Congé</b>	13	P-12 <u>EBM</u> , pp. 14-15  <b>Composition #2 due</b>	14	P-12 <u>EBM</u> , pp. 16-17	15	P-13 <u>EBM</u> , p. 18	16	<b>OT no. 4b</b>

LUNDI	MARDI	MERCREDI	JEUDI	VENDREDI
19 P - 13 <u>EBM</u> , p. 20	20 P-13  Journal à commencer [100 words minimum 300 words maximum per day]	21 P-13  Journal à continuer	22 <b>Congé</b>	23 <b>Congé</b>
26 P-14 <b><u>WT 4</u></b>  Journal à continuer	27 P-14  Journal à continuer	28 P-14  Journal à continuer	29 P-14  <b>Journal à rendre = Composition #3 due</b>	30 <b>OT no. 5a</b>
Dec. 3 P-15 <u>EBM</u> , pp. 21-22	4 P-15 <u>EBM</u> , pp. 23-24	5 P-15 <u>EBM</u> , p. 25	6 P-15 <u>EBM</u> , p. 26-end	7 <b>Review</b>
10 P-16 <b><u>WT 5</u></b>  Film: <u>JdF</u>	11 P-16 <u>JdF</u>	12 P-16 <u>JdF</u>	13 P-16 <u>JdF</u>	14 <b>OT no. 5b</b>
17 P-17 <u>JdF</u>  <b>Composition subjects handed out</b>	18 P-17 <u>JdF</u>	<b>VACANCES</b>		
		Jan. 2 P-17	3 P-18  <b>Composition #4 due</b>	4 <b>Review</b>
7 P-18 <b><u>WT 6</u></b>	8 P-18	9 <b>FINAL EXAM (Written)</b>	10 <b>FINAL EXAM (Oral)</b>	11 <b>FINAL EXAM (Oral)</b>