

Exploring New Perspectives – Final Essay

This semester, we have read many texts and news articles in French that will expose you to Québécois and Haitian cultural perspectives and language conventions in multiple contexts. In your **final exploratory essay**, you will examine how your perception of the Québécois or Haitians has been changed or nuanced by the work we have undertaken together. The final essay should be based on preparatory work you have done throughout the semester both in class and outside of it.

Through the stages of this assignment, students have or will:

- Summarized the key points of articles from the Québécois and Haitian media.
- Explained how the Québécois approach to a certain issue differs from/resembles a U.S. approach to the same issue.
- Articulate how their perception of Québécois or Haitian culture has evolved over the course of the semester because of readings they have completed.
- Articulate how their perception of their *own* culture has evolved over the course of the semester because of readings they have completed.

Stage I: First day of class – Freewriting

(graded only for completion)

What do you think of France and the French today? What do you like/dislike? What do you find strange/interesting? Why are you here in this class? (in English)

Stage II: Throughout the semester -- Preparatory Writing

(graded separately – see guidelines)

You will be writing on a regular basis about our readings, films, and discussions throughout the semester. All of the texts we read together can be resources for your final essay. You may want to focus particularly on some of your discoveries from the “Conte project” or from our “Current Events Discussions.” Your written responses to the articles we read for the “Current Events Discussions” will be very helpful preparatory writing.

Stage III: End of semester – Reflection Essay

(15% of course grade)

You will now write a 1000-1200 word essay to explain to your professor and to the other students in the class how your perspective on these cultures has changed because of our work this semester. Your essay will be based on the general format: “When I arrived in this classroom, I thought X about the Haitian/Québécois or both language and culture. After reading a, b, and c, I came to understand Y because Z.” (Don’t forget to look back at the freewriting you did on the first day of class!)

Remember that you are not limited to the news articles we used for our Current Events Discussion; you may use **any** text that we read for class, any media that we watched, or any grammatical concept that we studied. Your essay should focus on whatever idea or ideas you believe you have come to understand in a more nuanced way (or in a completely different way) this semester.

Timeline for Stage III (information about the elements of Stage II is contained in separate documents):

Monday, November 17th : You will bring in your idea for discussion, completing the following sentence: « Quand je suis arrivée dans ce cours, je croyais que les Québécois/Les Haïtiens ... mais maintenant que j’ai lu ... je comprends ... parce que... » Obviously, you are not limited to a one-sentence response, but try to confine yourself to a brief summary of the

main idea you'll be discussing. You will talk through your ideas with a classmate and think about how you will elaborate them. You will email your revised "sentence" to Madame Choplin by 5:00 p.m. for a homework grade.

Friday, November 21st: Bring first draft to class. Don't forget to complete the "Checklist for Writing Assignments" to help you with your proofreading. We will do a peer review workshop of the papers, and you will turn in your revisions based on your peer's comments by midnight. You will turn in your peer review of your partner's work for a homework grade on Monday.

Monday, November 24th: Discussion of final research presentation ideas. Work on Exploratory Essay revisions in collaboration with peers and Madame Choplin.

Monday, December 1st: Final version of the essay due in class. Please turn in all drafts and previous rubrics. Students will share their discoveries with the whole class. C'est la fête !

The first draft is weighted as 1/3 of the assignment grade, and the final draft is weighted as 2/3.

You will be evaluated on the clarity of your ideas (organization), the pertinence of the examples you give to demonstrate your ideas, the depth of your self-reflection, and your linguistic accuracy. We will discuss what does or does not constitute a pertinent example in class together.

| Excellent | | Deficient/Unacceptable |
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| The ideas are clear. The organization of the essay is completely logical, and your reader has no trouble following. 5 pts. | | The ideas are unclear, and your reader has difficulty following your essay because of a lack of coherent organization. |
| Your examples perfectly demonstrate how the readings have nuanced your understanding of Québec/les Québécois and/or Haiti/les Haïtiens. You directly establish how your perception evolved through your understanding of the course texts by citing them. 15 pts | | Your examples are illogical or based on a false premise. The link between the examples you give and the change you are explaining is either unclear or unconvincing. |
| The essay reflects that you better understand the Québécois and/or Haïtiens, but also that you better understand <i>yourself</i> as a person situated in a particular culture whose opinions are influenced by your own cultural perspective. 15 pts | | The essay reflects no new understanding of the French or shows no reflection about yourself as a cultural being. |
| Your writing accurately incorporates the grammar, vocabulary and syntactical structures we have studied. There are not careless errors. Errors in expression never get in the way of your reader understanding what you are trying to say. 15 pts. | | There are many unacceptable errors in grammar, vocabulary and/or syntax, frequently careless. It is sometimes impossible to determine what you are trying to say. |