

Exploring New Perspectives – Final Essay

This semester, we have read many texts and had many conversations in French that have exposed you to Québécois and Haitian (and perhaps other) cultural perspectives and language conventions in multiple contexts. In your **Final Exploratory Essay**, you will examine how your perception of cultural perspectives has been changed or nuanced by the work we have undertaken together learning about these francophone cultures. The final essay should be based on preparatory work you have done throughout the semester both in class and outside of it.

Over the course of this semester, you have at various times:

- Articulated your own prior knowledge about Québécois and Haitian culture.
- Read and analyzed folk tales from Québécois and Haitian culture, comparing and contrasting them with tales from your own culture.
- Discussed the role of storytelling in culture with French speakers from around the francophone world and reflected on their perspectives.
- Discussed other cultural questions with French speakers from around the francophone world and reflected on their perspectives.
- Viewed a Québécois sitcom and explained how the Québécois comic approach to issues surrounding various forms of diversity differs from/resembles a U.S. approach to the same issues.
- Read and discussed a novella from Québec that engages questions related to immigrant populations in Montreal.

In this culminating assignment, you will:

- Articulate how your perception of Québécois or Haitian culture has evolved over the course of the semester because of the texts you have read and the conversations you have had.
- Articulate how your perception of your *own* culture has evolved over the course of the semester because of the texts you have read and the conversations you have had.

Stage I: First day of class – Freewriting

(graded only for completion)

What do you know of Quebec and Haiti today? Is there anything you like/dislike? What do you find strange/interesting in your prior knowledge? 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 discussions of *Pure Laine* or *Vingt petits pas vers Maria*. Your written responses to the conversations you had with your TalkAbroad partner 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 culture as a defining factor of our worldview has changed because of our work this semester. Your essay should explore two overarching ideas:

1) New knowledge of cultural perspectives from the francophone world;

You might frame this new knowledge in terms of the general format: “When I arrived in this classroom, I thought X about the Haitian/Québécois language and/or culture. After reading a, b, and c, and talking with d, I came to understand Y because Z.” (Don’t forget to look back at the freewriting you did on the first day of class!)

2) New understanding of the way in which your *own* culture shapes your *own* worldview, and how that might not be shared by others.

You might frame this new knowledge in terms of: “One specific moment when I realized that my own culture makes me see the world differently from someone from another culture was...” Using one or more specific examples as a frame, you should articulate how you have come to understand that your own culture has impacted your worldview and thus why that worldview differs from that of people who hail from different cultures. You should feel free to make connections here to other courses beyond our own as appropriate.

Remember that you may use **any** text that we read for class, any media that we watched, your conversations with your Talk Abroad partner, or any grammatical concept that we studied. Your essay should focus on whatever idea or ideas about these francophone cultures and your own culture that 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 28th : You will bring in your ideas for discussion, completing the following sentences:

1)« Quand je suis arrivé(e) dans ce cours, je croyais que les Québécois/Les Haïtiens ... mais maintenant que j’ai lu ... je comprends ... parce que... »

2)« Un moment où j’ai vraiment compris comment ma propre perspective culturelle me fait voir le monde différemment de(s)... (Québécois, Haïtiens, votre partenaire TalkAbroad, vos camarades de classe...) était... parce que... »

Obviously, you are not limited to a one-sentence response in each case, but try to confine yourself to a brief summary of the main ideas 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 “sentences” to Madame Choplin by 5:00 p.m. for a homework grade.

Wednesday, November 30th: Bring an outline to class that lists your main ideas (en français) and the citations from the supporting texts that you plan to use. After our grammar review, you will discuss those ideas with a peer, and then you will be able to use the rest of the class to begin writing.

Friday, December 2nd: Bring your computer to class. After the Interro Collaborative, you will be able to work on your Essai Exploratoire.

Monday, December 5th: Bring your first draft, **printed out**, and your computer to class. Use www.bonpatron.com in order to help you proofread your work for careless errors before you bring it in. 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.

Wednesday, December 7th: We will not have class on Wednesday. Each student will meet individually with Madame Choplin to discuss their draft. Sign-up slots for the meeting will be posted to Moodle.

Friday, December 9th: Final draft of the Exploratory Essay is due electronically by 5:00 p.m. In class, please hand in your intermediate draft with your peer's comments (this will be a homework grade for your partner, so don't lose it!) Course evaluations, discussion of final presentation ideas and group brainstorming for the final presentations. We'll eat crêpes and enjoy our conversation! 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. The rubric for the 2nd draft includes points for your incorporation of instructor feedback.

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 - Very Good	Above Average - Satisfactory	Minimally Satisfactory - Insufficient
Organization of Ideas	The ideas are clear. The organization of the essay is completely logical, and appropriate transitions guide your reader from one idea to the next. 8.75-10 points	The ideas are clear. The organization of your essay is coherent, but some transitions may be lacking. 7.5-8.5 points	The ideas are unclear, and your reader has difficulty following your essay because of a lack of coherent organization. 0-7 points
Evolving understanding of Haitian and/or Québécois culture.	Your examples perfectly demonstrate how the readings have nuanced your understanding of Québec/les Québécois and/or Haïti/les Haïtiens. You directly establish how the course texts impacted the evolution of your understanding by citing them appropriately and unpacking the citations. 17.5-20 pts	You choose appropriate examples to demonstrate your evolving understanding of Québec/ les Québécois and/or Haïti/ les Haïtiens. You cite or paraphrase course texts appropriately. There may have been one or more missed opportunities for citation and/or a more careful unpacking of those citations. 15-17.25 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. You have made one or more assertions that is either based on a stereotype or is not expanded upon in a meaningful way. 0-14 points
Evolving understanding of your own cultural lens.	You clearly describe a specific moment in the course when you recognized that your perspective differs from those of members of the target culture(s). The essay clearly reflects that you better understand the impact that your own cultural perspective has on your thinking in convincing and appropriate terms. 17.5-20 pts	You describe a specific moment in the course when you recognized that your perspective differs from those of member of the target culture(s). You offer a convincing (but perhaps not in-depth) explanation of your understanding of yourself as a cultural being. 15-17.25 pts	You describe a moment of recognition of cultural difference, but you may rely on stereotypes to explain it. You demonstrate no new understanding of yourself as a cultural being, or that understanding is explained in an unconvincing or inappropriate way. 0-14 pts.
Linguistic accuracy	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. 17.5-20 pts.	Your writing generally incorporates the grammar, vocabulary, and syntactical structures we have studied. There are some careless errors and some errors in syntax, but rarely would those errors impact a sympathetic reader's understanding. 15-17.25 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. 0-14 pts.
(2nd Draft only): Incorporation of Professor &/or Peer Feedback	You made many significant improvements to your draft, clearly addressing all or nearly all of the comments made by the instructor and/or your peers related to content and linguistic accuracy. 8.75-10	Your 2 nd draft is a notable improvement upon your first draft, but you may not have addressed all of the comments related to content or linguistic accuracy. 7.5-8.5	The only changes you made to your final version were related to linguistic accuracy, and those changes may not have corrected the initial errors. 0-7