

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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Recent discussions in my French Civilization since 1789 course are particularly emblematic of my approach to teaching. To study abolitionism and Romanticism, we read Claire de Duras's short novel *Ourika* (1823), about a young woman of Senegalese origin raised in France during the revolutionary period. In our first class covering *Ourika*, we examined the novel's introductory frame narrative. Students worked in small groups analyzing one of two sections to establish who is speaking, and at what time and place, as well as the narrators' racial and gender identities and professions. As I wrote their observations on the board, they saw how the white, male doctor's narration serves to legitimize the black, female heroine's own first-person account. In addition to this concrete lesson in the discursive impact of literary form, I prompted students to make connections between previous readings and the doctor's references to anti-religious sentiment during the French Revolution and Napoleon's efforts to reconcile church and state. Subsequent sessions explored *Ourika*'s individualized experiences of collective history from the Terror to the Haitian Revolution, and interrogated the labeling of the work as an abolitionist text. My students now have a strong grasp on the novel from a literary and historical perspective, and can interpret how it configures the relationship between gender, race, and class and French national identity. We will continue to examine these issues through various genres and media during the semester. Our investigation will culminate in assignments using multimedia technology: students will illustrate historical letters with the software ComicLife, and research and create a short documentary film.

This example illustrates key aspects of my pedagogy: I draw on literary and cultural texts in the classroom at all levels of French language and francophone culture, take an interdisciplinary approach to curricular development, and integrate multimedia technology. I incorporate literature and visual arts in my courses as an entryway into French and francophone cultures starting in beginning French, where I also use them to model grammatical structures. In introductory French, I have introduced the *futur simple* tense through an excerpt from the graphic novel *Persepolis*. After reading about the protagonist's childhood ambition to become a prophet, the contextualized examples framed student's conversations, in which they spoke as if they were five years old again and compared what they wanted to be when older. The activity encouraged students to relate their childhood dreams with those of the work's heroine, and introduced historical Franco-Persian ties.

More broadly, I regularly adopt transnational and interdisciplinary reading lists in my syllabi. My upper-level seminar "Zombieland? The Living Dead in Francophone Caribbean Literature and Visual Culture" begins with an introduction to Haiti through historical and anthropological texts. These cultural insights allow students to understand the zombie's religious and social origins. These touchstones shape our consideration of the figure's appearance in film dating from the United States' Occupation of Haiti, where it is an exotic entity, and our interrogations of how contemporary writers continue to transform the creature, even as it remains a reflection of colonization and enslavement. By surveying the zombie myth in various media and national traditions, students hone their ability to read implicit meaning and to explore how issues of representation differ across forms.

This leads me to one final aspect of my pedagogical practices: my adoption of varied media and technology within reading lists and student-centered activities or assignments. In addition to utilizing audiovisual technology for classroom activities, I include graphic novels and films alongside literature on my syllabi. I assign multimedia projects, such as creating video essays in Advanced French. These assignments have helped students develop technological skills while building their linguistic capabilities (improving pronunciation by recording themselves speak). I also use the work of previous students as resources: a documentary on Haussmannization recently introduced a discussion of Baudelaire's "Le Cygne," while serving as a model for students undertaking their own research. These projects thus foreground students as scholars and researchers in their own right.