FRE 370 Utopian and Sci-Fi Quests for a Better World in French and Francophone Literature
Instructor: Dr. Mary Theis  Email: theis@kutztown.edu  Phone: 610 683-4435
Office: 11B de Francesco
Office hours:  M 8:40-9:00 a.m., 2:20-3:00 p.m. & 4:20-5:20 p.m.
               W 2:00-3:00 p.m.
               F 8:40-9:00 a.m., 2:20-3:00 p.m., and 4:00-5:00 p.m.
Also in case of class conflicts, appointments can be made outside of these times.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Taught in French, this section of FRE 370 develops students’ reading ability in French: it connects more accessible literature to the history of ideas; and it enhances student mastery of French cultural values by exploring the better worlds or the critiques of them depicted in French and francophone utopias, dystopias, and science-fiction. Designed primarily for French majors and minors but open to advanced students not majoring in French, this course reinforces all departmental mission goals for French: Communications, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

Prerequisites include either FRE 212 or FRE 213. Three credit hours.

COURSE RATIONALE:
Targeting the skill of reading, this course aims to improve student reading comprehension with practice using the literary tenses, instructor-prepared reading tools (reading comprehension questions, graphs, charts, webs, etc.), summarizing activities, and incrementally longer assigned reading of engaging utopian/dystopian literature and science fiction. Skimming and scanning of literary and biographically relevant Internet sites in class, along with reading comprehension questions, oral summaries of the main elements of literary passages, and discussion of French or francophone cultural values contained in them accelerate reading speed and prepare students for reading other authentic French and francophone short stories and novels. This genre study lends itself particularly well to the development of critical thinking because it situates its analysis in its historical context, includes comparative discussion of cultural values, evaluates the veracity of the “departure” of the utopian spirit from France in the twentieth century, and concludes with the importance of the utopian tradition in an era of cultural relativism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Addressing primarily Middle States objectives for interpreting written communication and for enhancing critical thinking, this course will help students

- To improve the speed and accuracy of their reading,
- To develop greater retention of read details through summarizing,
- To predict better what will happen later in a narrative
- To activate and to enlarge their vocabulary base
- To compare French, francophone, and their own cultural values
- To engage and build on their critical thinking ability
- To discover the pleasure of reading and grounding their own thinking in the history of ideas

Disability Disclosure Statement
Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specifics as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations with documented disabilities.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is made on the basis of completion of a subset of the following: in-class exercises designed to improve reading speed and comprehension, quizzes (testing recognition of literary tenses), performance on skimming and scanning exercises, answers to comprehension questions, analyzing and summarizing the essential details of literary passages (résumé de texte) with the help of reading tools designed by the instructor, and comparison of the cultural values found in literary texts with their own and target cultures both in discussion and in writing. Students will also take a midterm and final exam that stress reading comprehension.

COURSE OUTLINE

**Week 1**  
Introduction. Coming to Terms: Some Definitions. Recognizing Literary Tenses: Passé simple, Passé antérieur, Utopias in Antiquity: Plato's *Republic*

**Week 2**  

**Week 3**  
Resource for analysis: Brief Biographies of Selected Great French Utopists (Summarizing main events) (Handouts)  
Rapid Review of French Roots of Utopia from Rabelais to A. France & Quiz 2  
THE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS CONSTITUTION OF ANTANGIL (1616)  
François Rabelais THE ABBEY OF THELEME  
Sir John Mandeville THE BLESSED ISLES OF PRESTER JOHN  
Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac WARFARE ON THE MOON  
Denis Vairasse d'Allais THE ECONOMY AND EDUCATION OF THE SEVARAMBIANS  
Gabriel de Foigny LIFE AND DEATH AMONG THE AUSTRALIANS  
François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon SALENTUM: FRUGAL & NOBLE SIMPLICITY  
Charles Irénée Castel, Abbé de St. Pierre PROPOSAL FOR PEACE EVERLASTING
Morelly NATURE’S DOMAIN

Jean-Jacques Rousseau THE PEOPLE OF THE IDEAL COMMONWEALTH AND THE EXPRESSION OF THEIR GENERAL WILL

Louis Sébastian Mercier IN THE YEAR 2500

Denis Diderot LOVE IN TAHITI


Nicolas-Edme Restif de la Bretonne THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS THROUGH RULES AND REGULATIONS

Constantin François Chasseboeuf, Comte de Volney THE END OF PRIVILEGE

Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet THE FUTURE OF MAN

Donatien Alphonse François, Comte (Marquis) de Sade A BEDROOM DISCOURSE

François Noël (Caius Gracchus) Babeuf A SOCIETY OF EQUALS

Claude-Henri de Saint Simon GOLDEN AGE FOR POSTERITY

Charles Fourier THE SYSTEM OF PASSIONATE ATTRACTION

Etienne Cabet WORK AND PLAY IN ICARIA

Auguste Comte THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon ANARCHISM AND ORDER

Joseph Ernest Renan THE HIGHER ORGANISMS OF THE CENTURIES TO COME

Quiz 3

Weeks 5 -15 Material for analysis: Primary texts for the course in the order given below

Twentieth- and Twenty-first Century French and Francophone Science Fiction, Utopian and Dystopian Literature, and Meta-Utopian Speculation (Reading, completing reading strategies, and discussing selections from these primary texts and comparing French, francophone, and our own cultural values)

Week 5

France, Anatole. “Sur la Pierre Blanche” (1905)
Verne, Jules (Michel Verne?). *Au XXIXᵉ siécle: La Journée d’un journaliste en 2889* (1891, 1910)

Week 6
Verne, Jules. *Paris au XXᵉ Siècle.* (1994) [manuscript discovered in 1990s].

Week 7 and 8

Weeks 9, 10, 11

Le Silence de la Cité (1981) (option 2)

Weeks 12
Raspail, Jean. *Le Camp des Saints* (1973) Quiz 4

Weeks 13 and 14
Field trip to utopian community


**TEXTS (Selections)**


Vonarburg, Élisabeth. *Chroniques du Pays des Mères:* Montréal:
Québec/Amérique, 1992.


**Components of the Grade:**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Quizzes</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Questions on reading comprehension</td>
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<td>Assigned reading activities and participation*</td>
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<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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* STUDENTS WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION SUMMARIES

**INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES (in the Rohrbach Library)**


