

# LE PETIT JOURNAL FRANÇAIS: FRENCH AT ISU

Printemps 2026



## NOTRE COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF :

Shannon Beauné-Lala – présidente  
 Matthew English – vice-président  
 Hannah Brown – secrétaire  
 Parker Jurrens – secrétaire  
 Colette Reckamp – trésorière  
 Alani Sánchez-Flores – relations  
 publiques



Faculty Advisors:

Dr. Laura Edwards & Dr. Sandra Keller



## L'HEURE DE CONVERSATION

Written by: Colette Reckamp



This semester, the executive board of Pi Delta Phi hosted biweekly Conversation Hours to give all Francophile ISU students the chance to use their French, make some new friends, and enjoy a fun time building community. We create a judgment-free zone where all levels of French ability are welcome, practicing our French with pre-written questions, indoor and outdoor games, and other Francophone events.

During this semester's conversation hours, we celebrated Mardi Gras, *la Chandeleur*, and *la St. Valentin*, promoted Languages Week with a Francophone Panel and International Francophone Day with a collaborative poster, and hosted two Zoom calls with current TAPIF (Teaching Assistant Program in France) participants. This semester has been a great success for Conversation Hours, and we're looking forward to next year!



## PLUS D'INFOS :

Interested in adding a French and Francophone Studies major or minor? [Read about it here](#) and/or [contact Dr. Laura Edwards](#).

## INTÉRESSÉ·E ?

Come to conversation hours and any of our events, and you will become a member of Francophone club! Follow us on Instagram @isupideltaphi and join via Redbird Life.

## UN SPÉCIAL AU REVOIR :

This semester is Dr. Jennifer Howell's last as a French professor! She will be missed by us all.

We wish her the best of luck in her nursing career!



# LES COURS DE FRANÇAIS



## FRE 305

Written by: Hannah Brown

History of French Civilization, taught by Dr. Ponnou-Delaffon, is a survey of key historical moments and cultural figures from prehistoric origins to the social changes of May 1968. This course allows students to examine the ways in which the past has shaped and continues to influence France and the French. Primary documents and contemporary films are analyzed as students examine history through political, social, economic, literary and artistic lenses. Through various essays and an oral presentation, this course provides an excellent opportunity to hone one's French skills!



Written by: Parker Jurens

## FRE 215

Advanced Grammar and Oral Proficiency, taught by Dr. Howell, helps students to develop their confidence in spoken French while navigating a variety of different controversies relevant to French society. Through discussions on technology, eating habits, globalization, immigration, and more, students work to develop their ideas around complicated subjects – even in English! The textbook *Controverses* provides both vocabulary and arguments from multiple viewpoints on each discussion, supporting students as they work to develop their ideas. Interwoven lessons on grammar help all levels of students build confidence in their abilities, preparing them to continue on in the French program.

## FRE 116

Written by: Alani Sánchez-Flores

Throughout the semester, Dr. Keller's FRE 116 class has focused on a variety of different subjects. From *la nature et l'environnement* to *la société et la politique*, each unit has centered around expanding and improving the real-world conversational skills of her students beyond the classroom. During *l'unité des arts*, Dr. Keller took her students to ISU's University Galleries to visit Dianna Frid's art exhibition; *Matter is the Nectar of Writing/La materia es el néctar de la escritura*. Here, students used French to interpret the meanings and artistic mediums of different exhibits to come up with their own ideas of what each artwork represented to them. Other class activities have included reading and analyzing classic beginner friendly French literature—such as *Le Petit Prince*—to real one-on-one conversations with native French-speakers all over the world through TalkAbroad.





# LES ÉVÈNEMENTS ÉDUCATIFS



## PANEL FRANCOPHONE

Written by: Alani Sánchez-Flores

For this year's celebration of Languages Week, Pi Delta Phi hosted a *Voices of Francophonie* panel, a student and staff-led informal seminar exploring the question of what *la francophonie* means to them. Each panelist came with a unique perspective and background, with their own ties to the French language and culture! Panelists were: Hannah Brown, who talked about her Cajun heritage in Louisiana; Shannon Beauné-Lala, who was born in France and moved to the US at 9 years old; Hana Iverson, who was born in Egypt and grew up speaking Arabic, English, and French; Amanda Tay, who spoke about her life and culture as a Ghanaian growing up in Côte d'Ivoire; Aurora Kiamana, who shared her culture and Congolese heritage; Alani Sánchez-Flores, who was born in Puerto-Rico with French roots; and last but certainly not least, Kiril Anastasov, who was born in Serbia and grew up surrounded by French culture.



## TAPIF ZOOM

Written by: Parker Jurrens

We had the opportunity to hear from two students who have participated in the TAPIF program, which allows U.S. citizens to become English teaching assistants abroad in French schools.

We spoke with Savanna Wilder, who majored in French Education during her time as ISU, and is currently participating in the program. She walked us through her reasons for applying, the criteria to apply, her experience abroad, and her recommendations for 'thriving'. Savanna painted an amazing picture of her time in France, and she currently plans to attend graduate school in France after her year abroad.

We also spoke with Fletcher Peterson, who completed a journalism major and French minor at ISU, and participated in the TAPIF program last year. Currently, he is completing a masters degree in Toulouse. He also walked us through the TAPIF program and his recommendations, in addition to discussing his experience as a graduate student in France. He gave great recommendations and advice for those looking to go through the process.

Students interested in the TAPIF program can reference <https://tapif.org/> for additional information. We'd like to give a huge thank you to both participants for their time, and we wish them success as they continue their lives in France!



# IMMERSIONS CULTURELLES



## ART MURAL

Written by: Shannon Beauné-Lala

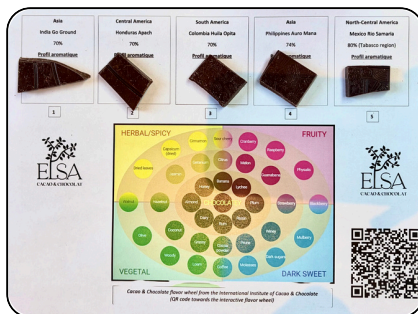
To celebrate International Francophonie Day on March 20th, Pi Delta Phi members created a mural in Stevenson Hall featuring francophone artists (such as Berthe Morisot and Manuel Mathieu) alongside their works. During *l'Heure de Conversation*, attendees were invited to draw what “francophonie” meant to them. The result was a vibrant and creative display, with students showcasing both their artistic talents (and even their knowledge of social media memes!) while sharing their personal connections to the French language and culture around the table.



## DÉGUSTATION DE CHOCOLAT ARTISANAL

Written by: Shannon Beauné-Lala

In February, Pi Delta Phi had the chance to take part in an incredible *Atelier du Chocolat – Bean to Bar* tasting workshop hosted by Illinois Wesleyan University and Elsa Cuny from Belgium. Joining us live from her shop via Zoom, Elsa guided French studies students through the fascinating, step-by-step process of chocolate making, moving her camera between machines to show each stage of production. As we followed along from our tables—complete with info sheets and samples of her chocolates—we then moved into the tasting portion of the event. Elsa encouraged us to share our guesses about the flavor notes in each chocolate before revealing details like the origin of the beans and what gives each piece its distinct taste. It was an engaging and informative experience, and we’re grateful to Illinois Wesleyan University for including us in such a unique opportunity!



## SÉRIE DE FILMS FRANÇAIS

Written by: Matthew English

The French film series, sponsored by the French section and coordinated by Dr. Ponnou-Delaffon, allows all students enrolled in an ISU French course the opportunity to enrich themselves in the world of Francophone cinema. Each semester the film series aims to broach a new theme with previous topics such as LGBTQIA+ stories and childhood, with this semester covering deaf representation. The films showcased this semester were: *Marie Heurtin*, a bittersweet biographical drama; *La famille Bélier*, a classic heart-felt comedy; and *Sur mes lèvres*, a neo-noir thriller. The film series does not only grant an occasion for students to practice their oral comprehension skills, but a manner to expose learners to a diverse number of narratives through the world-renowned medium of Francophone cinema. We cannot wait to see what stories await us next!



# ÉTUDES À L'ÉTRANGER



## ENTRETIENS AVEC DES ÉTUDIANTS DE FRANÇAIS

Colette Reckamp interviewed Anna Hippe and Amelia Gimbel about their respective study abroad experiences.

Anna studied at Université Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France, for the 2025 Fall Semester. Here are her responses:

### WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF STUDYING ABROAD?

One of my favorite parts of studying abroad was getting to know so many people that I would have never met otherwise. I had a great host family that shared a lot with me about their lives and France—towards the end anytime I did not have morning classes my host mom and I had hour long breakfasts together just chatting about whatever. Of course I loved my weekend trips where I travelled to over 15 French cities and 3 other countries.



### WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO STUDY ABROAD AND WHY THAT LOCATION?

Being a French Education Major, [studying abroad] is very useful but also it had just been something I had always wanted to do. I chose Angers because it was the only semester-long offering, but it also had the Fall Intensive Language month that was helpful in preparing for the Trimester. As a city, I am glad I was in Angers as it is not a touristy town, so it felt safer, like a hometown, and I felt I ran into less English than other cities I travelled to. There were still many things to do there and I felt like it was a good size for me.

### WHAT WAS MOST HELPFUL WHEN STUDYING ABROAD?

Going into study abroad, I tried not to set expectations in my head before getting there. Unless you are abroad for just a short time, I found it helped to not plan out any trips or big plans until getting there so that I could find my travel friends first and then decide on where to go together (in the first few weeks). I did not get super homesick, but my family and I planned that we would Whatsapp every Sunday which helped with staying in contact and the time change.



### IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY ABROAD?

I did a program where they partnered me with a French student attending the college. We only hung out like two or three times, but it was still interesting to learn about normal college life in France and share stories. One of my friends and I tried not to get stuck in the habit of going to one specific church or café all the time as there are so many in town. So, each week we switched it up so we could try them all. It took us all over town and I got to try a lot of pastries throughout the process!



# ÉTUDES À L'ÉTRANGER



## ENTRETIENS AVEC DES ÉTUDIANTS DE FRANÇAIS

Colette Reckamp interviewed Anna Hippe and Amelia Gimbel about their respective study abroad experiences.

Amelia studied at ESSCA in Angers, France, for the 2025 Fall Semester. Here are her responses:



### WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF STUDYING ABROAD?

My favorite part about studying abroad was meeting new people with different perspectives. I mostly hung out with other exchange students, so a lot of my conversations were in English. It was fun learning where they came from and experiencing France together. I also really enjoyed learning what I like, in food, travel, etc.



### WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO STUDY ABROAD AND WHY THAT LOCATION?

I decided to study abroad because I wanted to try using the French I have learned for the past 6 years in a country [where] it is predominately spoken. I also wanted to get out of my comfort zone and just see a different part of the world. I choose ESSCA Angers, instead of ESSCA Paris or elsewhere, because 1) I'm an accounting major and that was one of the sister schools of ISU that had the one semester option and 2) I've already had the privilege to visit Paris and I knew in my heart of hearts that I wasn't going to enjoy it as much because I'm not a city person. Angers was an amazing place because it had small town vibes like Normal.

### IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY ABROAD?

Before going abroad, I was recommended to get the "Welcome Packet" that a youth center in Angers has for anyone new to the area. It has a whole bunch of coupons for shops and opportunities within Angers! This packet led me to a dance company called "Diversity Groov'Dance" where I met one of the most important people from my trip abroad. I got to meet their predominately French-speaking friends and created a friendship I will cherish forever. I found my French outlet because of this coupon book! It is amazing. I also loved going to the gardens nearby and all of the pop-up fairs.



### WHAT WAS MOST HELPFUL WHEN STUDYING ABROAD?

Google Maps was my best friend. I don't think I would have been able to make it anywhere without that app. So, make sure you have a good data plan! Also, finding a supermarket that is nearby and easy to get to was great for my weekly shopping.



### WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE STUDYING ABROAD?

I was fairly prepared to go because I made sure to triple check the Study Abroad Module and ISU requirements, but one big thing I wish I knew was how tedious the visa process was, oh my goodness... I cried at least once during the process because I didn't understand how to show I had enough money for this trip. I think I ended up showing my bank account statement for that month, so TIP: make sure you have the money in your account at least a month before your visa appointment so that you can print that out!

# LES DIVERTISSEMENTS

NOUS ESPERONS QUE CECI  
VOUS PLAIRA

## MUSIQUE :

- **Reine** – Dadju
- **Vivre** – 47ter
- **Domage** – Bigflo & Oli
- Thérapie TAXI
- Louane

## FILMS :

- **Au Revoir Les Enfants** – Louis Malle
- **La Rafle** – Roselyne Bosch
- **Chasse Gardée 2** – Antonin Fourlon
- **Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain** – Jean-Pierre Jeunet
- **La Grande Vadrouille** – Gérard Oury
- **Intouchables** – Olivier Nakache & Eric Toledano

## RÉSEAUX SOCIAUX :

- Marrant Club

## LIVRES :

- **Là où je me terre** – Caroline Dawson
- **Le Comte de Monte-Cristo** – Alexandre Dumas
- **Astérix chez les Bretons (n°8)** – René Goscinny & Albert Uderzo
- **Germinal** – Émile Zola
- **Les Misérables** – Victor Hugo

## NOURRITURE :

- Sepelas, a Congolese restaurant in Urbana, IL
- Crêpes aux pêches
- Croque-monsieur
- Poutine et sirop d'érable du Canada :)

## SPORT :

- World Cup (June 11 to July 19)

MERCI D'AVOIR LU NOTRE  
PETIT JOURNAL !