# French Language I (Language and Phonology) Year 1, Three-Year Course Students

## Prof. Sara Cigada

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## Carlotta Contrini, Annita Lyonnet

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***Text under revision. Not yet approved by academic staff.***

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the basic theoretical knowledge of the specific features of French phonetics and phonology through a series of exercises and the active and systematic analysis of audio documents. The course aims to consolidate students’ speaking and listening skills, and to help them develop awareness of various phonetic phenomena. Students will also be introduced to French as one of the Western Romance languages and offered an overview of European and non-European *Francophonie*, including the main varieties of French. The course will then touch on the varieties of French spoken in France and other languages spoken in the *République*.

By the end of the course, students will be able to recognise and reproduce the standard phonetics of French spoken in France, explaining its characteristic phonetic phenomena. They will be able to transcribe standard spoken French into API (*Alphabet Phonétique International*); they will be able to properly describe, recognise and make liaisons, divide the phonetic chain into syllables, and recognise and reproduce expressive emphasis. They will be familiar with the basic rules of French spelling and have a basic knowledge of the French sociolinguistics introduced during the course.

***COURSE CONTENT***

French as an Indo-European language

- French as one of the Romance languages

- francophonie and Francophonie

- Diatopic varieties of Metropolitan French

The phonetics and phonology of contemporary French

- aspects of pronunciation

- the French vowel system

- phonetic transcription in *API*

- *E caduc*

- *liaison* and *enchaînement*

- the syllable

- key points on orthography

- the phonology of French in relation to phonetics and morphology

- structures and functions of prosody

***READING LIST***

The course notes, audio documents and texts analysed in class and published on BlackBoard must be studied for the exam.

The following is also exam material:

S. Cigada, Il patrimonio culturale della francofonia, in Geopolitica delle lingue, ed. G. Del Zanna, Paris 2011

The reference text for the course is:

P. Léon, *La prononciation du français,* A. Colin, Paris, 2011 (parts to be indicated during the course).

Further bibliographic references will be provided during the course and shared on the Blackboard page.

Details of the *required reading* will also be provided at the beginning of the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be delivered primarily in French and includes lectures in class, listening to audio extracts, transcription exercises and phonetic analysis, individual study in the language lab, according to the instructions to be provided in lectures.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam in French, divided into four parts.

The first part concerns *reading* (reading aloud, translation and commentary). Students will be assessed in practical terms on: their grasp of phonology and vocabulary; their understanding of a simple narrative and/or descriptive text and finally the awareness of the differences between some of the basic structures of French and their equivalents in Italian (forms of courtesy, rection, false friends etc.). The second part is a phonetic transcription test, and the third part consists in commenting on various characteristic phenomena of French phonology. There will be a particular focus on the vowel system, syllables (in spoken and written French) and *liaison*, as well as examples made in lectures.

Finally, the fourth part will assess students on their knowledge relating to the history and variety and spread of the French language. Students must pass each of the parts, which are worth 25% of the mark for the *Language and Phonology* course.

Moreover, as usual, the weighted average of the results of the interim written and spoken language tests will contribute to the final mark (up to a maximum of 1/6 and 2/6 respectively).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students are reminded that each year of a Language course must begin with an interim exam, either written or oral (as per each students’ choice). Students who pass the two interim tests may access the final Language exam (Language and Phonology).

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.

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***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

By the end of the practical classes, students will: have learned and consolidated, at an intermediate level, the main morpho-syntactic structures of the French language and developed a basic vocabulary. They will also be able to apply this knowledge in their own language practice, both written and oral. Students will be aware of the main spelling difficulties in French and be able to read aloud correctly.

Students will be able to understand medium-low difficulty texts on familiar subjects and relating to personal life with ease; in terms of the written language, they will be able to produce and translate short texts from Italian to French on simple topics related to daily life.

In terms of oral expression, students will be able to articulate the sounds of the French language correctly and interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity on the topics covered in the course text. They will also be able to summarise the key information in familiar texts.

The activities proposed in the series of practical classes for the first year of the course are designed to bring students to a level between B1 and B2 in the European Language Portfolio across all four skills.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Foundations of phonetics and phonology; phonetic correction. Spelling and pronunciation rules. La phonétique par les textes. Les virelangues

Analysis of the main features of communication.

Study of basic morpho-syntactic structures, fundamental vocabulary (active use of 1,500-1,700 words) and of the main elements for linking text together. Dictation exercises.

Reading and writing exercises, with an introduction to text types.

Oral and written communication on everyday topics.

Reading and listening activities based on short texts.

***READING LIST***

- F. Bidaud, *Grammaire du français pour italophones*, Quatrième édition, UTET Università, 2020

- F. Bidaud, *Exercices de grammaire française pour italophones*, Quatrième édition, UTET Università, 2021

Further information on the reading list for the final exam will be made available on Blackboard platform at the beginning of the academic year.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures, supervised practical tasks, and work in the language lab.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Written and oral interim test. For the interim writing test, please refer to the general part on the organisation of the language exams in your *Guida dello studente* (student guide).

In the oral exam, students will present the texts indicated during practical classes (30% of the final mark), analyse the morpho-syntactic, grammatical and lexical structures (30% of the final mark) and then discuss the written and oral texts used in the practical classes (40% of the final mark).

Marks will be based on: contents and constitutive factors of students’ spoken French: appropriateness in terms of grammar and expression; phonetics and phonology; relevance of answers and ability to engage in dialogue; depth of students’ linguistic analysis of the texts.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The syllabus applies to all levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced). Before the beginning of lectures, students will be divided into groups based on their initial language level.

Students require knowledge of grammatical, logical and sentence-level analysis and of grammatical terminology in Italian, as well as an interest in the language and culture of French-speaking countries. Students must have achieved the expected level for the first year in order to pass the final Linguistics/Literature exam for the first year, and as the basis for the practical classes in the following years. In order to learn effectively and build up long-lasting knowledge, students must participate proactively in practical classes and regularly complete the tasks assigned to consolidate knowledge and the language skills developed in class.

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