**History of the French Language**

## Prof. Sara Cigada

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

The course aims to explore the historical development of the French language, and highlight some of its moments through the analysis of a selection of texts. Furthermore, the course will provide an overview of the methodology and the tools available in diachronic linguistics, with a focus on some of the most significant events of the French linguistic and cultural history, in the perspective of its international *rayonnement*.

At the end of the course, students will be able to formulate an interdisciplinary speech at a specialist level. In addition, they will be able to apply their newly acquired knowledge to the chapters that were not analysed in class, and adopt an interdisciplinary approach allowing them to combine their linguistic and historical knowledge. Finally, students will learn to make assumptions on the socio-political trends influencing linguistic change, and they will become more aware of the importance of the ideological relevance of language, aimed at modifying people’s culture and behaviour. For this reason, the course will also guide students in their path towards European citizenship.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Two thirds of the lectures will be in common with the French module of the European Culture and Civilisation course. This part of the course will be held mainly in Italian, but the material will be in French; it will introduce some chapters of the history of French language and culture, also through the reading of texts (either in their anthological or full version). The language spoken by the Celtic peoples of Gaul; the Gallo-Roman civilisation and the *Table claudienne*; the Edict of Milan and the first spread of Christianity; the Frankish Gaul civilisation and their kingdom; Charlemagne; *les Serments de Strasbourg*; the spread of culture through monasticism and religious orders in the Middle Ages; chivalry and courtesy; the origins of the University of Paris. The language issue during the 16th and the 17th centuries; *le bon usage*; the Académie Française and the first dictionaries. France and the Silk Roads; French missionaries in the Far East. The *Encyclopédie*. The language of the French revolution; the linguistic-cultural policies and reforms of the school system; political press. The secularisation of the State; the 1905 *Loi de séparation* on the Separation of the Churches and the State; the *laïcité* as a social issue, and its evolution across the 20th century. France in the heart of Europe: Robert Schuman; the new social-political concepts and their spread from France to Europe. The recent debate on rights in France, and their international impact: linguistic aspects. *Paysage linguistique* of contemporary French. The Loi Molac.

The final part of the course, instead, will be held in French, and will be focused on some of the topics introduced during the first general part. In addition, students will be invited to suggest and analyse additional topics of their interest that must be previously approved by the lecturer (especially if they are planning to write their Master’s degree thesis on the subject).

***READING LIST***

The material for the general part of the course will be made available on Blackboard.

The reading list for the History of the French Language section of the course are:

H. Geckeler-W. Dietrich, *Einführung in die französische Sprachwissenschaft,* Erich Schmidt Vlg., Berlin, 2012, especially the fourth section.

F. Duval et al., *L’histoire de la langue française,* Hatier (Bescherelle), Paris 2022.

A. Principato, *Breve storia della lingua francese,* Carocci, Roma 2000.

W. Ayres-Bennett, *A History of the French Language Through Texts,* Routledge, London/NewYork, 2009.

Further information will be made available in class and on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

All students are invited to enrol on the course page on Blackboard in order to have the possibility to access all material and communications.

Frontal lectures.

Students will be asked to read additional material at home and discuss it in class, according to the calendar published on Blackboard.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral assessment, preferably in French, based on course content and a specific topic chosen by the student and previously agreed by the lecturer.

The final mark will be based on the following assessment criteria: ability to structure argumentation in a clear way; knowledge of topics (that is to say, use of complete information and knowledge of documents), texts (meaning the ability to use texts as a support for specific statements), and history (which means having a clear understanding of the evolution of language); relevance, coherence, and contents of the optional topic under analysis.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students are invited to enrol on the course page on Blackboard, so that they can receive materials and communications in real time. In case of IT-related problems, students must contact the competent IT support service.

Students attending the Culture and civilization course are expected to have a basic knowledge of geography as well as in history of Central Europe starting from the Christian era (that is to say, the Gallic Wars era), especially France.

The course of History of the French language also presupposes basic knowledge in General Linguistics and knowledge of the language sufficient to follow the part of the course that takes place in French, to read the documents presented and the reference bibliography.

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.