

# SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES PROSPECTUS SPRING 2024

## FREN 2180

### FROM WEST AFRICA TO WEST PHILADELPHIA: CREATING COMMUNITY IN THE FRANCOPHONE DIASPORA

INSTRUCTOR: ELIZABETH COLLINS, PH.D.

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

French 2180 is an academically based community service (ABCS) course run in partnership with the Netter Center for Community Partnerships. As such, the course combines community service with research, teaching, and learning in order to explore the immigrant experience of Francophone West African children in the United States.

In this course, undergraduate students of French from the University of Pennsylvania work in close partnership with the Henry C. Lea School, a local elementary school in West Philadelphia. Once a week, Penn students run a bilingual after-school program for first-and second-generation francophone West African children called Francophone Community Partnership (FCP).

Then Penn students meet on campus to discuss the challenges the children face as they adapt to their new environments, as well as ways we can work with them to enhance their self-esteem, sense of belonging, and pride in their cultural and linguistic identities.

Through the experience of community service supplemented by the interdisciplinary study of a variety of texts, the course examines many topics having to do with race/ethnicity (how to build a community of learners, the competing meanings the French language holds for Black Americans, deficit discourse v. funds of knowledge, codeswitching, race in the classroom), immigrant status (the immigrant and refugee experience of Africans in the United States, issues of transculturation and multilingualism, the dangers of a single story), social class (the teaching of French in U.S. public schools), gender (role of gender in building child-lead activities), and religious affiliation (Muslim children in U.S. schools).

Assignments include weekly readings, journal assignments, short reflections essays, pedagogical assignments, an FCP project, and a final presentation of your learning.

#### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

For the Spring 2024 semester, all sections of FREN 2180 are scheduled in person. The class will meet on Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30-5:30 pm.

**On Tuesdays, students will participate in the Francophone Community Partnership at the Lea School.**

- During the after-school activities, Penn students will learn, work and play with Lea School students to promote intellectual and social development. Interactions with students occur around art, writing, recreational play and board games.

- For full credit, you must be on time and engage actively and thoughtfully with the youth participants. Penn students will have the opportunity to co-lead activities during these sessions.
- You will be expected to arrive at Lea School at 4700 Locust Street in West Philadelphia by 3:45 pm. Van transportation will be available from 40<sup>th</sup> and Locust Street.

**On Thursdays, the class will meet on campus** to discuss readings, reflect on and debrief our experiences at Lea, and workshop pedagogical activities. For full credit, you must be on time, come prepared to discuss readings, and engage actively in class discussions and activities.

**Attendance and active participation are very important in this course.** The success of our sessions with the students at the Lea School depends on your regular attendance, active participation, and compliance with all protocols. This course is logistically complex, so it is imperative that you arrive on time to all sessions and are prepared to engage actively and in a professional manner, both on campus or at the Lea School.

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

This course values collaboration, communication, and community-engagement. Because of this, we will be implementing a procedure called **Contract Grading**. It works this way: everyone in the course starts off with an A-. If you attend and participate in all class sessions, engage with the Lea students, and submit all assignments on time meeting all requirements for said assignment, you will receive an A- in the course. If you would like to earn an A, you will have to go above and beyond the baseline requirements in ways that support the class. Extra credit will not be offered. Ways to raise your grade to an A will be made clear at the beginning of the semester.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**1. You will need to obtain clearances.** Per Pennsylvania law and Penn policy, all Penn students interacting with minors *more than once* in a semester, virtually or in-person, must complete three clearance checks, as well as mandated reporter training:

- PA Child Abuse
- PATCH - PA Criminal History Search
- FBI fingerprinting
- Mandated reporter training

We will guide you through this process at the beginning of the semester, but you will be responsible for obtaining your clearances as quickly as possible.

**2. You will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.** Before we can interact with students at the Lea School, we must comply with the COVID-19 protocols of the School District of Philadelphia in order to keep the school community as safe as possible. **It is therefore required that everyone in our class be fully vaccinated (and boosted) and**

**where masks during FCP on Tuesdays. There will be no exemptions to the vaccination requirement.**

### **LINGUISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

Students who enroll in French 2180 must have already completed the language requirement in French (completed FREN 0400 or equivalent).

You must have an advanced level of French to be successful in this course. We will speak French in every class, *but not necessarily for the entire class*. This may differ from other advanced French classes you have taken at Penn so far. However, this course is logistically and administratively complex, therefore it might not always be practical, safe, or efficient to speak in French.

Furthermore, many of the topics we will discuss in this class are particular to the United States, which is the current context of the Lea School students, so research done on these topics has been done in English, rather than in French. We will mostly speak French with the students at the Lea School, but you'll find that they might be more comfortable in French or English and might be familiar with many languages! Nonetheless, we will endeavor to speak and write in French as much as possible in this course, and we invite your input as to how this should be negotiated.

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

You will be required to bring a notebook dedicated to the class and a writing implement. All other course materials and readings will be on Canvas.