

## Course Syllabus LFR 101

### Elementary French I

**Number of ECTS credits: 6**

#### **Contact Details**

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#### **Course Description and Course Methodology**

This course is an absolute beginner's course, conform to the CEF Common European Framework for Languages, entrance level A1 and exit level A2.

Students acquire an elementary knowledge of the French language, and will be able to communicate autonomously very quickly. These basic communication skills will be acquired by reading short dialogues and small texts. Phrase structures and vocabulary will be practiced with the instructor and in small groups. Students are going to integrate their new French skills activities concerning French and Belgian cultural elements, and thus also practicing their oral skills and their reporting skills. Students will also work on small simple written texts. Students who have any prior French knowledge will not be accepted to attend this class. The instructor will send these students on to an appropriate level.

#### **Course Prerequisites**

Knowledge of general grammatical concepts and terminology.

#### **Learning Objectives**

After this course, students will have the following skills, and should be able to:

- Understand basic communication and be able to participate in everyday basic conversations.
- Know the basic grammar and basic vocabulary to manage living in a French speaking environment.
- Read and understand basic French texts and compose simple written work.
- Feel confident while speaking French in front of their peers.

And to enable students to produce correct written and oral language, the following grammatical material will be taught:

- *la conjugaison des verbes au présent,*

- *l'impératif*
- *le futur proche*
- *les articles*
- *les adjectifs possessifs*
- *les nombres*
- *le genre, le nombre et la place des adjectifs et des noms*
- *l'article partitif*
- *le passé composé*
- *la négation et l'interrogation*

## **Course schedule**

Classes will be taught in French progressively from the beginning and every student is expected to produce French phrases to his ability during classes. This may seem difficult, but don't forget that you can always ask if you don't understand. Gaining confidence while speaking French is far more important than worrying about the mistakes you might make.

Classes will be taught twice a week, **the first session** is devoted to learning and understanding texts and new theory, new grammar or new vocabulary skills. Students will need to prepare this session in advance by reading at home. This is a lecture type class.

**The second class session** will be devoted to both exercises and practical French in use f.e., dialogues and skits and *activités pratiques*.

The instructor is going to divide the students up in groups of 5 or 6 maximum, with a chosen "group leader" and a French group name. Students will be set exercises to complete for each exercise session and the group leader hands in his/her copy to me for correction. Afterwards, he/she posts his corrected exercises on Pointcarré in the designated group forum. The group forum can also be used to communicate assignments and notes and preparation work between students. The instructor will supervise the exercise session and go from one group to the other, and give extra explanation or more advanced exercises and assignments where needed.

Changes to the calendar will occur, but will always be addressed in class.

		<b>First class session</b>	<b>Second class session</b>
Week 1	Survival French	Syllabus, présentations	Les rencontres rapides.
Week 2	Chapitre 1: Bonjour!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler
Week 3	Chapitre 1: Bonjour!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler
Week 4	Chapitre 2: Perdu!	Textes & Grammaire	TEST CHAPITRE 1 Exercices + Parler
Week 5	Chapitre 2: Perdu!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler

		First class session	Second class session
Week 6	Chapitre 3: Bon Appétit!	Textes & Grammaire	TEST CHAPITRE 2 Exercices + Parler
Week 7	Chapitre 3: Bon Appétit!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler
Week 8	Examen Mid term	Examen Mid term CHAPITRES 1, 2, 3	Cours de culture
Week 9	Chapitre 4: Bon Voyage!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler
Week 10	Chapitre 4: Bon Voyage!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler
Week 11	Chapitre 4: Bon Voyage!	Textes & Grammaire	TEST CHAPITRE 4 Exercices + Parler
Week 12	Chapitre 4: Bon Voyage!	Textes & Grammaire	Exercices + Parler
Week 13	Chapitre 5: ça a été?	Textes & Grammaire	TEST CHAPITRE 5
Week 14	Chapitre 5: ça a été?	Textes, Grammaire, exercices	Examen oral (présentation)
Week 15	Examen final	étudier pour l'examen	

### **Course Materials**

Textbook and Audio recordings:

- 1) K. Caenen, *Choix de Bruxelles*, Vesalius College, revised version 2014
- 2) Small dictionary ( French/ First language and First language/French)
- 3) Audio MP3 's made by the instructor with all the texts of the handbook ( on Pointcarré)

Additional Readings:

If you are interested in politics and history, you can find some extra information in the following books. They can be found in the VUB or ULB library or in the National Belgian Library ( the “ Albertina library” [www.kbr.be](http://www.kbr.be), near the central station) If the book can be found in this library, the library code is also provided. ( ALB)

1. Geert Van Istendael, *Le labyrinthe belge*, traduit du néerlandais par Monique Nagielkopf et Marnix Vincent, préface Jaques de Decker, Bordeaux, Le castor astral, 2004, 277 p. ( bib. ULB)

2. Els Witte, Jan Craeybeckx, Alain Meynen, *Political history of Belgium from 1830 onwards*, Brussel, VUB University Press, Antwerpen, Standaard, 2000, 297 p. ( bib ALB : A2000 5. 730)
3. Benno Barnard, Martine Van Berlo, Geert Van Istendael, *How can one not be interested in Belgian history? War, language and consensus in Belgium since 1830*. Gent, Academia Press, Dublin, Trinity College, 2005, 151p. ( bib ALB A 2006 4.492 + Bib. VUB)
4. Els Witte, *Language and politics : The Belgian case study in a historical perspective* Bruxelles, VUB University Press, 1999, 239 p. ( bib ULB + bib. VUB)
5. Richard Hill, *The Art of being Belgian, Brussels, Belgium and Beyond*, Europublications, Brussels, 2005, 208 p. (bib. ALB A 2007 5.551)
6. Harry Pearson, *A Tall Man in a Low Land, some time among the Belgians*, Abacus, London, 2002, 245 p. ( ask the instructor)
7. Els Witte, Hugo Baetens Beardsmore, *The interdisciplinary study of urban bilingualism in Brussels*, Clevedon, Avon, England, 1987, 241 p. ( bib ULB)
8. Arend Lijphart, *Conflict and coexistence in Belgium: the dynamics of a culturally divided society*, Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1981, 171 p.( bib ULB)
9. Daniel Blampain, André Goosse, Jean-Marie Klinkenberg ...( et.al.), *Le français en Belgique : une langue , une communauté*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Duculot, 1997, 530 p.
10. Olivier Mouton, Marie-Anne Wilssens, Frédéric Antoine, Marc Reynebeau, *Belgium, a State of Mind*, Tielt, Lannoo, 2001, 207 p.
11. José Ovejero, *Bruselas*, Brussels, Excritos, 2000, 303 p.

Useful websites:

1. A very good website in English to help you understand French, for beginners also, with videos, exercises and much more. Also check out the “ cool French” part, with tons of slang phrases.  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/>
2. A good resource for beginners.  
[http://french.about.com/od/beginning/Beginning\\_French\\_Lessons\\_and\\_Resources.htm](http://french.about.com/od/beginning/Beginning_French_Lessons_and_Resources.htm)
3. A very broad database with exercises for all levels an nearly all grammar topics.  
<http://www.lepointdufle.net/>
4. Interglot Dictionary = [www.interglot.com](http://www.interglot.com)

## Course Assessment

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

Quizzes	25%	Announced quizzes
Oral French produced in class	5%	
French project	10%	
Class participation	10%	Active contribution to the class. You've made your <i>voorbereiding</i> and you do your best to speak French in class + physical attendance. *
Mid term exam	20%	
Final exam	30%	25% written exam, 5% oral presentation.
Total	100%	

## Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as stated follows:

	%	On 20	
A	85-100	17-20	Excellent
A-	81-84	16,1-16,9	very good
B+	77-80	15,3-16,0	
B	73-76	14,5-15,2	good
B-	69-72	13,7-14,4	
C+	66-68	13,1-13,6	
C	62-65	12,3-13,0	satisfactory
C-	58-61	11,5-12,2	
D+	54-57	10,7-11,4	
D	50-53	10,0-10,6	pass
F	49 and below	below 10	fail

Your transcript will give you a letter grade. The exams receive a number with the equivalent letter grade, but the numbers are added in order to obtain the final letter grade. The numbers indicated hereafter come from the fact that Flemish universities must consider 50% as passing and, by a process of linear interpolation from the US 4-point GPA system, 85% and above is an A, and anything below 50% is an F. If you want to calculate the course grade you only need to multiply the numerical mark for each assignment and quiz/ exam by the percentage allocated to each different part of the course and then add the results.

Grades have a tendency to be lower in Europe than in the US. As stated above a B is good and a C is satisfactory. However, most Study Abroad students generally want, or are used to, higher grades. To let you in on the secret way to an A = work for it, work hard, and you'll be rewarded.

### **Further description of assessment activities and Grading Criteria**

#### ASSESSMENT

##### ***1. La préparation***

Preparation work will have to be done after and before each in class exercise session. This includes making exercises, preparing for the next session, making sure you understand the new grammatical material, repeating and studying the conversation explained in the previous class, learning your vocabulary, reading and preparing exercises for the next class, *La préparation* will not be graded directly, but the set exercises will be corrected in class, and thus your *préparation* will influence your class work and be reflected in the assessment. All students will have their exercise book checked at several random moments during the semester to make sure that you've done the preparation and are keeping up with the course. Students should keep their handouts in a folder and bring this folder to class.

##### ***2. French project***

Is it a paper? Not really. It can be, but doesn't have to be.

Since you are taking this class and have a reason to do so, I assume you are also interested in the contemporary culture of French speaking regions in Europe. Your French project builds on that interest.

I know that there are different types of students out there, and some of you might start getting wobbly legs when they hear the word "creativity".

If you are one of those people, just do the following.

1. Write a short introduction in French, presenting yourself and your chosen theme in 20 lines.
2. Write a short research based (which means you have to include your bibliography) reflexion paper of a topic linked with the society/politics/culture/art/ of a French speaking country. The topic needs to be approved by the Instructor.

Your paper has 4 different parts: An introduction of the topic, a discussion of the topic, a more profound analysis and a conclusion.

Possible topics include:

- Social Security in Belgium, what are the challenges the system is facing in the 21st century?
- Art Nouveau souvenirs in Brussels.
- The extreme right in France

Stay close to your personal interests and go looking for their counterparts here.

This paper needs to be 1500 words in Times New Roman, single space.

I am not fond of grammatical errors in English, especially not if it is your mother tongue!

3. Submit before 1 PM of the Tuesday of Week 12. Staple it and hand it in at reception.

However if creativity doesn't give you wobbly legs, you may do the following:

1. Write a short introduction in French, presenting yourself and your chosen theme/project in 20 lines.

2. Submit a

- blog with reflections about the French language, the culture, arts, society, based on newspaper articles, travels, social media,...
- a culture diary
- a short film with interviews

The textual part of the creative project counts at least 3000 words.

3. Submit before 1 PM of the Tuesday of Week 12. Visual representations on a DVD please.

### ***3. Quizzes and exams.***

Two types of quizzes or exams will be given this semester.

1. Announced quizzes will cover a limited amount of course material and are given at certain intervals, after each unit in the course book except for the first two chapters, to ensure every student is keeping up with the course work. No quizzes are given the week after break, for obvious reasons.

2. Mid term and final examinations will be given at set dates. The final examination will also include an oral part, a presentation given in the final week of class.

The most important element in this course is the individual progress of the students and the effort they put in towards learning Dutch. Students are entitled to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes, it's an essential part of language acquisition.

## **Additional Course Policies**

### **1. Late homework policy**

Missing the deadline of your project work= -20% of your grade per day late.. No exceptions will be made. If you are sick, notify the instructor as quickly as possible, and bring along a doctor's note when you come back to class. No doctor's note = still -20% per day.

### **2. Coming late to class**

Try to be as punctual as possible. However, should you be late, please enter quietly without disrupting the class nor making too much noise.

Students are not allowed to add this class later than before the first class of week 3, because otherwise the amount of knowledge they will have to catch up on will be too big.

### **3. Absence from class.**

Attendance in class is compulsory and recorded at every class. If you are sick, warn the school and they will notify your teachers. You'll also have to bring a doctor's note when you return to school. If you miss class for any other reason, send an email to [kcaenen@vub.ac.be](mailto:kcaenen@vub.ac.be), preferably in advance as to explain why you cannot attend class. It is your responsibility to keep up with the course work, and ask the necessary explanations if you don't understand. If you miss an announced quiz, please notify the instructor in advance and we'll set up an alternative. The instructor will assume that you take the initiative to catch up on what you have missed and ask for notes and explanations, including assignments, from your fellow students. The instructor is by no means obliged to go running after the students to inform them about things said in class while students were absent. Study abroad field excursions are no valid excuse for absence in class and will reflect on your class participation grade.

### **4. Behaviour in class**

The following things are not allowed in class:

- Eating.
- Being impolite towards the instructor and fellow students.
- The use of a laptop computer, unless you have a documented learning disability that requires it.
- The use of a cell phone.

## **Academic Honesty Statement**

Academic dishonesty is **NOT** tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else's work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.

## Study Guide

### HOW TO GET A GOOD GRADE?

#### A. On a weekly basis.

After each first class session and before each second class session you should do the following things to keep up with the course. Keep this order to organise your study session, it should take you up to two or two and a half hours.

- 1) Read, understand and translate the texts.
- 2) Study the vocabulary. You can use the vocabulary sheets provided in the handouts. Write them out several times, correct spelling is very important.
- 3) Repeat the text using the MP3.
- 4) Study the *Phrases pratiques*.
- 5) Go over the new grammar. Make sure you understand.

After each second class session and before the following week you should do the following things to keep up with the course. This should take you up to an hour or an hour and a half.

- 1) Make sure you have the correct answers of the exercises corrected in class. Correct your answers. If you have difficulties or fail to understand let the instructor know by email.
- 2) Repeat the vocabulary and the grammar you've studied so far. Make charts or revision cards.
- 3) Do the set reading for the Tuesday class, look up new words in the set texts.
- 4) Study for a test if there is one coming up. Check the class calendar.

#### B. After every unit

A test is organised after each lesson or two lessons, expect for lesson 5, this is included in the mid term examination This means that you have to study the following items:

- 1) All the new grammatical material from that lesson, but you also need to revise the grammar from previous units, for example the verbs.
- 2) All the new vocabulary from that lesson. You simply study the vocabulary list that you made or filled out in these handouts. Of course, you're not supposed to forget the vocabulary from previous lessons!
- 3) All the exercises from that unit. Remake them and correct them.
- 4) All conversation and cultural items presented, discussed or practised in class or during the practical assignment.

#### C. Twice a semester

A mid term examination is organised in week 8 and a final examination in week 15.

