The International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) consists of 84 member states; 54 full member states (orange), 26 observer states (green), four associated states (pink). © Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.
La Francophonie at Cottey College is a collection of students’ essays and reflections on their acquisition of French and Francophone cultures.

Editors

Kate Knox
Traci Borders
Dr. Mary Mba

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We also thank the French teacher, **Christen Diehl**, and student members of **Nevada, Missouri High School French club**, for continuing to collaborate with us on some of our activities. We thank all **PEO Sisterhood chapters** that support our students. We want to thank **French students** and **members of LCF** who contributed their essays and who edited this issue. We offer our to **Steve Reed** for giving it a critical reading as well. Our great appreciation goes to **Dr. Mary Mba**, who makes learning French so much fun and brings a lot of creativity to everything she does. She spends numerous hours and sleepless nights working with us on every project and editing this journal. Finally, we thank **John Shopper** for printing this publication.
INTRODUCTION
- Dr. Mary Mba, Assistant Professor of French, Cottey College

Last year when I started publishing this journal, my aim was just to celebrate my students’ writing on, research into and acquisition of the knowledge of Francophone cultures. It was also my way of establishing and encouraging the study of French at Cottey College in addition to creating more global awareness and appreciation of French and Francophone cultures within our communities. After the publication of the first issue, I became the scholarship nominator and college representative for Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) scholarships, Barry Goldwater Foundation scholarships and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarships. To equip students for scholarship applications, I have organized several workshops for scholarship resume, recommendation request and scholarship application. These have allowed me to realize the importance of students getting involved and building their resumes. As a result of that, this year, we have an editorial team made up of students whose passion range from writing to journalism to blogging, among others. We are also expanding the entries to include the history of Cottey College’s partnership with Maison d’Éducation de la Légion d’Honneur de Saint-Denis, France, from where Cottey College hosts two exchange students every year. This is contributed by Dr. Jann Weitzel, the president of Cottey College. One of our current exchange students from France has also shared her experience studying abroad at Cottey College.

Since coming to Cottey College in fall semester of 2016, I have been working hard to strengthen the French program and some of what I have done is the establishment of the French Club, *Le Cercle français de Cottey College* (LCF) that provides an avenue for students to explore French and Francophone cultures. The club has become one of the most active clubs on campus and organizes lots of activities. We have established several annual events such as our *Bake-sales*, when students learn to bake several French pastries that we sell to our community members to fund our events; *Mardi Gras*, which we celebrate with lots of interactive French activities, displays and food (crepes with diverse fillings, etc.); *National French Language Week* that we observe from November 1-7 with French and Francophone presentations and other activities such as a French Game night and French inspired menu at our famous Raney Diner. In addition, we go on field trips to different locations to learn more about French and Francophone cultures, arts, and food. We went on a field trip to Nelson Atkins museum of arts in Kansas City, visited the site of the old French cemetery and ate at a French restaurant. This year, we will attend the dress rehearsal of *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (Pear Fishers), a French opera touring the United States. Attending the dress rehearsal will allow students to see what goes into these performers preparations and performance and they will be able to ask them questions.

I have also established a minor in French and my first minor in French student, Ms. Peace Karorero, will graduate this May. Ms. Peace Karorero will share her motivation, her last year’s study abroad experience in France and her future plans.

Finally, the culture essays in this issue are highly varied as I applied one of my teaching philosophies to my classes, which is to provide a space where students can see themselves in the classroom. In other words, I allowed students to research into whatever aspect of culture they were passionate about in their chosen Francophone country(ies) and compare their findings to their own cultures in a cross-cultural analysis. I strongly believe that when students have the academic freedom to pursue their passions and research interests in a “required” class that they get more motivated, involved and they participate more
actively. Most of my students are taking French because they want to fulfil their language requirement not because they are passionate about it and part of my methodology is to find ways to get them excited and motivated to not only come to class, but to want to be in class. I do this by letting them personalize their learning through letting them bring their passions into the class so they can learn to talk about them in French or learn about them in other cultures. This way, they also get a more global and diverse view of these interests. The entries in this issue thus include research on arts, music and literature; festivals and cultural practices; food and nutrition; social issues, sports, history, culture and economy; nature and wildlife, and weddings and funerals.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE LCF GRADUATING MEMBERS

PEACE KARORERO, French Tutor and former Vice-President of LCF– B.Sc. Health Science; Minor, French

ANITA KAMWENDO, French Tutor - B.Sc. International Relations

MATHILDE GELOT, President, LCF - AA

MARIE-AMÉLIE JARON, Member, LCF – AA
In 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte’s troops triumphed over the combined armies of Russia and Austria in the Battle of Austerlitz; one result of that battle was the loss of life for nine thousand French soldiers. Napoleon declared that “the orphans of his soldiers would be his children” and in fewer than two weeks, he signed a decree establishing the Maisons d’Education de la Legion d’Honneur, resulting in the creation of three girls’ schools. (Marlowe)

One of those schools, the Maison d’Education de la Legion d’Honneur de Saint-Denis, a boarding school for girls and young women aged fourteen to twenty one, is located in the northern section of Paris and currently houses five hundred girls and young women. Maison d’Education de la Legion d’Honneur de Saint-Denis, also known as MELH de Saint-Denis, is viewed by many as the most prestigious girls’ school in France. (“The Maisons D’Education”). The students who attend Saint-Denis are those whose parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents have received the prestigious French decorations la Légion d’Honneur, l’Ordre du Mérite, or la Médaille militaire. If a girl’s parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent has earned a foreign Legion of Honor recognition, that student may be granted admission by the Grand Master of the Legion d’Honneur. (Lamore and Lamore 2; Juhoor)

Cottey’s relationship with Saint-Denis began in 1976 when President Evelyn Milan (1974-1986) mentioned to Drs. Don and Marie Lamore, members of the music faculty, that Cottey would love to welcome French students to our campus. Dr. Marie Lamore’s sister, Simonne Leporttois, was a recipient of the Legion d’Honneur decoration and she was able to make an introduction for the Lamores to the officials at the La Legion d’Honneur, who desired to create a pathway for French girls to complete a year of education in the United States. The rest, as they say, is history. (Lamore and Lamore 2)

Dr. Milam’s involvement with the relationship between Cottey and the French school does not end there, for she began communication with the president of the American Society of the French Legion of Honor, an association of members who are Americans or U.S. citizens and who have earned the recognition, to request scholarships for the French students to attend Cottey. Since 1985-86 (earlier records unavailable), Cottey has welcomed seventy-five students from Saint-Denis with scholarships from the American Association of the French Foreign Legion (Office of Financial Aid) as well as financial assistance from other sources, including the P.E.O. International Peace Scholarship and the Dow Scholarship (Kerbs).
The relationship between Cottey and Saint-Denis has continued over the years, first with the Lamores serving as “messengers of goodwill” (Kerbs) and then by visits of three Cottey presidents, Dr. Washburn, Dr. Rogers, and Dr. Weitzel, to the French school during international trips to Paris.

The boarding school’s atmosphere, rigorous academic requirements, and small/medium class size create a perfect transition to life at Cottey College. This year (2018-19), Cottey has three students from Saint-Denis: Mathilde Gelot, Marie-Amelie Jaron, and Yasmine Juhoor. Juhoor, a junior at Cottey, will be the first student from Saint-Denis to graduate with a baccalaureate degree from Cottey College. She explained that one big difference between Saint-Denis and Cottey is the amount of freedom enjoyed by the students. While at Saint-Denis, students are able to leave campus only on Wednesday afternoon or on the weekend.

Ms. Juhoor complemented the individualized attention students receive at Cottey from faculty and staff. She stated that it is “interesting to see how international students can easily become involved and develop strong connections with students from around the world.”

Cottey is so grateful to the American Society of the French Legion of Honor for its financial support, making it possible for students from Saint-Denis to attend Cottey College. We look forward to many more students sharing their culture while living and learning as Cottey students.

Words Cited
My love of the French language emerged during my childhood when my father decided to give my brothers and I French lessons. Although we only had about two lessons due to our busy schedules and we barely learned how to count from one to ten in French, I was determined to master this language ever since. While in high school I remember how, year after year, I would make requests to the Guidance department to have French classes. I was told that the only way to add French classes would be if enough students also showed interest in French. I ventured out with several sign-up sheets and although there were multiple times when I would get people signed up, it never worked out either with the students’ schedules or the availability of teachers. However, I never gave up on my mission to learn French even after high school ended, and I was on my way to college. This time I had the goal of learning the language as a personal and professional benefit since I am an aspiring physician who was born in Burundi, a country where French is an official language.

After taking the class Francophone Women in Translation at Cottey with Dr. Mba and learning about all of the countries and territories where French is spoken, I decided that this language would not only aid me as a physician in Burundi but other places where French is spoken with the goal to extend my medical expertise toward a more equitable healthcare system. I was delighted when I heard that Cottey had approved a minor in French because that meant I could go abroad and learn a language that would be useful for me while also getting recognized for it in the form of a minor.
My Study Abroad Experience in Pau:

I had the privilege of studying abroad in Pau, France during the 2018 spring semester and I had a memorable experience. Upon my arrival to Pau, I was greeted by other students in my program, the program advisors and my host family. I decided to live with a host family as opposed to living in one of the university’s dormitories because I wanted to use what I learn in class during my interactions with them. My host family was a married, elderly couple who lived in a huge, maison-sized home. My host mother was actually Dutch and since she knew English along with a few other languages, I found it useful to ask her for French to English translations. Through my host family, I was able to find a church I liked where I ended up meeting wonderful, friendly locals. During my first week in Pau, I had several University Study Abroad Consortium (USAC) orientations, which included a tour of Pau University and an assessment test to determine our French class placement. I was placed in one of the beginning level classes, which was suitable for me since I had only taken one beginning level French class at Cottey.

In addition to several French classes daily, I was able to take a weekly phonetics class which helped my pronunciation skills. Towards the end of the semester, each student had to present and answer questions on any topic of their choice. I chose to present on the history of African print but the topics ranged from dance styles, politics, to traditional garments, and mountains. Similar to Cottey students, the students in my class were from all over the world from countries like South Korea, Morocco, Greece, Brazil, and Denmark just to name a few. What I really enjoyed about my classes was how each student was challenged to understand French in different accents, this really helped my comprehension skills! I also took two electives that were taught in English: Women, Gender & Society and Travel Journalism. The first class allowed me to learn about women and gender in the U.S. as well as French culture while the second course allowed me to document my travel experiences.

There were various extracurricular activities available to students through the college like hiking, dance classes, and weight lifting, which were the three activities I decided to partake in. I had a blast hiking the Pyrenees mountains and I fell in love with the beautiful views. The dance class I took was called: “Danse Africaine”, which was a great experience because of the different variations of African dance both by the instructor and the students, many of whom were from different countries in Africa. The culture in Pau is very unique because Pau is the capital of one of France’s traditional provinces known as Béarn and there were many people who still spoke the old language Béarnese. During carnival season I was able to witness the many interesting traditions that attract huge crowds of people. Being in Pau also allowed me to easily travel to other countries such as Spain and England, as well as other parts of southern France.

My essential advice for people studying abroad in Pau or in general would be to buy in bulk when it comes to fresh produce and to buy enough for one week or two weeks maximum at a time. After about a week or two, students will have a general idea of how much they will spend per week so that they can create a weekly budget for food and other expenses. In addition, I would recommend learning more about the culture in the area and to always tell a trusted person where you are at all times to remain safe. Last but not least, study the bus routes to avoid confusion when traveling. With that being said, while in Pau, I learned a lot about the French culture and language while at the same time analyzing the cultures I come from. I grew in many ways and met a lot of remarkable people!
My Exchange Student Experience, A Memoir

- Yasmine Juhoor

I attended school until middle school in Reunion Island then I moved to France where I attended high school and I finally moved to America for college. I think that making the decision to leave my home and travel abroad at such a young age changed me very much. I chose to enter the unknown and leave everything I love behind. I left behind my parents, my two brothers, my grandma, my friends, my cat, and my two dogs. I did this because I knew it was most important to take my life in my own hands and do the thing that would afford me the most choices later in life. Even so, it was terrifying, and I often wondered if I made the right choices.

Early Years on My Island:

I was born in Reunion Island. If you do not know where that is, you are not alone, so I will not blame you. Reunion Island is in the Indian Ocean in the southern hemisphere, near Mauritius and Madagascar. Americans call my island a French Southern and Antarctic Land, the French call us the France overseas, and island natives refer to ourselves as Réunionnais(e). I really enjoyed my life on the island, where every day was like a holiday. It was always the same tune: "Don’t worry, be happy!" I attended preschool, primary school, and middle school in Saint Denis, the capital of Reunion Island. In preschool and primary school, I was in a clique. In this group, each girl had her own role. There was the leader, the freak, the artist, the athlete, the “mum” and in this group, I was the little princess. I had more friends than anyone and I loved everything about my life.

When the time came for me to go to middle school, I was very happy because I had arrived to "take my place among the greats," as my parents enjoyed saying. After the first day, this feeling changed. I soon understood that I did not know anybody and was completely alone. I did everything by myself. I sat in class by myself, I ate lunch by myself, and I walked home by myself. The closest thing I had to a friend was my distant grandmother’s neighbor whom I had never even met. I felt lonely and isolated, like a drop of water in an ocean, or a small grain of sand in an immense desert. I made some friends, but I spent each day of my four years in middle school feeling this way. I knew that I had to do something to make sure that high school was not the same for me, but I had no idea how to change things.

Luckily for me, I have a good family that is always there to help me. When I was fourteen, I visited my family in France during my winter break. I spoke with my cousin, Clarisse, about my loneliness in school, and together we formulated a plan for me to attend high school in France with her. Our great-grandmother overheard us talking and came up with an even better plan. She told me that there was a girl’s school ten minutes outside Paris that I could attend instead. It is a very special school, and not everyone will be accepted. Besides having good grades, the student must have a family member who has received the Legion of Honor and two other military medals. Like a miracle, my great-grandfather possessed the three decorations! In a matter of months, I applied, was accepted, and was on my way to France.

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1 This is a modified version of an assignment written for Dr. Mary Laughlin's First Year Writing Seminar class.
My Stay in Continental France

I spent three wonderful years in France, and I loved every minute of it. But during my senior year, everyone else was making plans for after graduation, and I did not know whether I was returning to my island or attending college in France. Then one day, my English teacher spoke to my class about attending Cottey College. For me it was just a possibility: nothing more and nothing less. After two months, around November, I really thought about it as an opportunity to develop my core curriculum and as a great personal experience also. I told my teacher that I was interested in the American all-girls school, and she gave me a list of things to do.

“First you need to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL),” she told me. “Then you wait a few months and if you get a high enough score, you will be accepted by your college.”

I took the test in February and received the result in April. I had sixty-three points, which is a little bit low. I was terrified that I would not be able to go to school in America, so I did not relax at all until I heard Cottey’s decision. A month later, in May, I received an e-mail from the school congratulating me on my admission! On this day, I went shopping with my grandmother and I danced on the main street of the town because I was so happy. In June I paid one hundred sixty dollars, made an appointment with a representative at the United States Embassy, and three days later, I had my passport with the United States student visa inside!

Exchange Student in the United States

Now I am attending Cottey College and writing this memoir. My experience at Cottey College as an exchange student has been through peaks and troughs. As an international student who speaks English as a second language, it is hard to express feelings, thoughts, opinions, etc. that I would have during a conversation, especially when I notice that I hurt someone with what I am saying. However, being at Cottey is so far the most beautiful and amazing gift I have given to myself! I have improved my leadership skills with all the opportunities that we have on and off campus. I have learned valuable lessons from being an international student and living in the US. I have developed a sense of self-awareness that I did not have before. Particularly, this year has been much more enriching since I have been to multiple conferences and events, faced many challenges, and have been recognized in some of them. I would say that being a part of PTK has been a cultivating experience mostly because of the Honors In Action project.

I would give one advice to future international students coming to Cottey: Please, do everything possible to be a part of PTK, because this will show that you provided an exemplary academic achievement and because membership is unlimited, even after you graduate, you can join the alumni association. In addition, your employer will value your academic success much more as someone who has been a member of an honor society. Furthermore, you will be able to connect with new people through PTK events and even outside PTK: I met Carol Comer, the PTK International Vice President for Division 3, at a leadership challenge.

When I compare the education system between France and the United States, there are pros and cons in both. First in the US, the campus is a city inside a city, while in France it is just a collection of buildings. From my experience in the US, the participation in class is very well accepted and even encouraged while in France, especially in universities, it is very hard to speak and as a culture, we concentrate on what we think is important in relation with the lessons studied and the texts read. In America, someone can raise their hand and talk about their personal life because it could be relevant to the class. Extracurricular life is very valuable in the USA. Being a part of a club improves leadership skills, provides networking opportunities, improves communication, etc. Above all, being in an honor society is proof that a student has achieved academic success and because the membership is restricted, it makes the student more attractive to a future employer. In France, membership in an organization is useful but not necessary to show academic and leadership
achievements. Something that shocked me at the beginning in the United States is that students could come to class in their PJ, this would not be possible in France, we need to be perfectly dressed to be seen outside.

Another thing is the choice of classes, like in the US and in France there is a core requirement and optional classes depending on the field of study, which are also transferable. Both separate the year in semesters. However, in France, the well-known system is called LMD which stands for License, Master and Doctorate. The License is basically the undergraduate level but only lasts for 3 years, then Master for 2 years, in graduate school for the US, and finally Doctorate for 3 years in France while in the US it totally depends on the field of study. The LMD system takes place in the same university so the French do not have to transfer somewhere else to continue their education. A problem that the system can have is that from the first year, the French students need to know their specialty in order to take classes and follow their core curriculum. In contrast, in the US, students can have their first and second years as trial and then specialize in a specific field for their last two years. Even after their major is decided, they can have a totally unrelated minor, for example, someone can have a Biology major and a French minor. And finally, in the US, the tuition costs several thousand dollars and you can’t go through it without having loans and/or scholarships. On the other hand, in France, because having an education is very important, the admission costs few hundred euros. This is due to the fact that the university is a public institution, so it has the lowest possible enrollment fee among the potentially accessible higher institutions in France. For more information on this I suggest to read Claire Lundberg’s article on the French education “Where Student Loan Debt Is an Alien Concept.”

**An International Will**

As I am about to begin another part of my life, adulthood, I look back and think. I am very pleased with the decisions I have made during this second step of my life. For French people studying or working in the United States is a goal in their life. It is a kind of the American dream, which crosses the Atlantic Ocean to enter into the mind of Europeans. Right now, I am doing both. If I had not worked hard and made difficult choices, I would not be where I am today. However, I will be clear: my goal is not to work or study in the United States, like others, but to have an open mind and to travel all around the world. I want to meet autochthonous people and learn as much about them as possible: their culture, their religion(s), and their history.

The thing I have learned in reaching this point of my life is to regret absolutely nothing, least of all my errors, especially during the adolescent and teenage years. They have allowed me to move forward and to become a better person today.
For this essay I chose to compare the fine arts of Lebanon and Sierra Leone. I knew that I wanted to compare two francophone countries from separate continents, so that the differences between the arts would possibly be more significant and unique to the country as well as the continent, but something struck me about the art of Sierra Leone and even though it is not a Francophone country, my professor allowed me to still study it. I explored the architecture, contemporary art, painting, and literature of Lebanon while looking at the sculptural, and musical art from Sierra Leone. Lebanon and Sierra Leone have similarities and differences in their fine arts and the art of both of these countries is hard to compare to the art from my own culture.

**Lebanon:**

Lebanon is a small country located on the Western coast of Asia and is bordered by Syria to the North and East and by Israel to the South. Following the end of WWI, Lebanon fell under French mandate, and this mandate wasn’t terminated until after WWII following a long battle for independence. Lebanon has a thriving art scene especially in Beirut, the capital. Having been under rule of several different powers, the architecture of Lebanon reflects various cultures as well as several time periods. While being home to many historic architectural structures, Lebanon has developed residential housing similar to many other parts of the world. Still focusing on Beirut, contemporary art has made a place for itself with several museums being dedicated specifically to this style of art.

Contemporary art in Lebanon is unique, as is most contemporary art around the world, and has a wide array of art methods. Moustafa Farroukh is a famous painter who was born in Lebanon. Farroukh traveled the world visiting places like Rome and Paris, and during his lifetime he created as many as 2000 paintings. His art is reminiscent of the impressionist period, and he uses several mediums including oil paint, gouache, and watercolor. Another internationally recognized person to come out of Lebanon is author Khalil Gibran. In 1923 Gibran wrote a novel titled *The Prophet* which has since been translated into some 40 languages.

**Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa and shares a border with Guinea and Liberia. The French language is considered prestigious and anyone who knows it might have an advantage in society. Sierra Leone is home to the Mende people who are recognized for their artistic constructions. Their most common form of art is the masks they create, which are usually made of wood. The masks are somewhat of a feminist creation, as they focus on the life of women and their physical beauty. Sierra Leone embraces all kinds of art but the more traditional art seems to be recognized and presented more. The music scene within Sierra Leone is bustling along with the art. Different styles of music include: Maringa, traditional music from the many ethnic groups, like Gumbe and Afropop. Gumbe and Afropop are more modern styles of music while Maringa and the traditional music stay rooted in the past of Sierra Leone.

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2 Note that Sierra Leone is not a Francophone Country. This student showed a lot of interest in the country, so I allowed her to compare a Francophone Country and an Anglophone one, which generated a very interesting discussion in class as we were able to look at and compare French and English systems of colonization – assimilation vs association.
Compared, Lebanon and Sierra Leone both have thriving art scenes although with different levels of variation. Lebanon with its popular capital has a wide range of art styles while it seems Sierra Leone sticks mostly to the realm of art and music. This does not discredit any literature or architecture here, it just isn’t as wide spread. Both countries incorporate the use of other cultures into some form of art, for Lebanon it is the architecture and for Sierra Leone it is music. Art in Sierra Leone is commonly connected to the various ethnic groups, while the art in Lebanon is more general and has a connection to all people.

**Art from Different Ethnic Groups in Sierra Leone**

When looking at how the arts of Lebanon compare to my culture, I found some similarities. The rise of contemporary art in Beirut is similar to the movement of contemporary art in most major cities. Photography is a skill almost anyone has access to now and more people are beginning to explore digital art. Compared to the U.S., Lebanon and Beirut in particular, have a much more diverse architecture scene. The U.S. mostly consists of Roman and Greek architecture while Lebanon encompasses multiple time periods and cultures within their architecture. However, there are similarities with the residential areas in the city. The paintings from Moustafa Farroukh don’t necessarily connect to my culture but more of Western European Art. That being said, art is very impressionistic and many art museums across the U.S. hold impression work from a wide variety of artists.

In the U.S. there’s really nothing that compares to the more traditional music of Sierra Leone. The only connection that could be made is through the dance/pop music of the U.S and the modernized Gumbe music. Once again nothing in my culture can really be compared to the art from Sierra Leone. However, from North America in general the wood figure of the Mende people resembles a totem pole used among Native American communities. Looking towards more modern art a comparison can be made between the Coup d’état which embraced patriotic themes, and the recent political status of the U.S. has sparked more politically motivated art.

**Sources**


“Compared, Lebanon and Sierra Leone both have thriving art scenes although with different levels of variation. Lebanon with its popular capital has a wide range of art styles while it seems Sierra Leone sticks mostly to the realm of art and music.”

- Hanna Kellenberger
In the beginning of the semester, I had very little knowledge of France or other Francophone countries. However, as the semester progressed, I began to see that there was a slight resemblance and similarities between French and American cultures. Both cultures share the same values in certain aspects. For example, the French culture deeply values the arts, as does the American culture. When I began to search for Francophone cultures, I saw that Morocco has a deep passion for making mosaics. As I began to investigate, I saw how beautiful, mesmerizing, and complex their mosaics are; then I knew I had to choose Morocco for my cross-cultural analysis.

I have always been fascinated with the country of Morocco and found its culture to be rich. What had intrigued me the most about the country was their love and appreciation for art and architecture. Further research led me to discover that Morocco took pride in combining art and architecture through mosaics. I have always had an appreciation for the arts, so when I found out that Morocco had the same passion, I knew I had to explore the country even more.

I found it fascinating that Morocco covers not only the inside of their buildings with mosaics, but the outside as well. In Morocco, a person’s stature of wealth is shown through how colorful and complex the mosaic in his house is. Personally, I wish the United States could be like Morocco and begin to cover the outside of their buildings with cool tile designs. In the United States, we have mosaics in bathrooms and kitchens, but that would be all and they do not show a stature of wealth. American culture prefers more paintings, drawings, and other 2-D designs. In Morocco since they are predominantly Muslim, there is a part of the Islam faith that does not believe in depicting religious figures because it is unnatural. Therefore, in mosques there are no religious figures in mosaics, just mosaics of geometrical patterns. However, in churches in the United States, there are mosaics depicting religious images.

I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Morocco. Personally, after this project I would love to visit the country and truly discover other gems. Morocco is an amazing country with compassionate people and an intriguing history. I would love to visit because they offer so many cites and tourism sites. Through this project I have gained a deep appreciation for Morocco’s outlook on their combination of art and architecture.

Sources


“I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Morocco. Personally, after this project I would love to visit the country and truly discover other gems.” – Ryann James
Music in République de Côte d'Ivoire

- Melanie Dillon

IVORY COAST

The Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) is a small country of about 300,000 sq. km in West Africa. The Ivory Coast has a population of approximately 23.7 million. The primary language spoken in the Ivory Coast is French, however, there are also 78 other indigenous languages that are spoken in the country. Ivorians practice Islam, Christianity, and other indigenous belief systems.

The current president of Ivory Coast is Alassane Ouattara. Some important years in the Ivory Coast are as follows:

- 1842 - France colonizes the Ivory Coast
- 1958 - The Ivory Coast becomes a republic within French community
- 1960 - France grants independence under president Felix Houphouet-Boigny
- 2002-2007 - Civil war between Muslim rebel-held North and government controlled south

Music in Ivory Coast is a blend of traditional beats, lyrics and instruments, with other music styles such as Hip-hop and reggae. There are endless varieties of musical instruments in Ivory Coast, however, they fall into the four general categories: idiophones, membranophones, chordophones and aerophones. Some music have also incorporated non-local instruments such as harmonica, guitars and different drums. Traditional genres of music in Ivory Coast include sacred or ritual music which is often used for ritual practices and often requires initiation, and secular or popular music which is often a brand of “borrowed” music that is often danced to depending on the occasion. Four of the most famous Ivorian artists include Magic System, Alpha Blondy, Meiway, and Christina Goh. Alpha Blondy is considered the most famous of the artists.

While there is a wide variety of musical instruments that are used in Ivorian music, the Djembe and Ahoko are two of the most common. The Djembe is a drum shaped like a large goblet with goat skin stretched across the top. The djembe is often called “the talking drum”. The name “djembe” can be broken down into “dje” which means gather, and “be” which translates to everyone. The ahoko is a wooden rod with nut shells that contain loose seeds tied around the end of the rod. It is quite similar to a maraca.

Each ethnic group within the Ivory Coast has its own type of folk music traditions. Typically, most ethnic music has strong vocal polyphony. Polyphony is when music consists of two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody, as opposed to just one voice (monophony). Popular imported styles include reggae from Jamaica and hip-hop from the United States.

Popular music styles include Zouglou and Coupé-Décalé. Zouglou comes from the early 1990s when university students began rallying because of the living conditions on the university campus. This music style was strict in nature and often was accompanied by a dance to a fictional god. Interestingly, many popular Ivorian zouglou artist are now living in exile due to their political support to the former president Laurent Gbagbo. Coupé-Décalé is another popular music style. This style of music generally reflects the aspirations of a large portion of Ivorian youth. Coupé-Décalé is generally very percussive and features African samples, deep bass and repetitive, minimalist arrangements. This genre is usually about happiness and often gives insight into the political situation of the country.

Comparatively, the music of the United States has dozens of genres, many imported, and others created within the United States. Each genre of the United States music has its own sound. For example, country generally has acoustic guitars, pianos, drums
and potentially fiddles and banjos (depending on the type of country music). Rock music often has electric guitars, drum sets and other synthetic sounds to accompany the lyrics. Lyrics for genres in the United States generally tell a story, however, there is typically no trend within each genre of what the lyrics will say in the music. Sometimes a country song is about love, sometimes it’s about heartbreak, sometimes it’s about war. Some rock songs might be about one person or sometimes, in the case of Michael Jackson, they are about Halloween and zombies. Despite the differences between the two types of music, there are some similarities. The music in the Ivory Coast is generally a blend of sounds which can also be said about music in the United States. Some music in the United States has blended sounds and genres. For example, some country songs do not sound fully country but a blend between country and rock. Also, there are many artists in the United States that use polyphony, similar to ethnic music in the Ivory Coast.

Culture Reflection:

This semester I learned a lot about French culture and was able to compare it to the culture that I grew up in. I learned that the way that French families are similar to my own in structure and closeness. The one major difference I learned is that people in France tend to stay near their family homes whereas in the United States it is not uncommon for people to move far away from home. I also found that my family treats our pets the same as the French. Both my family and French families generally consider pets as members of the family and treat them as such. One thing that I found was different was the structure of the education system. The French tend to begin school anywhere between age 2 and age 3 whereas the United States doesn’t have anything except preschool for kids of age 4 and 5. I also noticed that French students get out of school around 17 years old, whereas students in the United States generally get out of secondary school around 18 years old. One thing that was very different was specialization during school. In France students generally know what they are going to do in the future at a young age and when they go to college it takes them less time to graduate because they are going straight into their major and taking classes that pertain to their major. In comparison, students in the United States are not asked to declare their major until after their sophomore year of college. This results in more time in college but allows students to change their minds. In France, once you decide on what you are going to do in the future, you are basically stuck with that decision.

From this class I learned that there are many similarities and differences between life in France and life in the United States. I am excited to learn more about the French culture and structure of the country. I think that learning about how different countries are set up helps me to better understand the structure of the United States and think of how somethings may be more beneficial than others.

From the culture project that I did research on I learned that the Ivory Coast is a very interesting and vibrant culture. The music that originates there reflects the vibrancy of the culture in the way it sounds. It was interesting learning about how music in the United States was similar and different to music in the Ivory Coast. I hope to continue to learn more about other cultures in the future and to be able to expand my cultural knowledge, one country at a time.

Sources


"From this class I learned that there are many similarities and differences between life in France and life in the United States... It was interesting learning about how music in the United States was similar and different to music in the Ivory Coast. I hope to continue to learn more about other cultures in the future and to be able to expand my cultural knowledge, one country at a time."- Melanie Dillon
Literature in Senegal and the US

- Kate Knox

Literature is one of the most important aspects of any culture. Because of it, individuals can give themselves voices that may have been taken away from them. Literature has the power to give perspective and influence opinion, and depending on whose hands that power falls in, it could be extremely positive, or detrimentally negative. This is very obvious when taking a look at the colonization of Africa and the “single story” (Adichie) told about its people that followed soon after.

The “single story” is one of the most important tools of oppression. By telling another culture’s story, colonists were effectively able to discredit and silence the voices of an entire continent. However, there were some who were able to stand up the oppression, and found their voice through telling their own story. Some of the most prevalent authors when it came to breaking the single story came from Senegal. A few of those authors were named Mariama Bâ, Ousmane Sembène, and Léopold Senghor.

Mariama Bâ was a Senegalese woman who wrote to portray inequality when it came to men and women in African culture, and her most well-known book, So Long A Letter, depicted the struggle of a woman who had to deal with the death of her husband along with his second wife. Her literature gave African women a voice that had not been allowed to be heard for generations. She won the Norma Prize for African Literature for So Long A Letter in 1980, and inspired many women to also take up their pens and write their own stories. However, she did not condemn men or African cultures, especially, polygamy. She believed that it should be a woman’s choice. In So Long A Letter, the protagonist chose to stay, but her friend chose to get a divorce and move on instead of being in a polygamous marriage.

Ousmane Sembène was an author and filmmaker from Senegal. Often called “The Father of African Film,” Sembène pioneered filmmaking in Africa, and also depicted what it was like to actually live in Senegal and showed the cultured and collaborative side of Africa that colonists fought so hard to erase. His novel God’s Bits of Wood was a fictional retelling of a real railroad strike where the community of workers and civilians banded together to fight the oppression they faced. His work showed the true lives of Senegalese people and showed that they could work together to make a change.

Léopold Senghor was a Senegalese poet, politician, and activist. He was actually the first president of Senegal from 1960-1980, and was the first African president to willingly retire from presidency. Senghor was one of the founders and major supporters of Negritude, a movement that encouraged black skin to be seen as beautiful, and for people to be proud of their blackness. He also published many poems encouraging Africans to be proud of their heritage and culture and to defy the single-story narrative forced upon them. In addition, he along with three other Francophone African presidents, founded the Francophonie organization, an equivalent of the Common Wealth of Nations.

American authors have also told the true story of their environments without fear of backlash. Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Solomon Northrup were three such authors. In the time of slavery in the US, many people, northerners and southerners alike, did not know the true harsh reality of slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe portrayed the cruel treatments of slaves in her novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and tried to not only stir up anti-slavery sentiments in the north, but inspire empathy towards slaves in the south. Mark Twain portrayed the evils of slavery through the eyes of a child in his novel Huckleberry Finn. As a respected non-northerner, his opinions were shocking and also reached to both the north and south alike. Solomon Northrup, a free-born violinist who was kidnapped and forced into slavery, wrote a memoir about his experience in Twelve Years A Slave.
Seeing both Senegalese and American authors combat the single story that colonists had written making Africans out to be lower than the rest of humanity is very inspiring and gives hope that with more courageous authors like them in the world, the correct, true stories will start to be told.

Sources


Christmas Traditions in Madagascar and Switzerland

- Kara Alford

After learning about how France celebrates specific holidays like May Day, Christmas, Day of the Dead, Labor Day, and more, I wanted to learn more about how two Francophone cultures celebrate Christmas. I have always loved Christmas and learning how other cultures celebrate this holiday. I picked Switzerland because I visited this country when I lived in Germany. I did not have the opportunity to learn more about their Christmas traditions during my time in Switzerland. I picked the country of Madagascar because it is a country that I have never been exposed to. I would love to visit Madagascar one day, but I don’t know if I will get the opportunity. This is part of the reason why I wanted to learn more about this country’s Christmas traditions. I love learning about cultures and tend to start in areas that I enjoy and learn more from that exposure in gathering this information.

Christmas in Switzerland

In Switzerland, the Christmas holiday starts with Advent and this starts four Sundays before Christmas. This culture has two types of Advent celebrations which comprise of the Advent candles and Advent calendar countdown to Christmas. Some towns and villages celebrate the Advent calendar countdown by having different families or houses host a party for the village at the end of each day. This tradition has a long history, but there was no specific date of when it started. At these parties they celebrate with a mulled wine, Gluhwien. The other Advent celebration has four main candles that are lit each Sunday and then a white candle on Christmas. Each candle has a different meaning and has different scripture and activities that can be read in honor of these candles. French culture and my family celebrate Christmas with this tradition. This tradition has always been one of my favorite Christmas celebrations because my brother and I used to take turns lighting the Christ, Christmas day and white candles. My family would also take turns reading the different scriptures, prayers, and activities that correspond to the meaning of the candle and would end each session with singing a Christmas carol that is associated with that candle’s meaning. I could not find when this tradition started and this tradition has spread to many cultures through religious beliefs.

The Switzerland Santa Claus is known as Samichlaus and he visits on the night of December 6th. There is a walk or parade in some areas were Samichlaus and the families welcome in Christmas on the eve of December 6th. This tradition is practiced in some towns or villages of Switzerland, and can be traced back 200 years. My family celebrated something similar when we lived in Germany and welcomed St. Nicholas. Switzerland also has baby Jesus that brings gifts on Christmas Eve and some areas have gifts brought on Epiphany, January 6th, from the wise men (three kings) or Befana. The families tend to decorate their Christmas trees on Christmas Eve, eat a main meal together to celebrate this holiday, attend midnight mass, and then after mass they drink hot chocolate and eat ringli (Swedish donut).
Children also celebrate this holiday by singing Christmas carols from the last week of Advent till Epiphany. Sometimes the children carry large stars that represent the star the wise men or three kings followed to find the baby Jesus. Switzerland has four common languages: German, French, Italian, and Romanash. Each language has a different greeting to wish someone Merry Christmas, and all are used. Switzerland has incorporated these different cultures into their main culture and how they celebrate Christmas.

**SAMICHLAUS (FATHER CHRISTMAS) AND HELPER, SCHMUTZLI**

**Christmas in Madagascar**

Madagascar is a large island of the southern coast of Africa. Christmas in Madagascar is during their planting season and this means how they celebrate Christmas is different from what I am used to. Yet, as I always say, different is never a bad thing, it is just something to learn from and about. Even though Christmas is during a hot time of year, the people of Madagascar use holly to decorate. The Santa Claus of Madagascar is called Dadabe Noely and wears a red suit with white fur. The biggest way the people celebrate Christmas is attending Christmas Eve mass till midnight to welcome in the holiday and sing Christmas carols. Families also attend Christmas day church together, eat sweets or biscuits after church and then go work in the fields. Children also have a poem that they state during Christmas time and tend to sing more Christmas carols. Madagascar Christmas traditions are a combination of American, French, and Madagascar cultural beliefs and values. As I was learning more about this culture’s Christmas traditions, I could not pinpoint exactly which aspect came from which cultural belief. Madagascar families also celebrate by eating fresh lychees and having home-made crèche or what we call Nativity scenes. The people of Madagascar have incorporated these many different cultural practices into their own special cultural Christmas traditions.

**“DADABE NOELY” FATHER CHRISTMAS IN MALAGASY**

The me Madagascar Christmas traditions of how they mixed cultural aspects reminded of my family mixing different cultural traditions to celebrate Christmas. My family has taken Epiphany Day as the end of our Christmas from the Spanish culture and St. Nicholas who visits the children on December 6th from Germany. We start Christmas by decorating our house the Saturday after Thanksgiving because we need to find our Advent candle items. Just like the Swiss people and Malagasy people my family attend Christmas Eve service. Our church does not hold a midnight mass but we end the Christmas Eve service with singing the Christmas Carol, Silent Night. I have always felt that Christmas cannot start without singing Silent Night before we go to bed. I have even been able to sing along with a German version of this song to remind me of the different families who are separated during this holiday season. I have also learned from exploring these culture’s Christmas traditions that families are very important on this day. Everything I read about stated that the families did all their celebrations together just like my family. I love learning about how cultures can have different beliefs, traditions, and practices but the same theme of family can and does connect us through our celebrations of Christmas.

**Sources**

I have some prior knowledge of French and Francophone cultures before beginning this course. I took two years of French during my freshman and sophomore year of high school. My teacher at the time liked to include culture while teaching my class the language. We had days where we would make food. We learned about francophone countries by eating food from different countries and watching films. We also spoke about it quite a bit in class as well. At the end of my second year I wrote a paper and did a project about my French-Canadian history. I enjoyed it because I was able to learn about where my family came from and how they ended up in Canada and eventually the U.S.A. In high school one of the aspects of French culture that I remember the most is the school system.

In this class I have been able to expand my knowledge about French culture surrounding family dynamics and work routines. I also found it interesting to learn about people celebrating their birthdays as well as their “Saint’s day”. Friendships in France and the United States are thought of differently. The French might see Americans as being very social, and since we are social, we have many friends. There are several other differences between French culture and American culture, but these are the major differences I took note of.

The country I focused on for my culture presentation was Côte d’Ivoire, also known as Ivory Coast. I remember learning about Côte d’Ivoire in high school, and the country interested me then, and it still does. That is why when I was brainstorming ideas for my culture project Côte d’Ivoire. Once I made that decision, the next step was to decide what aspect of the culture I wanted to make my presentation about. Back home I have always enjoyed going to festivals, I think of it as a time to enjoy time with my friends, family and my community. That is when I decided to focus on festivals in Côte d’Ivoire, specifically Fêtes des Masques.

Mask Festival in Ivory Coast
- Phoebe Arthur

I have some prior knowledge of French and Francophone cultures before beginning this course. I
Fêtes des Masques, which translates to Festival of Masks, occurs every year in November. At this festival, members of the community dress up in colorful costumes and they wear handmade masks. There are also dance competitions that are done between villages. The events that take place during the festival are meant to pay respects to the forest spirits. The idea of dressing up made me think of a holiday in America, Halloween. Halloween originated from the Celtic festival of Samhain (means ‘Summer’s End’ in Gaelic). At the festival, bonfires were lit, and people would wear costumes to ward of ghosts. It was also seen as a time to come together as a community to gather resources for winter months and bring animals back from pasture. In the late 1800’s, the mindset regarding Halloween in the United States changed to thinking of it as a community event with neighborhood get togethers. Families and friends can get together to have fun, go trick-or-treating and get dressed up. A connection I made between the two is that they are both community events. Each festival invites celebration and involvement from the community.

Sources


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Nutrition in Vanuatu
- Traci Borders

Vanuatu is a beautiful Pacific island country located in the South Pacific Ocean and is of volcanic origin. It has a tropical climate with an agriculture dominated economy. Vanuatu has a wide variety of traditional staple foods such as root crops like yam and taro, and other crops such as banana, coconut, sugarcane, tropical nuts, greens. They also eat lots of pigs, fowl, and seafood. After contact with the West in 1606, other tropical crops were introduced, such as, manioc, sweet potato, papaya, and several other crops as well as beef (“Vanuatu-Agriculture”). With all these natural organic resources, you wouldn’t think that there would be much of a nutrition problem in Vanuatu. However, Vanuatu has malnutrition and over nutrition issues that are very similar to the United States.
Only one third of the land is cultivated and most of the population depends on the export of the locally grown agricultural products for their livelihood. The domestic markets are therefore left with very limited locally grown goods. Due to most of Vanuatu’s agriculture being exported for money, cheaper and processed foods are being imported into the country from Western countries. Climate change is also affecting the food production and growing population is also driving prices of food up. This is making it harder for the people to buy local and when they do buy locally grown food, it is very expensive. This makes the cheaper, imported and processed food more appealing, especially since it is not only cheaper but faster and easier to fix. Such food includes rice, noodles and canned meat, which have little to no nutrition value (“Factors Affecting Food”). Due to the lack of nutrients in these imported foods, people are becoming malnourished and burdened with many other diseases.

One of the diseases of main concern is obesity which can lead to diabetes and other serious heart conditions. According to “Vanuatu National Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition Security,” Vanuatu is dealing with under nutrition from not eating enough safe and nutritious foods and over nutrition from over eating unhealthy foods (“Vanuatu National Plan”). The influence of the western foods imported to Vanuatu is believed by many natives, to be to blame for this rise in malnutrition (Roy). This sounds very similar to the issues of the United States.

The United States also eats a lot of fast and processed food even though there is plenty of natural organic food in the U.S. Like Vanuatu, locally grown food is more expensive and takes longer to prepare. This makes choosing processed less nutritional food more appealing to the average American consumer. However fast and cheap food is becoming detrimental to the health and financial state of the nation.

The U.S. and Vanuatu alike are experiencing the chronic effects of eating unhealthy, fast and processed foods. People should be able to buy healthy groceries for their families without worrying if they are going to have enough money to pay the rest of the bills and feel that they have the time to make healthy meals for themselves and their family instead of feeling rushed all the time. Until the prices of locally, organic food can become affordable to everyone and people start making healthier choices of their food intake for their life’s sake, obesity is a problem that will continue to rise and sadly kill many people needlessly.

Sources
Food in Benin and Burkina Faso

- Ashlyn Robertson

The countries I picked to do my culture research and presentation on are Benin and Burkina Faso. I did this by going to Google and looking up francophone countries. The reason I chose these two countries specifically are because they are neighboring countries, so I knew they would have a lot of similarities. I thought that would make it easier to point out the differences. I have never been to either of these countries, but I would like to go. I chose to study the similarities and differences in the food eaten in these countries. Food, even though the same, can be prepared and eaten in different ways in different cultures.

Benin

Benin is in West Africa between Nigeria and Togo. Their flag has red, yellow, and green split into three sections. The green long ways on the right, while the red and yellow are put into two halves between the rest of the flag. The French colonized this country and had it originally name French Dahomey. They then gained their independence August 1 of 1960 and got their name changed to Benin (Mahmood). They have some colorful looking food with great diversity in it such as Yovo Doko, Tapioca, and Fufu (Abdoulaye). Fufu is something that Benin and Burkina Faso share in food.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a northerly neighboring country to Benin in West Africa. The flag has red and green split in half and a star in the middle. This country was originally named Upper Volta when it was colonized by the French. They gained their independence in 1960, renamed the country Burkina Faso, and changed the flag in 1984 (Mills). Once again, the foods are brightly colored and even shares the dish of fufu, which is dough made from boiled and ground plantain or cassava, used as a staple food in parts of western and central Africa. It has this soup like dish on the side (Our Africa). The fufu differs from a similar dish, Tô in that Tô dough is made from crushed millet or corn while Fufu dough is made of ground or pounded yam, cassava or plantain. All of the foods are very different from American food.

Tô

The fact that the United States has a large amount of outside cultures that influence the whole of the country makes it difficult to decide what the main food dishes are that should represent the country well enough. There are plenty of knock-off dishes that are turned into greasy and unhealthy foods. An example of this would be Chinese food. It is an outside culture that has some great dishes, but then you look at our fast food Chinese food places, you will hardly find any really healthy food. Another example is Taco Bell. If anyone were to explain Taco Bell as a Mexican fast food restaurant to me, then I would think they were crazy. There are not any real Hispanic dishes in Taco Bell. They are all dulled down versions of something close to the original. No American food is anywhere near as healthy and they all tend to go into the greyish, tan region of color for everything.

What might be thought of as true American dishes would be hamburgers, fries, and apple pie. I would say biscuits and gravy and barbeques are great

“Cultural awareness is about being open to embracing the diversity of life. It is about a willingness to learn and to seek new experiences and ultimately new friends and new things.” - Evelyn Munufieh
examples of a normal family gathering kind of food. All of this is different from the colorful, healthy foods that come from both of the other countries because their food come from organic whole food sources, while ours come from processed sources. Both of the other countries have great looking food that I would love to go and try one day. These are important cultural aspect since food is something people eat every day and can be passed down family lines for generations. They show your roots because every food culture has their own type or twist on how or what they cook. I would really like to try a lot of these dishes in the future, instead of the usual American mix up of things.

Sources


“In this class I have been able to expand my knowledge about French culture surrounding family dynamics and work routines. I also found it interesting to learn about people celebrating their birthdays as well as their “Saint’s day”. - Phoebe Arthur
Lumos is working towards putting an end toward the institutionalization of children worldwide by 2050. In many countries like America, orphanages have been replaced with foster care and small group homes. That is his wish for Haiti, but changing long-held cultural practices and traditions isn’t easy.

Save the Children is an organization that works with local communities and organizations to focus on the challenging transition between childhood and adulthood. They have skilled professionals that teach them money, job, and relationship skills. They also provide health education and care to children in need through health programs at school. With the help of generous donors, Save the Children can proudly report they have protected 72,237 children from harm, supported 51,239 children in times of crisis, provided 427,835 children a healthy start to life and gave 364,225 children vital nourishment. Save the Children clearly is an example to my favorite quote of all time by Mahatma Gandhi, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Sources


“History of Soccer in Niger”
- Abigail Reyes

**Niger National Football Team, 2017**

Soccer in Niger is called *Fédération Nigerienne de football*. The Nigerien Football Federation was founded in 1961. Many of the players are not just from Niger. Many of them start playing at a very young age. Soccer is the main sport played in Niger. The soccer team was popular when they played their first international match against Sierra Leone in Freetown on October 8, 1949 and won 2-0. They had another awesome moment in 1982 when they played and eliminated both Togo and Somalia from the FIFA World Cup.

**Niger Women's Soccer Team**

Niger has a women's soccer team as well. They made their official début from February 14, 2018 to February 24, 2018 during the West African Football Union Cup. Their team is primarily formed from players that are from Niger but they plan to add a couple other players from France and Ghana. In Niger, women are highly encouraged to play soccer. They want to prove how much potential women have and can accomplish. The women's soccer team has had many championships over the time they have been playing and often play for causes geared towards stopping violence against women.

“I chose Niger because they have a huge amount of things that are comparable to my culture and me. They love soccer and I do to. That’s why it caught my attention so much as well as many other factors. For example, the food they make uses many spices, just like in Mexico. The families in Niger tend to be very big and Mexican families are the same. The little kids are taught to play soccer at a very young age in both countries.”
- Abigail Reyes
**History of Niger**

Niger is a country in West Africa. It’s next to Nigeria and Chad. Niger is named after a river named Niger River. The Niger River is the main river in West Africa. The Niger River is 2,597 mi long. The culture in Niger is very diverse. Their culture collaborated with the French culture since the start of the 20th century. Some of their famous cities are Agadez, Arlit and Dosso. The population is around 20,672,987 people.

**Why I chose Niger?**

I chose Niger because they have a huge amount of things that are comparable to my culture and me. They love soccer and I do to. That’s why it caught my attention so much as well as many other factors. For example, the food they make uses many spices, just like in Mexico. The families in Niger tend to be very big and Mexican families are the same. The little kids are taught to play soccer at a very young age in both countries. They are trained very well and they are also taught how to view the culture and who to even root for. I also thought it was super cool that they had a girls’ soccer team. Because in other places a women’s soccer team isn’t always something that is promoted. And this makes me happy because I love the fact that they encourage women to play and also be proud of them.

**Quick info about Niger**

Niger is a country in Western Africa, named after the Niger River. With a climate that is mostly hot, dry, dusty. They practice Islam, Animism and Christianity as some of the religions. Their national colors are orange, white, green which are also on the flag and those colors are used for their soccer team. Niger speaks French and its capital city is Niamey. Their population according to 2017 is of 21.48 million. The country Niger ranks 57 in the list of countries.

**Sources:**


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**Luxembourg**

- Katie Fernandez

I always thought of French people as snobby people who ate cheese and drank wine as they enjoyed looking at a modern painting on the bank of the Seine. After taking a beginner’s French course, however, my awareness of French culture has drastically grown. I now know that the French seem unapproachable to strangers because they have lifelong friends, unlike Americans. The French typically grow up around the same people in the same community. Consequently, when they meet a stranger, they don’t interact with them to be friends because “temporary friends” isn’t a concept familiar to the French. Americans form friendships frequently and break them just as frequently. Americans perceive the French treatment of strangers as rude because we treat strangers like they are our close friends. The French have close bonds with their
friends that take several years to develop, so it would be unusual for them to jump in and give their friendship to a stranger that they have had little interaction with. I found learning about French culture to be enriching, and was excited for the opportunity to broaden my knowledge by researching a Francophone country.

The Francophone culture that I chose to study is defined by the strength of its people as well as a mixture of French and German culture. Their strength comes from a long history of being pushed around. Luxembourg was established some time before 1443 A.D. by the building of a fortress on the Alzette River. The name is fitting, as it derives from the German word *Lucilinburhuc*, which means “little fortress.” At the time, its territory extended to today’s Czech Republic. In 1443 A.D., the “Little Fortress” was conquered by Burgundy, which was once a department of France, bringing Luxembourg closer to French culture. France, Spain, and Austria fought over Luxembourg for four centuries, trying to gain possession of the Fortress of Luxembourg on the Alzette River. The fortress lay at the center of three powerful countries (France, Belgium, and Germany) on a river perfect for the transportation between them.

**Luxembourg**

In 1815, the Congress of Vienna ceased Napoleonic Wars and appointed Luxembourg a shared grand duchy. Grand Duke, William I, ruled unionized Luxembourg and the Netherlands. However, Luxembourg joined a successful revolt against the Netherlands in 1830. Luxembourg lost half their territory and immediately following the revolt, they were forced to join the German Confederation. Fortunately, the German Confederation dissolved in 1866 and Luxembourg was accepted as a neutral country, but not as an independent nation yet. William III still ruled the Netherlands and Luxembourg until, in 1890, he died, leaving his two daughters to assume the role of duke. However, the Congress of Vienna had specified that women were not to rule. Seeing as how the Congress of Vienna was outdated and no longer around, they allowed the two daughters to become duchesses (one taking the Netherlands and the other taking Luxembourg) and decided to make Luxembourg and the Netherlands independent from one another.

Finally, Luxembourg is an independent country at this point. Unfortunately, their days of being yanked around were not yet over. Germany invaded and overran Luxembourg in both World War I and World War II. In addition to being a part of the German Confederation, these conquests mixed German culture into Luxembourg culture. After Germany was defeated, the Little Fortress returned to its previous sovereign state. Luxembourg, not wanting to be pushed around any longer, helped found the European Union with five other countries; it also joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The history of Luxembourg wove it into a strong nation that stands proudly together. It has become a nation that values the strength in unity and aspires to remain a strong and independent state. Their motto is “mir wëlle bleiwe, war mir sin” which means “we want to remain what we are.” It is their goal to protect themselves from their powerful neighbors, and the motto serves to clearly define their united goal as such. I chose to focus on the history of Luxembourg because, I think to truly understand something, you must learn its past. Luxembourg’s story explains her scars and how they made her people stronger. She’s been pushed around; she knows what it’s like, and she will no longer stand for it.

**Luxembourg Fortress**

I have never been to Luxembourg, but I would love to visit it someday to see the remains of the Fortress of Luxembourg and experience the unique
mixture of France and German culture. Additionally, I think that there is a lot to learn from Luxembourgers. For instance, their unity strengthens them and serves as a model for other countries. American culture is so diverse that it doesn’t know what it is. We don’t have a clear goal or aspiration. We just go about our lives, complaining about the issues in the world and aimlessly attempt to solve them. Our identity used to be that we are a melting pot of different opinions that compromise to achieve something. That’s what our country was founded on: a compromise. We created a House of Representatives and Senate to please two different opinions. Now, we argue over who’s right and refuse to compromise with one another so that we accomplish nothing. Presidents erase each other’s work instead of building off it or making adjustments to fortify it. While America forgets who we once were and constantly tears itself away from one another as nations once fought over Luxembourg, Luxembourg remembers its past as a way to maintain its identity and unify their nation.

Sources

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**Monaco: Culture and Economy**

- Chido Shamuyarira

I have been able to acquire lots of information regarding France and Francophone countries through taking the Elementary French 101 class. Before I took the class all I knew was how to say hello and thank you in French. I had little interest in knowing about the French culture and I am really glad I now know some aspects. The way French people greet one another especially people they know with kisses on the cheek stood out to me. In my country Zimbabwe this is viewed as explicit but since I learned about why the French people do this, I really love this way of greeting because I think it strengthens relations between individuals. I am now familiar with what people in France do during their leisure time, how they value their family, friends and their daily routine.

This semester my respect and understanding of this culture different from my own has grown. To learn more about French culture, I decided to look into a country called Monaco. It is the second smallest country in the world yet it is very wealthy. It attained independence in 1287 from Genoa and was previously a part of France (“Cannes State”). The amazing characteristic of this country is the blending of two cultures the Italian and the French one, mainly influenced by its location. Their system of governance is based on a monarchy whereby the Grimaldi family rules (Wile). Furthermore, Wile mentions the name of their culture which is Monegasque and how they value performing arts and leisure activities which are usually pricy.

I chose Monaco because I was amazed by the scenery when I watched a Grand Prix F1 race during the summer break. As a business major I have always been interested in the economy since it is the wealthiest out of all the smaller countries.

Compared to my country, it is definitely smaller and the culture blend is different. In Zimbabwe there is blending of British and Zimbabwean cultures due to colonization and for Monaco, it is a blend of Italian and French. As a coastal country, there is more outdoor, water related leisure activities and for Zimbabwe, being landlocked, there is more non water related activities. There is a difference in the
number of people who know how to swim in Zimbabwe as compared to those in Monaco.

The part I was mostly interested in is the economy. Monaco is known as a tax haven where people do not pay income tax and that has resulted in the increase in foreign investment (“Cannes State”). There is a lot of gambling at the Monte Carlo Casino which is only allowed to tourists and not the inhabitants (Wile). The economy is mainly supported by tourism. The people there lead luxury lives, hence attaining expensive items has become part of their culture.

**MONTE CARLO CASINO**

Although this Francophone country’s culture is different from my own, I would definitely love to travel there someday and see the famous F1 track, the beach and also the Prince’s castle. I have learned to appreciate the differences that are among people this semester.

**Sources**


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**Wallis et Futuna**

- Ashton-Kate Veal

The islands of Wallis and Futuna, located in the west-central pacific oceans, have a rich and unique culture. In the following essay I will be analyzing what the home life on the islands is like, how children are treated, what the education system is like, and I will be looking at the societal norms on the island. I will also be comparing those previously stated details with those of America and France. As an American citizen born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, my take on America in the following essay will be different from if an immigrant from Venezuela living in California or a wealthy person from New York City wrote this piece. America is full of different cultures that are shaped by the geographic locations they live in and therefore my opinions in this essay, are just that, opinions. They do not represent everyone in America. And my opinions of France are again, just that, opinions. I had the opportunity to live with a French family in France for almost a month. My statements made of France do not represent all of France but are unique to my experience with my French host family and the area in which I lived.

Up until the 1500s the island of Wallis was a part of Tonga and shared its language and customs. The relationship between Wallis and Tonga was weakened in the mid-nineteenth century when the French banned overseas travel. In the 1830s the Catholic mission arrived and in 1844 France was invited to protect the citizens of Futuna and Wallis while the Catholic church still ruled the islands. In 1888 France took over political management of the islands under the insistence of Queen Amelia. Queen
Amelia was adamant that she wanted a French doctor to be the administrator. The French navy then provided a series of administrators. The end result was what is called a tripartite administration of Wallis and Futuna. The Tui Sigave, Tuiagaifo of Alo, and the Lavelua, all chiefly families, represented the traditional leadership of the islands. The series of French naval doctors were the colonial administrators. While the bishop of the Catholic Church exercised administrative powers.

Although Wallis and Futuna are perceived to be the same overseas territory of France, the two islands each view themselves as different from the other. Despite some intermarriages between the island, Wallis and Futuna see themselves as two distinct cultural entities. In fact, each island has its own official language on top of speaking French. The island of Wallis speaks Wallisian. While the island of Futuna speaks Futunan. However, Wallis is the dominant island of the two because they have a large population than Futuna.

When a young couple marries on the islands of Wallis and Futuna, they join the household of one of their families. Because of this, households are often quite large with people often related by sibling bonds with their spouses. Households are headed by the father or the eldest son. Occasionally a family will be headed by the eldest sister but this is only in unique situations. Because the families live so close together family is extremely important to the citizen of Wallis and Futuna. And they have close ties with their extended family members. One’s family is the primary source of interaction.

In France, the French also have close ties with their immediate and extended family. When I stayed with my French family, we were going to my host mom’s parent’s house and spending time with her brother’s and sister’s children almost every day. And if we were not going over to my host mom’s parent’s house then we were going to the zoo or the beach as a family. However, unlike on the islands of Wallis and Futuna there is no head of the household. Duties such as taking care of the children and handling finances are shared by both the mother and the father. Also unlike in Wallis and Futuna, married couples often live on their own instead of living with their family.

In America, people have closer ties with their immediate family. For myself personally it is difficult to spend much time with most of my family as they live in Houston, Texas and I live in Des Moines, Iowa. However, we do not see my family that lives in Des Moines that often. When my family spends time together it is usually just my parents, my brother, and I. Like in France, and unlike in Wallis and Futuna, there is no head of the household. Responsibilities are split between the wife and the husband. In America it is often the goal of a married couple to live on their own, apart from their families. If a married couple lives at home with their parents it is often seen as a sign of failure, unless the married couple moved into their parent’s house in order to take care of their parents.

Infants in Wallis and Futuna are cared for by all of the women in a family because they all live in the same complex. Because of this, it is often said that it is rare to hear a child cry because the second a child starts to cry, they are immediately attended to by someone in the family. Children often accompany the adults to the fields while they work, to social events, and to church. Children are rarely left at home. Each village has a state-run primary school but attendance at these schools are irregular. This is because children will often miss school in order to go to work with their parents or because they have duties at home to attend to.

Infants in France are cared for by both of their parents as opposed to all of the women in a family. Like in Wallis and Futuna, child are attended to quite quickly once they begin to cry. A parent or an older sibling will immediately run to the crying child to see what they need. Unlike in Wallis and Futuna, there is mandatory schooling from age six to sixteen. If someone wishes to continue their education then they must take two more years of school until they are eighteen in order to be eligible for higher education. There is also preschool and kindergarten level classes available for children below the age of six but are not mandatory.

Like in France, care for infants is a shared responsibility of the parents in America. It is not a task that the whole family takes part in. Depending on someone’s parenting methods, a child when they begin to cry may be left to cry. As it is seen as a way to toughen a child up and how to teach them to be self-reliant. Unlike in Wallis and Futuna children are left at home with a babysitter for social events and do not attend work with their parents. As for schooling, children must attend school starting at kindergarten. How long someone has to remain in school varies from state to state. Where I grew up,
Iowa, someone could drop out of school once they turned sixteen, which is usually in their sophomore year of high school. However, it is extremely common for students to continue their education through high school and then go on to university or college. There is also preschool available to those who want it.

Like in France, in America, men and women are equal. There is talk of engrained misogyny within society and proof that men get paid more than women at work who are just as qualified, especially women of color. But women are more equal to men in American than in Wallis and Futuna. Also similar to France, men and women socialize in the same groups. It is very common in America to see men and women hanging out together as just friends. Respect for everyone is important in America. And generosity is seen as an attribute to strive for. Unlike in Wallis and Futuna and in France, America has many religions represented throughout the country, which is due to the fact that there are hundreds of different cultures represented in America.

Wallis and Futuna share quite a bit with the citizens of France and America, however, they share arguably more with France, which makes sense considering Wallis and Futuna are overseas territories of France. But despite some similarities between the three areas, America, France, Wallis, and Futuna all have their own unique cultures. Wallis and Futuna each have their own separate cultures but each find respect and generosity to be important aspects of their culture. In France family and those close relationships mean everything. And, in America we pride ourselves on the fact that there are people from hundreds of different cultures who have made America their home and who have added a little bit of their culture to the larger culture that embodies America.

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**Wildlife of Madagascar**

- Ellie Smith

The Francophone country I chose was Madagascar. I chose this because I had been watching a documentary on places where wildlife is abundant, and Madagascar was one of the countries mentioned that occupies 90% of the exotic wildlife in the whole world. I thought that was an amazing statistic, and wanted to learn more about the Madagascar wildlife and their country.

Madagascar is also known as “the Big Red Island, the Rainbow Island, the Eighth Continent.” (Janine Whyte, 2017) because it is the largest islands located in the Indian Ocean. Madagascar is equally the fourth largest island in the whole world, and that is why the island contains a surplus of animals and plants (One World Nations Online). The population of this island has grown since 2012 from 22 million inhabitants to 25 million.

The people of Madagascar are known as the “Malagasy Society,” which is made up of a small elite and bourgeois class and a large lower class. Men are the primary breadwinners in most families while women usually are engaged in petty jobs or engage in the role of being homemakers. However, female empowerment and education in recent times have encouraged women to diversify their roles and also enter politics in Madagascar (World Atlas). This is similar to marital gender roles in the United States, how women typically are housewives and the men work, but time are gradually changing for the better. The fashion in Madagascar is very vibrant and diverse from the American Culture. Both men and women wear something called a “Lamba,” which is like a wraparound dress. Women usually wear a shawl over their heads and shoulders (World Atlas).

90 percent of wildlife in Madagascar is found nowhere else on earth (Answers Africa). Madagascar is known for having 3,000 species of butterflies, rare birds, and an abundance of lemurs. Other exotic animals of Madagascar include Matella and Tomato frogs, Tenrecs (a hedgehog relative), Fossa’s (a Mix of a puma and dog), Spear-Nosed snake, and many more exotic reptiles and mammals. However, the diverse ecosystems and wildlife is currently threatened by growth of population and other environmental factors.

![Tomato Frog](image_url)

**Tomato Frog**

In conclusion, I really enjoyed learning a little about the culture and wildlife of Madagascar. It has helped me to know a little more how diverse every part of the world is. I have always been fascinated with the beauty of this country, and hopefully one day I will have the privilege to visit one of the...
Francophone countries we have discussed in this class.

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**La Réunion**

- Rachel Coots

A lot of la Réunion’s history is just fables and speculations made by historians. This is because before the French took over the island, there was no type of record keeping. However, since the French first arrived in 1638 records of la Réunion have increased, especially because it has been included in several different parts of history. While the French arrived in 1638, the island was not officially claimed for France until 1642 and was named Île Bourbon for the French royal house of Bourbon. The first French settlers were sent in 1665, which started colonization on the island. After 1793 the island changed names several times before finally settling with the name Île de la Réunion in 1848. This is because several events occurred to change the leadership over the island. Through colonization the island has developed a very ethnically diverse population. After being taken over by the Free French force in 1942 the island, “became a département d’outre-mer (overseas department)” (Réunion). For reference, the first Europeans to come to the Island were Portuguese explorers in the 15th century, but they did not settle on the Island. la Réunion is a small island of 2,511 km off the coast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Reunion Island was briefly colonized by Britain between 1810 and 1815. During this time, coffee was replaced by sugar cane. In 1819, vanilla was introduced for the first time. Today, vanilla and sugar are the main agricultural products.

**ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF REUNION ISLAND**

I come from Kansas which is vastly different from la Réunion. One of the main differences is the size; Kansas is over 80 times bigger than la Réunion. Another major difference is the fact that Kansas is a landlocked state of a larger country, while la Réunion is a separate island that is a part of a larger country. Kansas is a part of the plains of the Midwest meaning that the highest point is just a really tall hill and the major bodies of water are rivers and small lakes, however, la Réunion is an island with tall mountains and surrounded by one of the most major bodies of water. Although, Kansas is a part of the plains, there are also some more populated areas that have developed into big cities. The island, on the other hand, is populated much less densely causing there to be only groupings of buildings that resemble something like small towns. These are just some of the geographical differences.

There are many more differences, but I would like to focus on the differences in wildlife. For instance, la Réunion has a lot of tropical creatures that roam the island and the water that surrounds it. One of the more important land creatures on the island is the panther chameleon, while the...
landlocked state is mainly populated with and values the American Buffalo. These are very different creatures indeed. The panther chameleon is small and has the ability to hide itself, but the American Buffalo is large and can be seen from miles away. The island is also surrounded by a large variety of tropical fish, whose habitat is the coral reef that surrounds la Réunion from under the water’s surface, while the closest thing that Kansas has to a sea creature is the Barred Tiger Salamander, which is not much of a sea creature at all. Finally, something that both have plenty of are birds, and the kinds of birds that inhabit each are only slightly different. The island hosts the White-Tailed Tropicbird, which is very small and can be found almost anywhere tropically from Madagascar to the Caribbean Islands.

The Kansas state bird is the western meadowlark (Kansas), which is also very small and can be found almost anywhere on North America. This only starts some of the similarities between the two. Some other similarities include that they are both home to very diverse populations, they both had many extinctions of indigenous creatures. While the information I have found tells me that la Réunion is a beautiful place, I would never personally choose to vacation there because I do not really enjoy beaches all that much.

Sources


Francophone Weddings of Morocco and Bulgaria

- Selica Piloy

Moroccan Weddings

According to Moroccan wedding.com, Moroccan wedding festivities often take from three days to one week. However, there is a difference between country styled weddings and city weddings. For example, in the urban area couples are generally a bit wealthier and they might include a number of dress changes for the bride. Also, they often have a variety of cakes, cookies and even some professional live music.

In rural weddings on the other hand, couples generally stick to the more traditional ceremonies, though the urban influence is starting to mix in to even the most remote wedding festivities. During the ceremony, the guests are separated by gender. Men and women chat endlessly for hours; sipping tea, talking about the happy couple or even dancing or singing. Wedding celebrations are good excuses to bring all the family, friends and neighbors together.

In the evening, the bride and groom will normally arrive to greet the guests, although in some ceremonies the couple separated for the majority of the ceremony. Later, the couple is serenaded by their guests with several traditional poems and prayers. After they have been declared husband and wife the couple usually go upstairs for a little alone time. After the long day, dinner is finally served. During dinner time the guests are again split by gender. Men are seated and served first, and then women after the men finish. The guests cannot start to eat until the couple come to visit your table and break the bread, at that point you are welcome to eat. After dinner and dessert, everyone will go outside of the ceremony room for a traditional song and dance ceremony.

Bulgarian Ceremony

In Bulgaria, weddings are one of those events where local culture play an important role. Most weddings in Bulgaria take place on Sundays. The Thursday before the wedding the bride’s mother performs the ritual of kneading the Pitka bread, the rising of the dough symbolizes the creation of a new family unit. Through the traditions, the best man starts to be busy making a wedding banner, a 6-foot-tall pole has to be made from a fruit tree and beveled
with an ax blow. On the top of the pole a decorative foil with an apple or an onion is placed.

In Bulgaria the ceremony day starts early in the morning, the groom’s family and friends sprinkle him with barley to get good luck, then rifles are fired into the air to ward off evil spirits. The groom asks for the blessings of his parents before the departure. Then, they cheerfully march with singing and dancing to the best man’s home, where the groom gives him wine. Later the maid of honor and the best man lead the procession to the bride’s house, where they give her bottles of wine, a wedding veil, candles and sweets.

In the midst of the ceremony, the bride is locked in a room and only the maid of honor can gain entry until the groom and the best man reach an agreement to be let in. The bridesmaid tries to put the veil on the bride three times. She has to reject it twice and accept it the third and last time. Finally, the bride and groom are taken outside with each holding the end of a long-woven cloth during the rituals to keep evil spirits away.

Then the bride throws a plate full of wheat, coins and raw egg on her head. The more pieces the plate crashes into, the more luck the couple will have. It is considered good luck for the bride and groom to enter the church with the right foot first. At the end of the ceremony, the couple exchanges rings and kisses. Then will come the custom of “stepping” on the foot. Whoever manages to step on the other’s foot first will dominate the marriage.

In the olden days, the reception would take place in the house of the groom. In current times, it takes place in a certain hall or restaurants where the mother of the groom places a long hand-woven white cloth on the door for the new couple to walk, while scattering flowers on their way to ensure health and happiness. Then, she gives the newlyweds a cake of honey and wine with more wishes for a long and sweet life. Afterwards, she holds a loaf of Pitka bread on her head and invites them to pull each end. Whoever gets the largest piece will dominate, similar to the custom “stepping” customs.

According to tradition, the bride-to-be should not wear her wedding dress before the wedding day or, if she cannot resist it, she should try on the dress without all accessories, so that her clothing is not complete. That way the bride will not cause a bad luck on her wedding in Bulgaria. The groom is not supposed to see his future bride in her wedding dress before the wedding. According to a popular superstition, the future husband and wife should not spend the night before the wedding in Bulgaria together. The wedding dress should not be washed during the first year of the married life.

Culture Analysis

Since long time ago I wanted to explore more about the cultures of my friends and two of them are from the francophone countries such as Morocco and Bulgaria. Since in this class is required to have a small presentation about the cultures of these countries, I decided then to research how the wedding ceremony is in their countries. Therefore, I started to dig for the information presented above. Through the learning process I get to understand that each country celebrates their wedding ceremony in different ways even though they have the same background on French. For example, in the Moroccan wedding families are often separated by gender throughout the celebration. Also, the couple commit to each other a year before their actual wedding day, moreover, the bride is allowed to receive gifts from her groom only in holidays.

In Bulgaria, weddings often take place on Sundays since it is considered a good day according to the Bulgarian traditions. Every key person typically plays a special role during the marriage ceremonies. For example, the brides mother bakes a special bread called pitka bread. The rising of the dough symbolizes the emergence of the new family unit. The couple will later place this bread on their heads and tear it apart. The best man also plays an important part as he has to make a banner from a fruit bearing tree. The pole of the banner must be 6 feet long and at the end, he must stick either an apple or an onion to signify fruitfulness and resilience. The bridesmaid on the other hand is charged with offering and getting the bride to put on her veil. The two of them are kept in a locked room and she will have to offer the veil twice and the bride will reject it twice, then the third time, she will accept it. All these are done with negotiation. While the bride is making her request, the bridgroom and his best man would be outside the door and the bridesmaid will be communicating the bride’s request. Once they come to an agreement, she will accept the veil and the groom and best man will be allowed in.

After the bride’s acceptance of the veil, other traditional activities such as the “stepping” where the
couple steps on the right foot of each other will follow. Whoever steps on the other person’s foot first will be the head of the household.

BULGARIAN WEDDING TRADITION

Both countries have some similar activities, like giving presents to the couple for good luck, best wishes and blessings. Moreover, both traditional weddings often take more than three days where relatives, friends and neighbors form part of such wonderful festivities.

Completing this assignment has gave me a broad understanding that each culture is unique even if some cultures may have similar activities that are related with each other, nothing is exactly the same. I used to think that people in every country always get married in churches or religious places like in my country. However, through this homework I understood that some counties are so diverse that they have different cultures and different wedding traditions. Each culture equally has wedding traditions that might differ within it according to the social standing of the couple. I really appreciate that this class has encouraged me to get to know other cultures and appreciate them, as the Guatemalan Nobel Peace laureate, Rigoberta Menchú, said, “I resolutely believe that respect for diversity is a fundamental pillar in the eradication of racism, xenophobia and intolerance” (Rigoberta Menchu). I absolutely agree with the statement, through the French class I have gotten familiar with other cultures, and by knowing them, it is easier for me to interact with my friends.

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**Traditional Marriages in Monaco and Ghana**

- Evelyn Munufieh

Taking French class has opened my mind to different cultures around the world. I have come to learn a lot about the food culture, the dressing, ceremonies, festivals, and seasons among others. During my cultural research on marriages celebrated in the Francophone countries I chose, I learned new things that I never came across. In class we learned about the meals the French take on a daily basis comparing it to other cultures. I found it to be interesting because I managed to get something out of it.

I have had the opportunity through learning to explore other cultures in class and in the class presentations. Cultural awareness is about being open to embracing the diversity of life. It is about a willingness to learn and to seek new experiences and ultimately new friends and new things. I believe my cultural awareness will equip me to deal with the situations I face or I come across.

During my research for my cultural presentation, I learned that every culture varies one way or the other and that understanding and learning from other cultures will enrich, empower and make a person better in life. I believe engaging in our own ongoing cultural self-assessment through individually oriented work such as reading, researching and interpersonal learning like performing in community activities will help one to become culturally competent.

"I enjoyed learning so much about both of these cultures (Belgium and Djibouti), and agree that this is the best project of the semester. I am glad I chose two very different countries because I feel like I learned more that way than I would have otherwise." - Kathleen Hurst

**Traditional Marriage In Monaco**

Monaco is the second smallest country in the world, after Vatican City. French is the Principality’s first language. Marriage is considered to be an important part of the Monaco culture and is held on basis of the traditions of Roman Catholics. Before one can get married in Monaco, he or she must meet some legal requirements. The legal age for marriage is 18 years for both men and women. The bride and groom may not be related by blood, marriage or adoption.

You must be resident for thirty days before the wedding to legally marry, however it is possible to complete the legal side in your country of residence and then have a non-legally binding ceremony in Monaco. Under the provisions of Article 139 of the Civil Code of Monaco, the marriage can be celebrated in Monaco on the express condition that one of the future spouses has been a resident in the Principality for over a month at least, before the publication of banns. Thus, at least one of the couple must have lived in Monaco for at least thirty days before you get a marriage license.

During my research for my cultural presentation, I learned that every culture varies one way or the other and that understanding and learning from other cultures will enrich, empower and make a person better in life. I believe engaging in our own ongoing cultural self-assessment through individually oriented work such as reading, researching and interpersonal learning like performing in community activities will help one to become culturally competent.

"I enjoyed learning so much about both of these cultures (Belgium and Djibouti), and agree that this is the best project of the semester. I am glad I chose two very different countries because I feel like I learned more that way than I would have otherwise." - Kathleen Hurst

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Certificate of publication of the marriage banns

If you have been divorced then the final divorce papers must be shown

If you are widowed then the death certificate of your previous spouse must be shown

All documents must be certified and translated by an approved translator, and countersigned by consuls of the issuing country. Couples are expected to undergo some form of preparation for conjugal life either in the form of pre-marital counselling or a marriage preparation course. There must be at least two witnesses ages 18 or older, and they must be able to prove their identities.

Traditional Marriage In Ghana (Marriage Among The Akan)

Marriage in Ghana includes the traditional marriage and the white wedding depending on which tribe and their traditions. A man who wishes to marry, first discusses the intentions with the girl concerned. He has to make sure the girl will agree to marry him before he informs his parents. Finding out through secret meetings if they will marry each other is known as “kasasie.” The man then tells his mother or an elderly person about his intentions. His mother or the elderly person will in turn inform his father. If the mother feels that the marriage will not be possible for some reason, she will discourage him. When the father agrees, an investigation will immediately start into the girl’s conduct and family background.

Marriage in Ghana

When the boy’s parents are satisfied the father, through a delegation, informs the girl’s parents about his son’s intention. This information is known as ‘abowmu bodze’ or ‘opon-akyi bo’ (knocking ceremony). The announcement is made with a pot of palm wine or a bottle of schnapps. Some amount of money is added to the drink. The amount paid differs from community to community. The man may add some extra money to whatever custom demands. This is usually to impress his in-laws that he can really look after their daughter. In some communities, this money is regarded as a “token gift” for the girl’s mother.

The girl’s parents ask them to go back and come later for an answer. This enables them to find out if their daughter agrees to the marriage. They also investigate the boy’s conduct and family background. When they are satisfied, word is sent to the man’s family to come forward. It is the custom for a father to pay for the marriage expenses of a son. But these days, most young men give the money to their fathers for the marriage rites.

The father sends a message to the girl’s parents to inform them of the date for the rites. Both parents inform their maternal relatives to send their representative to the ceremony. On the appointed date, the man’s father sends a delegation to perform the rites. The important part of the ceremony is the offering of drinks known as “tiri nsa” (head drinks). In the past, it used to be palm wine, but now it is schnapps. The “tiri nsa” traditionally seals the marriage. There is also a customary fee charged to be given to the girl’s mother. Her brothers too are given some money known as “akonta sekan.” Before the payment of the customary drinks and the fee, the girl is formally called before the gathering to give her final consent to the marriage.

After accepting everything, the girl’s family head pours libation asking for protection and blessings for the new couple. He also prays that the marriage should be blessed with children. The rest of the drink is shared among all the people present to signify that they are all witnesses to the marriage. Pieces of advice are then given to the couple. After the traditional marriage, the to be couples can then decide if they would like to begin with the process of the white wedding or church wedding, where they have to be married by a pastor and by the high court.

Sources

Funerals in Djibouti, Belgium, and the Ozarks

- Kathleen Hurst

Funerals are a large and important life event that is often minimized because of its negative connotations. As this event is so heavily influenced by religion and local customs, I looked for two countries with different majority religions and social values to ensure contrast in my presentation. I chose Djibouti, a small country located in the Horn of Africa. This is the country I did my cultural analysis on last semester because, as I put it, “I picked last, and it was the only one left.” I ended up really liking learning about the country because I did not know very much about it before I began. Since I focused that essay on the conflict between two major ethnic groups, I thought it would be great to choose the country again and learn about something completely different this time around. Because the vast majority (over ninety percent) of Djiboutians are Muslim, I focused this part of my presentation on Islamic funeral traditions (“Djibouti”). I have never been to a Muslim funeral, so I definitely learned quite a bit from my research. According to Islamic tradition, the body should be buried as soon as possible, preferably on the day of death. This is a big difference from my culture, when funerals can take place up to a week after the death. In accordance with Sharia, the body is washed with water and camphor, something we definitely do not use where I am from, and then it is dried and perfumed with oud and rose (“Djibouti Burial Arrangements”). I did not know exactly what oud was, so asked around and found out that it is also called agarwood, it is very expensive, and it smells woody or musky. That is not really a scent I am around very often, so that is probably why I had never heard of it. I figure the reason the body is perfumed is because it is not embalmed, so it might start to smell. I am not really sure about how bodies naturally smell after death, because I have only seen embalmed bodies.

After the body is washed and dried, it is wrapped in clean, white sheets. This is a huge departure from my culture, when the body is made up and dressed to look like the person did during his or her life. Next, the body is carried on the mourners’ shoulders to the local mosque, where family and friends offer prayers. After this step, the body is once again carried on shoulders to a cemetery, where it is buried in a hole leaning to the right. I thought this was oddly specific, but it makes sense because direction is very important in the Islamic faith. An example of this is the way Muslims usually face Mecca when they pray. After the body is buried, people pray and offer condolences for three days, while the family gives away the person’s belongings and distributes gifts. This is done to ensure more rewards for the
This is so completely different from my religious beliefs, which say that what other people do after you die has no effect on what you receive in Heaven. Despite this, I think it is a nice practice which shows the Islamic values of generosity and charity. It is now my favorite part of Islamic funerals.

The second country I chose was Belgium, a country that is definitely high on my list of places to visit. One of my favorite movie stars, Audrey Hepburn, was born in Belgium, so I have always had the idea that it was a pretty cool place. After doing research on it, I can indeed confirm that it is very cool. While Belgium officially recognizes three religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, over half of the population is Christian, with about fifty-two percent being Catholic, so I examined that denomination’s funeral traditions (Belgium).

First, there is a wake. Sometimes we have these in the United States too, so I am familiar with them. During a wake, the deceased person’s family and friends stay up all night with the casket. This tradition comes from a time when medicine was not very good and people were accidentally buried alive sometimes. To try to prevent this from happening, people would stay up with the body all night to see if it woke up. That is how the name came to be. Next comes the mass and rosary prayers. This is just a church service with prayers. Most religions have something like this. The more devout Catholic people in my area might do their funerals this way.

Something I found that was completely unique to Belgium is the tradition of eating Simnel cake. This is a traditional dish usually eaten on Easter, so I am not completely certain why it is also served at funerals. I imagine it is because Christians believe in life after death and that is the whole point of both Easter and Catholic funerals, so maybe that is where it came from. There was a question during my presentation about the significance of the balls on top, so I did some research and found a pretty interesting answer. There are always eleven balls on top of the cake, and they represent the apostles, with the exception of Judas. This makes sense for a cake usually served at Easter. Like the Djiboutian Islamic tradition, Belgians also give gifts after a death. However, the gifts are given to the deceased person’s family, not by them. I learned that gifts are always given in odd numbers, but never thirteen, due to superstitious beliefs (Goldade).

I enjoyed learning so much about both of these cultures, and agree that this is the best project of the semester. I am glad I chose two very different countries because I feel like I learned more that way than I would have otherwise. They are both very different from my own culture, especially the Islamic traditions in Djibouti. I see more overlap with the Catholic traditions in Belgium, but there are still traditions like the Simnel cake and gift giving that do not translate to Protestant traditions in America. I definitely think this semester’s presentations were far better than last semester’s, so I hope we do this project again next year and improve even more.

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Minor in French Requirements and Catalogue Entries

Faculty: Dr. Mary Mba (Assistant Professor)

Overview: A minor in French will provide a global perspective to students studying French and ground them in not only the knowledge French cultures and civilization of the Hexagon, but of its expansion, influence and heritage in the world as well as the cultures and civilization of the Francophone world. The minor in French at Cottey College focuses on the acquisition of French language, study of French literatures and films, and study of the cultures and civilizations of France and the Francophone world.

Educational Objectives: The Minor French beneficial in helping students think more globally, comparatively and challenge strongly held stereotypes. It prepares students for a graduate program in French and Francophone Studies, French/Francophone Literatures, Area/Cultural/Indigenous Studies, Colonial and Post-colonial Studies, Francophone and World History and Geography, Comparative Studies, Journalism, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Liberal Arts, International Relations, and International Business, among others. Students will be qualified to work in so many career paths in private and public service, education, diplomacy, non-profit, multinational corporations, international, and intergovernmental organizations.

With a French Minor, students will develop the ability to:
1. Express themselves in French at a linguistic and intercultural proficiency that transcends the intermediate level
2. Be able to carry out a day-to-day conversation with native and near-native speakers of French
3. Explore the underlying values involved in cross-cultural exchanges
4. Critique and analyze authentic documents, literatures and artistic works from French-speaking societies
5. Produce written work and media in French
6. Effectively engage in bilingual translation and interpretation
7. Effectively function in the French and Francophone world

Alignment/Appropriateness with Cottey College’s mission and goals: The missions, vision and learning outcomes of Cottey College all stress its dedication to educating women to be contributing members of a global society. This Minor in French is a step towards the College realizing its vision of being “a higher education institution of choice for women of diverse backgrounds who seek access to exceptional education programs”. Overall, this Minor is French helps prepare Cottey College students to be globally aware and responsible women leaders, as it embraces the three cardinals of education at Cottey College: global awareness, social responsibility and women leadership.
**FRENCH MINOR REQUIREMENT:**

To get a minor in French, a student must complete 18 credits hours above the 100-level courses (6–7 courses). Students who have 5 years or more of French, native speakers and AP students must take FRE 311 (Review of French Grammar), 9 credits of 200-level courses (excluding Intermediate French I and II) and 9 credits of 300 level.

### Required Core (9 credits)

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<th>Course #</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hrs.</th>
<th>Pre-Req.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRE 201</td>
<td>Intermediate French I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 102</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRE 202</td>
<td>Intermediate French II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 311</td>
<td>Review of French Grammar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 201</td>
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### 200-level courses - choose 2 (or 3 if you have 5 years or more of High School French, are a native speaker or an AP student)

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<th>Hrs.</th>
<th>Pre-Req.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRE 211</td>
<td>Introduction to French Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 213</td>
<td>Oral French</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRE 214</td>
<td>French Civilization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRE /WGS 215</td>
<td>Francophone Women in Translation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
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</table>

### 300-level courses - choose 1 (or 2 if you have 5 years or more of High School French, are a native speaker or an AP student):

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<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hrs.</th>
<th>Pre-Req.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRE 312</td>
<td>Francophone Culture and Civilization through Film</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 313</td>
<td>Francophone African Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 314</td>
<td>Business French</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>FRE 202</td>
</tr>
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**FRENCH (FRE) COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**FRE 101 Elementary French 1 (f)** Essentials of grammar, composition and culture acquisition with progressive practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. 4 credits

**FRE 102 Elementary French 2 (s)** Prerequisite: FRE 101 Elementary French 1

Continuing emphasis on grammar, composition, reading, speaking, listening, and culture competence. 4 credits

**FRE 201 Intermediate French 1 (f)** Prerequisite: FRE 102. Elementary French 2 or four years of High School French (With Instructor’s approval).

Systematic review of grammatical structures and principles with vocabulary building; developing skills and techniques to learn French as spoken and written language. 3 credits

**FRE 202 Intermediate French 2 (s)** Prerequisite: FRE 201 Intermediate French 1
This course is a continuation of the skills and themes taught in FRE 201. Students will refine their understanding of grammatical structures; they will expand their vocabulary; and they will improve their reading and conversational skills. 3 credits

FRE/WGS 215 Francophone Women in Translation (xs)

This course surveys the work of women writers and film directors from different Francophone countries. Themes of class, race, gender, identity, family, language, education, culture, and social progress are explored as are the history, geography and socio-cultural dynamics of the country of origin of materials. Students read a variety of genres: novel, short story, autobiography, memoir, drama, and poetry, and watch several films. All works will be read and discussed in English. 3 credits

FRE 211 Introduction to French Literature 1 (xs or independent study) Prerequisite: FRE 202 Intermediate French 2

Survey of French Poetry, theatre, short story and novels from its origins to present day. Course includes lectures, readings and discussion of representative works. Course may have a different theme each time. 3 Credits

FRE 213 Oral French (xy or independent study) Prerequisite: FRE 202 Intermediate French 2

Develops comprehension of spoken French as step toward further developing oral expression. Includes review of difficult grammar concepts. 3 credits

FRE 214 French Civilization (xs or independent study) Prerequisite: FRE 202 Intermediate French 2

French history and geography from the medieval age to the present; Past history as introduction to the present political, economic, and social life; French culture and its diffusion in the world. This course is taught in French. 3 credits

FRE 311 – Review of French Grammar and Composition (Summer online) Prerequisite: FRE 202

French 311 is an intensive review of grammar. It is designed to provide a solid foundation for students to understand of the structure of the French language. It is also writing and translation intensive. This course is taught in French online. 3 credits

FRE 312 - Francophone Culture and Civilization through Film (xy or independent study) Prerequisite: FRE 202, FRE 311 or with Instructor’s permission

A Historical survey of Francophone cultures and civilizations through film. Students will be introduced to the French socio-political and cultural expansion across the world, with a special focus on sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, Canada, Asia, and the Caribbean. This course is taught in French. 3 credits

FRE 313 – Francophone African Literature (xs or independent study) Prerequisite: FRE 202, FRE 311 or with Instructor’s permission

This course introduces students to African literature written in French with emphasis on the work of major authors from Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. The study of diverse literary genres (epic, novel, short
story, poetry, essay) will be supported by insights into the respective geographical, historical, linguistic, and societal context. This course is taught in French. 3 credits

**FRE 314 – Business French (Summer - online)** Prerequisite: FRE 202 or with instructor’s permission

FRE 314 allows students to develop professionalism in commerce, international business, and economics. The objective of the course is to acquire a commercial and economic vocabulary as well as expression tools that will allow students to evolve effectively in a professional environment. This course is taught in French. 3 credits