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develop not only individual courses, but entire business language programs
resulting in the creation of certificates, specialized concentrations, and fully
developed specialized majors. Complicating the situation is the fact that
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“business language” in an academic environment. Given these factors, an
overview of the options available to instructors of business French in terms of
the content of a second-semester business language course is perhaps long
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tives on the rationales behind, and the development and implementation of,
the second-semester business French course.

One must begin by establishing some basic criteria before pursuing any
discussion of the content of such second-semester courses. First, and most
obviously, one assumes that a first-semester business French course is in place,
as is already the case at numerous institutions. Yet it is necessary to consider
briefly what the content of this first course might be, especially in light of
the fact that the content of the business French textbooks currently available
does vary greatly. At the broadest level, one can suppose that students will
acquire a basic knowledge of the vocabulary and concepts that are associated
with business French and doing business in France. Topics usually covered in
the initial course include (but are not restricted to) the organization of French
companies, marketing and advertising, banking and finance, human resources
and the job search, and correspondence and the writing of the curriculum vitae.

Individual textbooks are chosen as the basis of the course and largely dictate
in how much depth each topic is covered, what vocabulary (and how much)
is introduced, and which linguistic competencies are addressed.

If, indeed, the previous topics accurately reflect the content of the first-
semester business French course, then one can make the basic assumption that
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the previous course. What is unclear, however, is through what content and what kinds of activities such an enhancement will take place. As textbooks and supplements to these texts are considered for the second course, some initial troubleshooting is necessary, with the following providing merely a few of the questions that the instructor should ask in developing this course: Will the skills students possess be sufficient for the content chosen for the second-semester course? Are appropriate materials available for the approach that has been chosen? Will the instructor be comfortable, given his or her background, with presenting the course content? Are the available materials up-to-date and still pertinent? Yet another factor to consider is the focus of most business French texts on France, at the expense of the rest of the Francophone world and its role in the global economy (a factor that will be discussed later in this article). Is the intent, in fact, to complement what was taught in the previous course or to introduce students to a completely different subject matter? Although we cannot address all of these issues here, they certainly should be considered as the second-semester course is developed.

One might, nonetheless, propose the following general goals for any second-semester business French course. They are by no means exhaustive, but hopefully do provide some basic guidelines for the development of such a course and the selection of materials for required or complementary classroom use. As stated earlier, we wish to present students with a context within which they can apply the vocabulary and concepts studied in the first business French course. From a purely linguistic point of view, we must encourage the development of the four fundamental skills—oral, written, reading, and listening comprehension—within the specific context of business French. Individual instructors may also adapt the course to the needs of their particular students. Whereas many students in traditional French programs may be taking the course simply to fulfill a requirement for the major, others may be preparing for a study abroad experience or even an internship abroad, in which case their individual interests may be more immediately practical in nature. Additionally, one might suggest that we present students with material that will enhance their knowledge of current affairs in the French and Francophone world (with some of the models suggested here specifically addressing such competency), if such material is not already covered in a pre-existing course outside of the context of a business French curriculum. Finally, the more in-depth focus in the second business French course also allows students to explore areas of particular interest through projects and/or oral presentations in a manner that may be impractical within the confines of the initial course.

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The approaches to the second-semester business French course being presented here are not intended to be definitive nor all-encompassing in the material they propose to cover. What they hopefully do offer is a framework for the instructor investigating various possible options for teaching such a course. For each model, a basic premise for choosing the given approach is provided, as well as some advantages and challenges in its development. In every case, a sample syllabus will allow readers both to gain a basic understanding of the content of each approach and to envisage the feasibility of utilizing such a model in their own classroom and to determine its appropriateness at the individual instructor’s institution.

The sample syllabi are based on a semester of approximately fourteen weeks, and provide (admittedly broad) weekly topics that would allow for a thorough approach to the proposed content. At the same time, in terms of serving as a guideline, they allow the individual instructor considerable flexibility in the choice of methodology, specific material to be covered, and the linguistic competencies to be stressed. In only a few cases is a specific classroom activity suggested in the form of oral presentations that would be the culmination of students’ research on a topic of their choice, and that might very well be the result of work completed over the course of the entire semester. Finally, although specific textbooks are utilized as the basis of most of the sample syllabi, this does not imply an unqualified endorsement of these texts. Rather, they are simply those works currently available that adequately address the content of the individual approaches.

**APPROACH 1: CONTEMPORARY FRANCE**

In an effort to remain current (that is to say, to have a long “shelf life”) and as universally applicable as possible, one might assume that most business French textbooks do not cover in-depth knowledge about France (or the rest of the Francophone world), avoiding material that quickly becomes outdated. In addition, many if not most students lack in-depth knowledge of the basic infrastructure, economic and otherwise, of contemporary France, possessing only a cursory awareness of the geography, immediate past history, politics, and principal economic activities of the country. Therefore, the goal of this first approach is to complement students’ knowledge of business vocabulary and concepts with an overview of France. Today, two sample syllabi are provided, each based on a different primary text, one a textbook oriented to a North-American college-level audience (and published in the United States), the other published in France and providing a similar overview of France and French institutions, yet not intentionally designed for classroom use.

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The obvious advantage of this approach is the possibility to “fill in the blanks” in terms of students’ knowledge of contemporary France in a systematic manner usually not covered in basic language courses. Also, a considerable
amount of the material in the texts does cover economic and business-related topics, making these works appropriate for an overly business language course. By the same token, one possible disadvantage is the large amount of information that could perhaps be covered in such a course, information that, if one of the proposed textbooks is utilized, may not necessarily cover important recent changes (the election of Nicholas Sarkozy as President in May 2007 serving as just one example). In addition, as delineated above, the sample syllabi have an obvious “metropolitan” orientation, as both textbooks mentioned focus almost exclusively on France. In addition, and perhaps not surprisingly, the text published by the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères has a decided pro-French bias, with a tendency to privilege the more positive aspects of contemporary French society and the economic and technological accomplishments of the French nation. Nonetheless, the rich content will certainly fill a void in most students’ knowledge of French culture, whether their interests are primarily business-oriented or not.

APPROACH 2: ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF FRANCE

In comparison to the first approach, the second focuses more specifically on the French economy. The material in such a course, with its emphasis on subject matter more closely related to the business world, would in all likelihood more directly complement the concepts studied in the introductory business French course. The goal, obviously, is to present students with an understanding of France’s economic status, its strengths and weaknesses, thus differing from the previous model in that the content addresses material more commonly found in a traditional business or economics course. The proposed text, composed half of text and half of charts providing a multitude of statistics on a variety of economic indicators, offers a wealth of information on the French economy. As the weekly topics in the syllabus indicate, many of these would be easily accessible to students in terms of content, yet at a level of detail far exceeding what a textbook oriented to a non-French audience would likely include.

APPROACH 2: SAMPLE SYLLABUS:

Text: INSEE, Tableaux de l’économie française

Weekly Topics
1. Présentation du cours; discussion générale
2. Territoire et population
3. Consommation et logement
4. Santé et justice

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**APPROACH 3: SOCIOECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF FRANCE**

The third model, one might suggest, combines elements of the first two, in that it does provide a perspective of contemporary France, albeit not as methodically as in the first example provided, while maintaining an emphasis on the socioeconomic aspect of contemporary France suggested by the second, yet through a less rigorous presentation of economic intricacies that may not be appropriate for the students’ linguistic level or areas of interest. The goal is an understanding of the lifestyles of the French with an emphasis on those aspects both directly or indirectly related to the concepts learned in the first-year business French course, but which are usually not covered in depth in the textbooks utilized in the first course. Such topics might include unemployment, work conditions, salaries, consumer habits, leisure time, and vacations, all of which are covered in depth in the textbook found in the sample syllabus: the 2005 edition of Gérard Mermet’s *Francoscopie* (of

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which a new edition is published every two years). Mermet’s text presents an extraordinary amount of information in the form of text, charts, and lists concerning the lifestyles of the French population. The headings in the sample syllabus below, based on chapters in Mermet’s work, demonstrate a wide variety of possible topics (material that may or may not be included at the instructor’s discretion).

**APPROACH 3: SAMPLE SYLLABUS:**

**Text:** Mermet, *Francoscopie* 2005

**Weekly Topics**

1. Présentation du cours; discussion générale
2. L’individu
3. L’individu (suite)
4. La famille
5. La vie sociale
6. La France dans le monde
7. Les valeurs
8. La population active
9. Les métiers
10. La vie professionnelle
11. Les revenus
12. La consommation
13. Loisirs
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Perhaps even more so than in the previous models, such a course allows the instructor to benefit from an extensive array of material for classroom discussion and analysis, much of which should spark considerable interest on the part of students who, if less interested in understanding the intricacies of France’s economic infrastructure, are very much intrigued with the lifestyles of the French. By the same token, the tremendous amount of information in Mermet’s text far exceeds what could possibly be managed within a single course, presenting the instructor with both the luxury of more than sufficient content from which to choose, and the dilemma of poring through the text to determine what would be most appropriate for the course (and for the students taking it). Indeed, the headings in the proposed syllabus cover only a fraction of the material found in Mermet’s text. The one potential drawback to using *Francoscopie* (or other works resembling it) is the fact that the material is presented in a decidedly less cohesive manner than that found in the texts of

**APPROACH 3: SAMPLE SYLLABUS:**

**Text:** Mermet, *Francoscopie* 2005

**Weekly Topics**

1. Présentation du cours; discussion générale
2. L’individu
3. L’individu (suite)
4. La famille
5. La vie sociale
6. La France dans le monde
7. Les valeurs
8. La population active
9. Les métiers
10. La vie professionnelle
11. Les revenus
12. La consommation
13. Loisirs
14. Présentations orales; conclusions

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the previous models. Not ostensibly intended for use in the classroom, Francoscopie risks overwhelming students with a wealth of information lacking the contextualization that students may require to grasp a fundamental and well-rounded understanding of French society today.

APPROACH 4: FOCUS ON QUÉBEC

The fourth approach is the first that does not have an emphasis on France. The premise for this particular model is that most business French textbooks focus on France and France alone, neglecting the rest of the French-speaking world, or giving the latter only passing reference. Yet the economic reality (at least from an American perspective) is that the United States does more business with Québec (in terms of dollars) than it does with France. Furthermore, trade with the rest of the French-speaking world (Belgium and Switzerland being prime examples) is far from negligible and, one might argue, to ignore Third World Francophone countries that are not major players in the global economy only serves to perpetuate their marginalization. To focus exclusively on France, therefore, does a disservice to those students whose ultimate aim in taking such a course might be to seek employment with an American company where knowledge of the French language would be a desirable if not required skill, where this does not necessarily imply a connection with France. The goal of this particular model is to provide both a general and business-oriented overview of contemporary Québec, based on the assumption (for the most part well-founded) that most American students have at best only a rudimentary knowledge of any aspect of Québec (let alone Canada as a whole), its history, geography, and culture.

APPROACH 4: SAMPLE SYLLABUS:

Texts: Tête de Labsade, Le Québé: Un pays, une culture,
Loughrin-Sacco and Gagnon, Québec Inc.

Weekly Topics
1 Présentation du cours; discussion générale
2 La géographie
3 L’histoire
4 L’histoire contemporaine
5 La langue française au Québec
6 La politique
7 Église et éducation
8 Cas pratique: Hydro-Québec
9 Cas pratique: Le mouvement des Caisses Desjardins

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APPROACH 5: ARTICLE-BASED COURSE

Whereas the previous models have a geographic orientation with some degree of a socioeconomic slant, the following approach takes as its premise that most business language textbooks contain information that becomes out-of-date so quickly (sometimes before they are even available for use in the classroom) that it becomes necessary to complement or even replace material in these texts through the use of recent periodical articles and other documents to convey the current state of affairs in France and the French-speaking world.

The development of a course utilizing current press articles, as proposed in this model, allows the instructor to custom design the class to suit the interests and academic strengths of the student population.

The model proposed below, developed in the spring of 2006, demonstrates one possible approach to an article-based second-semester course. The weekly text provides a systematic overview of the economy and business affairs of contemporary Québec, they do offer sufficient insight into the province to make them appropriate choices for such a course.

The obvious benefit of such a course in a business French curriculum is the diversification of this field away from a “Hexagone-centric” focus. Perhaps the greatest challenge in developing a course with a focus on Québec is the identification of current and appropriate texts. Of the two works mentioned in the syllabus above, Tête de Labade’s text, although an excellent introduction to Québécois culture and history, contains little that is directly business-related. In addition, the revised edition of this particular work was published in 2001, thus providing limited information about the most recent developments in Québec’s political and socioeconomic scenes. Loughrin-Sacco and Gagnon’s *Québec Inc.*, utilized during the latter part of the course, consists of case studies on Québécois companies and institutions, such as Bombardier, Hydro-Québec, and the provincial government’s Office de la Langue Française. The advantage of such case studies is that they both introduce students to aspects of the French-speaking business world with which they are undoubtedly unfamiliar, and provide a guide for students through reading comprehension and vocabulary expansion exercises. Although neither text provides a systematic overview of the economy and business affairs of contemporary Québec, they do offer sufficient insight into the province to make them appropriate choices for such a course.

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topics (in italics in the syllabus) and article titles listed should provide an adequate indication of the scope such a course could possibly have (although space limitations preclude a detailed discussion of the articles). The choice of readings inevitably depends on the resources available to the instructor. First and foremost, the Internet provides unlimited potential resources (and, from a practical standpoint, is the most cost-efficient source of information). Either print or Web-based versions of newspapers (such as Le Monde and Le Figaro), weekly newsmagazines (L'Express, Le Point, L'Actualité), business-oriented magazines (L'Entreprise, L'Expansion) are an obvious starting point for identifying potential articles, while government publications (such as Label France, published by the French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères) and brochures can provide both timely and practical information of benefit to students. The crucial factor in the development of such a course is the selection of articles that capture students’ interest, that are at an appropriate level in terms of students’ linguistic abilities and, ideally, that allow the instructor to capitalize on vocabulary and concepts studied in the first course and that are subsequently found in the chosen articles. In the case of the titles in the sample syllabus, there is a mix of “feature” articles, which are often less time-sensitive, and articles on the most recent trends and issues in the French-speaking business and professional world. For example, the articles for weeks three and four, on unemployment and prime minister Villepin’s vision for the future of French industry, treat on-going issues and policies in which change is constant and priorities can frequently shift. Articles on French companies (such as those found in week five of the syllabus) may have been written in response to a specific event, but may contain sufficient material of interest that will not become quickly out-dated and will remain relevant months or even years after publication. Finally, government publications, such as the two texts in week eleven published by the Québec government on language policies in the workplace, describe conditions that will change only infrequently, allowing for repeated use of such material. APPROACH 5: SAMPLE SYLLABUS: Text: Articles de presse Weekly Topics 1 Présentation du cours; discussion générale 2 Conditions de vie “Le vrai visage des Français”; “La France, service et sourire compris!” APPROACH 5: SAMPLE SYLLABUS: Text: Articles de presse Weekly Topics 1 Présentation du cours; discussion générale 2 Conditions de vie “Le vrai visage des Français”; “La France, service et sourire compris!”
Perhaps the greatest drawback to such a course is that, if it is taught on a yearly basis, one can envisage teaching the exact same material only once, since any subsequent offering will inevitably result in the selection of fresh material, as new issues and a changing economic and the sociopolitical landscape dictate. Another challenge, although far from insurmountable, is the use in many of these articles of unfamiliar and technical vocabulary, as well as references to people, places, and events that might be familiar to a regular reader of the periodical from which the text is selected, but will often lie outside of

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the knowledge base of a typical American college student. This factor will, as a consequence, entail considerable “pre-reading” preparation on the part of both instructor and students, a workload surpassing (perhaps significantly) that for a course based on a more traditional textbook. Nonetheless, this challenge is offset by the ability to present not only the current state of affairs in the French and French-speaking world, but also the relevance of these regions in the global economy (a factor often challenged by claims of France’s diminishing importance on the world stage). An ultimate benefit, one would hope, is the demonstration of the extent to which French continues to be a vibrant language in terms of its use in the arena of international business.

Although all the preceding models exemplify logical approaches available to instructors of a second-semester business French course, other options are certainly feasible, such as the possibility of focusing exclusively on contemporary Europe (and the European Union). In this case one could incorporate not only France but also Belgium and (non-EU member) Switzerland, and highlight the role of Francophone Europe in the modern global market. Yet another option would be a course on “la Francophonie” with an emphasis on international trade, although the availability of adequate resources, and the perception that many of these countries are minor, if not negligible, players in the global market may hinder somewhat the rationale for the development of such a course. Approaches that do not have a geographic focus are equally relevant and feasible. Courses based on a term-long major project, or on case studies in French, allow students to pursue in-depth analysis of a specific subject, in opposition to the general nature of the models described above.

A final framework for a second-semester business French course might be constructed around the various video programs currently available that have been produced for use in the classroom, or that can easily be utilized as an integral component of such a course. Among the former, Le Ninan and Auger’s Le français des affaires par la vidéo (currently available only in PAL format) and the Carte de visite series are ostensibly conceived as the basis for a business French course, while In Ann Hinshaw’s Radishes and Butter and Bull HN’s Cultural Diversity: At the Heart of Bull are perhaps the only video-based resources available that specifically address French-American cultural differences, a topic rarely mentioned in business French textbooks. Finally, one could even suggest the feature films by Laurent Cantet, Ressources humaines and L’emploi du temps, which, with their pseudo-realistic approach to contemporary French business practices and the issues of unemployment

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and employer/employee relations, could easily stimulate discussion about the modern French workplace.

Variations on the approaches described above are certainly possible; indeed, one might suggest that selected materials from any of the above sample syllabi could be integrated into one individual course, provided that the materials are selected in a manner that is coherent and logical in relationship to what students have covered in the introductory business French class. In addition, the preceding approaches are by no means exhaustive, and other designs are possible, and have been implemented at universities and colleges across the United States and Canada. To cite just a few examples: Elizabeth Martin developed a course at the University of Illinois focusing on the analysis of advertising in French. Steve Sacco at San Diego State University has used the Bull video mentioned above as the foundation of a consultancy project for his students; and Thérèse Saint Paul at Murray State University has published an article on a course she developed called "French for Green Business."

Finally, this article has not attempted to address the many excellent works (many of them in English, admitted) that treat Franco-American cultural differences and what Americans need to know in dealing with the French in a professional context. Maureen Maguire-Lewis has developed numerous simulations, including Frost in France, designed as an extended classroom activity in which students engage in role play to investigate how cultural differences have an impact on international negotiations. Among the works devoted to introducing an English-language readership to the intricacies of living and working with the French, Polly Platt’s French or Foe?; Gilles Asselin and Ruth Mastron’s Au contraires! Figuring out the French; Jon P. Alston, Melanie Hawthorne, and Sylvie Saület’s A Practical Guide to French Business; Jean-Benoît Nadeau and Julie Barkley’s Sixty Million Frenchmen Can’t Be Wrong are all excellent and intriguing resources. Although these are not specifically intended for classroom use, they address issues that are closely linked to the material potentially covered in both the first and second business French courses, and by providing insight into how the French conduct business, they introduce an element largely ignored in traditional business French textbooks.

What the various examples presented here hopefully demonstrate to both current and potential instructors of business French is that first and foremost, there is no one ideal approach to the second-semester course. The needs and interests of students must be taken into account, along with what the French need and expect in the business world. Finally, this article has not attempted to address the many excellent works (many of them in English, admitted) that treat Franco-American cultural differences and what Americans need to know in dealing with the French in a professional context. Maureen Maguire-Lewis has developed numerous simulations, including Frost in France, designed as an extended classroom activity in which students engage in role play to investigate how cultural differences have an impact on international negotiations. Among the works devoted to introducing an English-language readership to the intricacies of living and working with the French, Polly Platt’s French or Foe?; Gilles Asselin and Ruth Mastron’s Au contraires! Figuring out the French; Jon P. Alston, Melanie Hawthorne, and Sylvie Saület’s A Practical Guide to French Business; Jean-Benoît Nadeau and Julie Barkley’s Sixty Million Frenchmen Can’t Be Wrong are all excellent and intriguing resources. Although these are not specifically intended for classroom use, they address issues that are closely linked to the material potentially covered in both the first and second business French courses, and by providing insight into how the French conduct business, they introduce an element largely ignored in traditional business French textbooks.

What the various examples presented here hopefully demonstrate to both current and potential instructors of business French is that first and foremost, there is no one ideal approach to the second-semester course. Ultimately, the needs and interests of students must be taken into account, along with what the French need and expect in the business world.
individual instructor will feel confident and competent in teaching. Perhaps the most positive outcome of an investigation into the possible ways such a course might be considered is the realization that there is a tremendous amount of material available for consideration, and that any of these approaches will include subject matter of benefit to students.

WORKS CITED


