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La Francophonie at Cottey College is a collection of students’ essays and reflections on their acquisition of French and Francophone cultures.

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INTRODUCTION

LA FRANCOPHONIE WEEK

The week of March 18 to 24 is La Francophonie week and Tuesday, March 20 is La Francophonie day. La Francophonie week is celebrated all over the Francophone world and organized by the International Organization of La Francophonie - IOF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie - OIF). Founded in 1970 and with its head office in Paris, the International Organization of La Francophonie has as its mission the embodiment of the active solidarity between its 84 member states and governments (54 members states, 4 associated states and 26 observer states), which together represent over one-third of the United Nations’ member states and account for a population of over 900 million people, including 274 million French speakers.

La Francophonie week is celebrated with conferences and different cultural and sporting activities and events all over the world. For us at Cottey College, La Francophonie week is the week right after spring break and we do not have time to organize any event. However as I am not just interested in teaching students the French language, but in exposing them to French and Francophone cultures as well, my students adopt a Francophone country other than France and study the cultures of the country. They give a presentation on their findings at the end of the semester and they also write a culture evolution essay in which they write about how they have evolved in their knowledge of French and Francophone cultures. In addition, they draw a cross-cultural analysis by comparing some aspects of the cultures of their francophone country with their own culture. Students have agreed to share these essays with the Cottey Community in a new publication tradition that is now entitled “La Francophonie at Cottey College”.

LA FRANCOPHONIE

The word Francophone was first used by Onesimus Reclus, a French geographer in his 1886 book, France, Algérie et Colonie published by Hachette. Being a staunch believer in the excellency of France and of its language, he defined Francophones as those who are or appear to be destined to become participants in the French language1. However, the word, Francophonie, was coined by the poet, Leopold Sedar Senghor, the first president of Senegal and one of the founders of the Negritude movement. La Francophonie as an organization was formed on 20 March 1970 by the representatives of 21 states and governments under the influence of three African Heads of State, Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, Hamani Diori of Niger and Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia. It has as its motto: equality, complementarity and solidarity, thus mirroring the French motto: liberty, equality and brotherhood. The International Organization of la Francophonie unifies nations that were colonized by France, has French as their official language or are just interested in what is going on in the Francophone world, hence, the observer states. In addition, the International Organization of la Francophonie (IOF) is responsible for coordinating international cooperation between its 84 belonging states and governments. Linguistic and cultural diversity, universal values such as peace, democracy and human rights as well as sustainable development are the ties that bind these states together within the organization. However like the Commonwealth of Nations, La Francophonie member states have no legal obligation to one another.

The French language has been taught at Cottey College almost since its inception. My research shows that there was a French club at Cottey College from 1929 to 1963. The current club was reinstated in the fall semester of 2016. At Cottey College, students not only learn to speak French but are exposed to the diversity of the Francophone world, and thus students are prepared to be global citizens. French is therefore an important area that ensures that Cottey College’s vision of leadership, social responsibility, and global awareness are realized. The acquisition of Francophone cultures unbiases and opens up students’ minds as they learn how to interact with people from different cultures thus becoming better leaders and world citizens.

This is the French club at Cottey College, but it is not open to French students only. It is open to all Cottey College students who are interested in learning more about or experiencing French and Francophone cultures. Any member could be an officer as long as they are not studying abroad. The club thus serves as a locus for students to come in contact with French and Francophone cultures here at Cottey College.

This publication shares students’ French and Francophone culture findings with the Cottey College community while inviting the community into the Francophone world. By doing so, we expect that the community will develop a more profound appreciation for these cultures and for the hard work that our students do. This publication therefore celebrates French and Francophone cultures, and our students’ culture acquisition journey.

Come on along with us and enjoy the beautiful tales of the students’ culture journey as each essay is beautifully written and each student’s experience is unique. Essays include Francophone countries in Africa, Europe, Islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, North America, and South America.

HAPPY FRANCOPHONIE DAY!
BONNE JOURNÉE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE!

Dr. Mary Mba, Assistant Professor of French
Cottey College
KARA ALFORD is a senior who will be graduating from Cottey College with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Cultural Anthropology. She has an Associate of Arts degree from Crowder College in Social Work. After graduating from Cottey College, she plans to teach English as a second language in South Korea. She also plans to obtain a Master’s Degree in Cultural Anthropology in Korean culture, and use this degree to help facilitate governmental affairs. She enjoys participating in multiple volunteer activities that Cottey College has, and helping with her church’s Vacation Bible School program during the summer. She loves reading many different genres, and is always in need of some author or book suggestions. She also enjoys playing with her dog, Little Munch, playing her oboe, and singing in her church choir. While she works on her homework, she listens to music or watches a movie because she can concentrate better.

We are proud of Ms. Alford for her outstanding participation in, and contributions to Le Cercle français. We wish her happy realizations of all her dreams. Félicitations!!!
Belgium

- Kara Alford

What I knew about Francophone culture came from my parents’ time spent in France. All I knew was that the French are arrogant, rude, and condescending. The other aspect that I knew about French is that their culture includes art and architecture. In this class, I learned that in France there are different ideas on the importance of family and how this relationship happens in their lives. The French have dinner later in the night than Americans do and these dinners consist of the entire family and on weekends, family members do things together. In American families, dinner together is not necessarily happening and on the weekend most American families go to their separate activities. The other aspect I really enjoyed learning about French culture is how the education system is vastly different from the American education system. French education runs the same curriculum for the entire nation whereas in the United States, it is decentralized. At a certain point in the French system of education, a student can go into a trade or continue on to university. Yet to enter into university the person must pass through *lycee* (high school) exit exam and then an exam to enter into the university.

I chose to present on the Francophone culture of Belgium. I chose this country because of the family connection I have to Belgium. I learned that Belgium has three official languages and one of these is French. The three official languages of Belgium affiliate with the different provinces. In the capital of Brussels, all the official languages are used in the signs to indicate the different aspects in the city. The French speaking people have an idea that the people of Belgium should be able to choose which of the official languages they can speak as their primary language.

In Belgium family takes precedence over all other aspects of a person’s life. The other aspect of Belgium’s culture that I found so different from American is how they show pride in their cultural identity. This happens with different appearances in not only how they dress, but in how their homes, sidewalks, and even the streets are cleaned.

Belgium has a very unique liaison with the United States owing to their being allies during both the first and second world wars. This is evidenced in the different monuments and memorials dedicated to American soldiers in Belgium. The Audenarde American Monument was erected to commemorate the service and sacrifice of the 40,000 American troops who, in October and November 1918, fought in the vicinity as units attached to the Group of Armies commanded by the King of Belgium. The inscription on the Audenarde Monument reads “Erected by the United States of America to commemorate the services of American troops who fought in this vicinity Oct. 30–Nov. 11, 1918”[^1] Another important landmark is the Ardennes American Cemetery near the Liege area of Belgium to bury fallen American soldiers and to serve as a memorial to them. About 5,317 Americans from units that operated in northwest Europe in World War II with 65 percent of those being fallen airmen of the U.S. Army Air Forces are buried in this cemetery. This cemetery equally served as a central point during the last days of the war for the European Theater of Operations.

Belgium (food)
- Ali Miller

Food is probably my favorite aspect of any culture I have ever learned about. I have always loved food, and although I’m not always super pumped about trying new foods, even mentioning food interests me. When I was a kid, I wanted to be a chef. So when I started learning French in high school and starting learning how much the French really care about their food, I got really excited. So my deciding factor for choosing Belgium was because they are super close to France and I know that they also care a lot about their food as well.

Once I started researching food in Belgium, I started thinking more and more about food here in the United States compared to food in Belgium. Both cultures see food completely differently. For example, here in the United States, we think about quick meals a lot. Fast food places are incredibly popular herein the United States and they are not quite as popular in Belgium. Belgians like to take time with their meals and sit and talk.

Belgians also really, really love their beer. What I found very interesting is that there is basically a brewery in every village in Belgium. Also, in the 20th century mainly, the brewery owners/brewers were usually the mayor of their village. That’s how much they care about their beer. And in those small villages, brewers would create special beers for special events, including weddings. Like, how cool is that? In the United States, people love alcohol but not to the extent of the Belgians. As far as I know, we don’t care nearly as much as the French either. I’m not quite sure why they seem to care more about alcohol in Europe as a whole more than in the United States but I think it’s really funny. A really bad stereotype of Americans, especially rednecks, is dumb people drinking beer and doing really dumb activities where they end up getting hurt.

Another really cool thing about food in Belgium is all the different kinds of food that are popular in Belgium. For example, basically all of my favorite foods are popular there but Belgians eat them in a different way than I do. Like chocolate, fries, and waffles. I love fries and I eat them practically every time I go out to get food. I think the biggest difference in the way I eat fries in the United States and the way Belgians eat fries is what we dip them in. I mainly use ketchup, honey mustard, ranch, or barbeque sauce. But in Belgium they mainly use mayonnaise, which is weird to me because I use mayonnaise on my deli sandwiches and also Chick-fil-a chicken sandwiches. But never for fries; that just sounds so gross to me.

I just always love learning about food. I hope that I can one day go to Belgium and also to France since it’s right there, and I hope I get to try
La Belgique : Les Flamands et Les Wallons

- Anita Kamwendo

Pour ma rédaction culturelle, j’écris à propos des groupes culturels de Belgique. En Belgique, il y a deux groupes distincts: les flamands et les wallons. Les flamands sont cinquante-cinq pour cent de la population et ils parlent néerlandais. Ils sont un mélange de culture allemande, romaine et anglo-saxonne aussi. Les wallons sont trente-cinq pour cent et ils parlent français et ils sont un mélange de culture française et romaine. Ce sont des langues différentes et ils ont des cultures différentes aussi.

Les flamands sont en majorité catholique mais le pratique est en déclin. Ils ont une forte histoire dans les arts. Ils ont des peintres tels que Jeroen Bosch et Rogier van der Weyden. Ils mangent la cuisine traditionnelle. Dans Wallonie, les gens sont catholiques aussi, mais pas autant. Et le pratique est en déclin aussi. Ils apprécient l’art populaire et ils assistent aux beaucoup de fêtes. Ils mangent la cuisine française.

Les différences sont un problème pour la Belgique, parce qu’ils sont une source de conflit. Parfois, les gens utilisent des graffitis à la frontière entre Wallonie et Flamands pour effacer la langue avec lesquelles ils ne sont pas d’accord. Le problème a un contexte historique, et remonte à la quatrième siècle. Il ne semble pas être de solution pour ce conflit. Ceci démontre l’importance de langue en culture.

Pendant le quatrième siècle, les Romains (les Wallons) et les Frank (les Flamands) se sont combattus pour le territoire de Gaul. Éventuellement, les Franks ont pris le contrôle du territoire, mais la région de Wallon était déjà insérée dans la partie qui parle la langue des Romains qui deviendrait le français. Quand la Belgique est devenue indépendante en 1830, les Wallons avaient la richesse et ils voulaient que le français soit la langue dominante. Les Flamands n’étaient pas contents et ils ont travaillé jusqu’à qu’ils sont reconnus. Ils ont fait pression sur le gouvernement de Belgique pour leur liberté.

Maintenant, il y a quatre territoires en Belgique: un pour le français, un pour le néerlandais, un pour l’allemand, et Bruxelles qui est bilingue. Les Flamands sont plus riches que les Wallons, ce qui est une autre source de problèmes pour la Belgique. Il y a des discussions pour la sécession des Flamands. En Flamand, les signes sont néerlandais et le gouvernement est mené en néerlandais. En Wallonie, les signes sont en français et le gouvernement est mené en français aussi. Mais, beaucoup de Wallons et Flamands ne détestes pas les autres. Ils n’aiment pas le
gouvernement de Belgique et comment il fonctionne.

La langue est très importante pour les Flamands et les Wallons. Au lieu d’intégration de langue, ils ont décidé pour la séparation. La langue est partie intégrante de culture et de l’identité. Aux États-Unis, l’espagnol est la langue sur laquelle les gens se disputent. Pour certains Américains, l’espagnol est une menace pour leur culture. Mais, vingt et un pour cent des Américains parlent deux langues.

J’ai grandi avec deux langues chez moi, et je suis plus forte pour cela. Je pense que les États-Unis devraient exiger que tous les enfants deviennent courants dans deux langues parce que beaucoup de monde y est déjà. Je suis bilingue. Je parle anglais et chichewa. Je pense que c’est très important pour les gens de savoir des langues multiples. C’est bon pour le cerveau et l’intelligence.

**Sources :**


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**Burundi**

- Tarisai Dahwa

Throughout the semester I have learned a lot of diverse things about the different aspects of the French culture. In doing so, I have had the ability to compare these to my own culture. Also, we looked at a lot of francophone countries, and one that I found to be of interest is Burundi.

Burundi, whose capital city is Bujumbura, is a small country with a population of only 11.18 million people. It is located in the horn of Africa in East Africa. Burundi gained its independence from Belgium in 1962, and has two official languages, Kirundi and French. I chose this country mainly because I have been there and have gotten to first-handly experience its culture. my step-mother is also Burundian and so I have been exposed to a lot of Burundian culture, which is why I decided that it would be a great and interesting country to do my culture presentation on.

The main part of the culture that I focused on was the traditional drumming, the crafts, and the basket weaving. I chose these three because I feel that they are a great representation of African culture. Almost every African country has its own traditional drumming. The type of drumming does indeed differ from country to country. For example, in Zimbabwe, the type of sticks we use to drum are different from the ones that Burundians use, as I showed in my presentation. Drumming is the most important part of Burundian heritage. It is something that takes place as a social event. In Zimbabwe, we have a lot of different types of drums. The most common one is called “ngoma”, which is the shona word

“I have evolved emotionally because I am learning to accept other cultures.”
- Jemima Nasara
for drum. This can refer to any standard hand played drum. We have dancers who dance to the drums. In most cases, they dance around in circles, in the traditional attire, which comprises of the traditional animal skin. However, dances like these are not as common anymore, but they do occur on special occasions.

Another aspect of Burundian culture that I focused on is what people do in their leisure time. A lot of Burundians go to the beach to party, drink, take pictures, or just swim as they are one of the four countries where Lake Tanganyika flows through. They are a very relaxed society that enjoys drinking a lot. Drinking is more of a social and a family event as families can go out to bars together and drink and dance. Theirs is a very relaxed culture. This is somewhat similar to Zimbabwe. However, drinking and clubbing is not done as a family. But Zimbabweans are also very laid back and love their social events and relaxation.

The crafts and basket weaving in Burundi is also very similar to that of Zimbabwe. Due to the Victoria Falls and our vast safaris, Zimbabwe receives a lot of tourists annually. We have basket makers and crafts men who share their art with tourists as this is a booming business with tourists. Many of these crafts depict several aspects or national monuments of Zimbabwe that tourists can keep as souvenirs.

**SOURCES:**


“My country of focus is Cameroon, I would like to visit this country someday which is why I am writing about it. Cameroon’s official name is Republic of Cameroon and its official languages are English and French. It is located in the western part of Africa, just bordering Nigeria. I am interested in Cameroonian fashion because it is closely related to the Nigerian fashion. “In the north of Cameroon, where it is arid and much of the population is Muslim, traditional clothing is free-flowing and head-coverings are common. In the rainy, forested region of the south, traditional

“Je pense que c’est très important pour les gens de savoir des langues multiples. C’est bon pour le cerveau et l’intelligence.”
- Anita Kamwendo

**Cameroon**

- Jemimah Nasara

**CAMEROON**
dress includes richly patterned and embroidered fabrics, ruffles and sometimes, fitted hats on the men. The two types of fashion styles I will be focusing on are the pagnes and the boubou.

**Pagne** is a wrapper style garment which is typically worn by women in Cameroon. The type of cloth used varies from simple cotton batik prints to heavily embroidered satin fabrics for formal occasions. It can be used in several ways such as a protective head covering; it can be worn as a skirt, used as a sling-style baby carrier while a woman does her chores, or to provide warmth and dryness during rainy season.

![](AFRICAN_BABY_SLING)

The **boubou** is a traditional four-piece outfit for men. It consists of an undershirt, a flowing outer shirt that falls to the hips or longer, loose fitting pants, and a matching hat—each piece is made of cotton. The outer shirt usually has embroidery on the neck, hem or the sleeves. It can be worn with or without the outer shirt, whichever the man pleases.

![](BOUBOU)

Comparing it to the Nigerian fashion, Nigeria also has different types of batik that everyone wears. It comes with different prints and people sew it into different styles which make it versatile, so no two people are wearing the same fabric having the same style. The different fabrics are sold in the market where people can go purchase it and have tailors sew it into the unique style each individual wants. Print fabrics are worn commonly by everyone in Nigeria—it is not only for special occasions such as weddings, or parties. Some people wear it to work, politicians wear it for press conferences, and most people wear it to church on Sundays too.

The boubou is called “babariga” in my own culture and it is worn mostly by men, although women are adopting that fashion and wearing the same outfit too. It is exactly the same as the one worn in Cameroon—it typically consists of the four-piece outfit or can be worn without the outer shirt; if worn without the outer shirt it becomes a “kaftan” which is just the inner shirt, loose fit trousers and a hat. It is also worn by everyone ranging from children to elderly people, such as politicians. This has become part of our fashion style and is unique to the western countries in Africa—there are many styles and prints, so if you go to any other country in the west you may see that they have their own unique fabric with unique prints.

I have evolved culturally in many ways. Looking back to the beginning of the semester, I didn’t know anything about the French culture, but right now I can say I know more about their culture. Learning more about a new culture has opened me up to a whole new perspective of viewing issues. I got to find out that the French have a very similar culture to mine, for example, if you were to meet a Nigerian they probably wouldn’t call you their friend on a first day basis, but after getting to know and interact with you often, then you get to be called their friend. This is very similar to what the French do because they regard people they just meet as acquaintances not friends. Those they have grown up with or have been involved with for a long time are the people they refer to as friends.

I have evolved emotionally because I am learning to accept other cultures. The multicultural event is a very important occasion because it brings all cultures together and shows you the
uniqueness of other cultures and what they are made up of, through their food, outfits, posters, singing, dancing, etc. Being in class and learning about the French culture has made me understand that sometimes we have to try new things and view life in general from a whole new perspective. Things I wouldn’t accept before, I can learn to accept now or at least tolerate it because it is part of what someone else believes, ignoring it might be rude towards that person. Learning about the fashion, food, music and dance of another culture is fun because it lets you try out all the different things, and you meet different people each day, you never know where that person may be from pertaining to their country. It gives you an edge so when you are conversing, the person will be impressed that you know a little or have an idea about what their culture entails.

**Sources:**


**Different Foods in Francophone Nations**
-Natalee Long

This semester we covered a chapter in our book, *Chez Nous*, that introduced the class to common foods and drinks that can be found in France and Canada and by default other European Francophone nations. But, it left out all other Francophone nations, such as those in Africa and Oceania. This left me wondering what types of foods these countries enjoy and of the influence, if any, remained from their French backgrounds. In this essay I will compare a wide variety of Francophone countries; French Guiana, Mali, New Caledonia, and Laos’ more popular or common dish(es) to that of France and Canada’s most popular dishes. I have always been a ‘foodie,’ so being able to explore the amazing dishes of these countries only makes me want to travel there directly and indulge in these side dishes.

The first country I will be discussing is French Guiana, a small country in northern South America. Here food play an important part of most celebrations, one favorite is, *bouillon d’aoura* (also known in creole as *bouillon d’awara*).

**Bouillon d’awara (Awara Broth)**

This stew can take up to three whole days to make and is a seafood, chicken, local vegetables, and local fruit grown fruit, *Awara*. Other local foods commonly feature beans, rice, coconut, local game meat, and you will almost always find shrimp thrown in as well. These unique combinations can be associated with the country’s wide variety of influence, including Asian, Spanish, and French. When *bouillon d’aoura* is compared to common French dishes, even with regional differences, a similarity emerges in hardness and their uses of popular meats and vegetables from local areas.

The next dish, *capitaine sangha*, is a specialty meal in Mali, a larger land-locked country in western Africa. *Capitaine sangha* is a spicy dish made with nile perch, a rather large and invasive species of fish commonly found in Africa, bananas, a hot chili sauce, served with rice. Most common dishes in Mali are served with sauce made from vegetables, seafood, or meat, over a plate of rice or millet. In Mali, rice or millet is eaten almost every day with at least one meal, this is similar to French meals that are served with
bread or baguette. In Mali, you will be hard pressed to find food to soothe a sweet tooth, rather the most common ‘sweet’ is tea, while in France you can often find foods such as crepes, macaroons, and other pastries.

Up next is the country of New Caledonia, a small oceanic country near Australia. Here the popular cuisine includes lots of seafood, in fact, most of the specialty foods in New Caledonia will feature fish, lobsters, oysters, etc. A popular local dish, Bougna, is fish or chicken cooked in banana leaves. There is not much known about other specific dishes that residents of this island often make, but they are known for the vast selection of French wine, which like in France, is very popular.

Near the top of popular Laos food is the French Baguette, though commonly attributed to having a strictly Asian influence it is obvious to see the French influence in this popular food. Other favorites though, feature more dishes with rice, noodle and vegetable bases, one such popular dish is, Khao Piak Sen. This dish is commonly served for breakfast and is comprised of flat noodles and broth. The noodle soup can also be garnished with cilantro, bean sprouts, chilli oil, etc. Since this dish is a savory breakfast staple in Laos, it can be compared to the savory options that adorn Canadian breakfast menus.

Khao Piak Sen, Laos Wet Noodle Soup

Sources


“I learned more about culture and different French and Francophone customs than I was expecting to learn in this class and I’m very appreciative for that, because you can learn a language but without understanding the people behind it, what’s the use?” - Hana Kellenberger
Djibouti

Kathleen Hurst

My knowledge of French culture has not increased a great deal over the course of the semester. This is not only because I have already taken French classes in the past, but also because I have been exposed to the culture outside the classroom as well. However, this does not mean that I gained nothing from the class. It was a good refresher course, and it did expand my existing knowledge a little bit. If I were to make the decision again, I would still choose this class over a more advanced course.

Standing in complete contrast to this is my experience with Francophone cultures during this semester. Coming from a white, Midwestern background, I have not had a great deal of exposure to Francophone cultures. This especially applies to cultures originating in Africa and Asia. Even in high school French class, my teachers preferred to focus on their own cultures, since that is what they were most familiar with. Therefore, I studied Southern France and Quebec, but little else. When I did projects over Francophone countries during in my former French classes, I was always assigned Switzerland, Monaco, or Belgium. There were only three students in my class, so we passed those three countries around and never really covered anything else. In retrospect, this is really weird, but at the time it made sense. I hate to say it like this, but I think no one cared about anything but Europe because we were all White.

At Cottey College, my exposure to Francophone cultures began in *le Cercle français*. I found Sarah Van Horn’s presentations on Francophone countries in Asia and the Pacific really interesting, especially the one about Vietnam. This led to my having a more open mind, and enjoying this aspect of the class more than I might have otherwise. I have put together a few presentations like that for later club meetings.

When it came time to pick a country for my final project, I just picked Djibouti because it was one of the few countries that had not yet been picked. It seemed like it would be kind of boring since it was mostly desert, but there was nothing I could do about that. When I started reading about the cultures of the disparate peoples who inhabit the country, I definitely knew this was the aspect of the country about which I wanted to present. It just seemed really weird to me that such similar cultures would consider themselves completely different when they follow the same religion, speak similar languages, and have really similar customs. I still do not have much of an answer as to how they are really that different, except that I am an outsider who cannot pick up on subtle dissimilarities between ethnic groups. I figure it probably goes both ways. If they were looking at people from the Southern or Midwestern United States, I am sure they could not differentiate between us, whereas I can tell by someone’s speech and clothing exactly where they are from. It just depends on the culture(s) you are used to.

I think my reaction to these different ethnic groups really reflects the way White people historically thought about people from other cultures. That is how the Issa-Somali and Afar ethnic groups were stuck in the same country in the first place. Europeans just went around and drew imaginary lines where they did not belong, and combined groups that really should not have been placed together. We always try to impose our laws, customs, and thoughts on other people, even though they have their own. That has really messed things up for a lot of people, like Native Americans, Africans, Asians, and most recently, everyone from the Middle East. White people just need to stay home.

Having said that, here is what I found about Djibouti. Djibouti, formerly known as Somaliland, had no state or national identity until an 1859 French treaty with a local sultan after which it existed as a French protectorate and colony until 1977 when it gained its independence. Today,
French is one of two official languages spoken in the country, but it still has a high population of French expatriates. Their currency, the Djibouti franc, is named after that of France. Djibouti lies on the Red Sea coast in North Africa and is made up of 8,960 miles² of hot and arid terrain (mostly desert). Its rocky and sandy soil prevents large-scale agriculture, so the citizens are mostly nomads. The topography contains intermediate mountain ranges, an active volcano, and two salt lakes. The country has only one major city, in which more than half of the 640,000 residents live.

Two dominant ethnic groups make up the population of the country, Issa-Somali and Afar. As the name indicates, the Issa people migrated from Somali while the Afar belong to the same ethnic group as the neighboring Ethiopian Danakils. Only about two-thirds of the people are settled, while the rest are nomadic. Historically, both groups were nomadic sheep and cattle farmers and traders. Both groups practice Islam and speak related languages. They have little shared identity or nationalist feelings. New wealth from maritime trade currently unites them a little bit. When the French took over the area of modern-day Djibouti, the Afars occupied about 75 percent of the land. However, the Issa overtook them during the 19th century due to Somali immigration. Before independence, the French pitted the two groups against each other and alternately favored each. In the ‘60s, the Issa wanted to unite with Somalia, while the Afar wanted to stay with France and the Issa eventually established the independence of Djibouti, and provided its first president, Hassan Gouled Aptidon. Unfortunately, he turned Djibouti into a one-party state controlled by the Issa while the Afar minority was ignored politically. This caused an Afar revolt and civil war ensued from 1991-1994. After the armed conflict, a policy of compromise was instated and a multiple-party system was established, though the Issa still dominate politics in Djibouti. The current president, Ismail Omar Guelleh, is the nephew of the first president, and is politically similar to his uncle.

One fun fact, Djiboutians eat a “light narcotic leaf” called qat all the time. Men consume it for recreational purposes each day after lunch. They’re able to do this because government offices and other workplaces close at midday because of the heat.

SOURCES:

“One of my favorite aspects of French culture is the 10-week paid vacation that workers receive and 35 hours a week they work. It shows that the French value hard work and enjoying life.” - Olivia Kirkendall.
French Guiana
- Hana Kellenberger

Final Culture Evolution I knew only the basics of the French language when I arrived on Cottey’s campus. I had taken multiple French courses throughout high school but they failed to really impact my understanding of the language and the culture of the French people. Before this taking a French course at Cottey I had only very briefly delved into francophone countries. While taking French in high school we only related our lessons back to France and occasionally Canada or Louisiana, but nowhere else. I knew that there were many francophone countries but I never knew anything specific about them, like their history or their location. I have learned so much in just one semester of French here at Cottey. I feel excited to learn new things and I’m confident in speaking to other people. I learned more about culture and different French customs than I was expecting to learn in this class and I’m very appreciative for that, because you can learn a language but without understanding the people behind what’s the use?

For my final francophone country presentation I choose to research French Guiana. I found the history of French Guiana to be very interesting. Located between Suriname and Brazil, this fairly small country was “discovered” by Christopher Columbus during his third voyage to the new world in 1498. For nearly a century it remained only inhabited by indigenous people until the French settled the land. The French named the island after an American Indian word meaning “land of waters.” The name is fitting, seeing as French Guiana has an environment made up of lush rainforest and marsh, and sits alongside the coast. French Guiana has an array of different ethnic groups and this lends to diversity in all cultural aspects. In the art world of French Guiana the Hmong immigrants, originally from Southeast Asia, create tons of beautiful and bright textiles and tapestries to sell. There is a multitude of languages, stemming from the multiple ethnic groups of the regions and their interactions. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion in French Guiana, with the Hmong people also adhering to this prominent religion, though the Maroon people and some Amerindian people stick to their own religions.

Although small, French Guiana has plenty of tourist attractions from a space center to a beach full of leatherback turtles. French Guiana honors their French roots but the indigenous and immigrated people have helped to make French Guiana thrive. This small country is a proud one and with good reason. They strive to make French Guiana unique and strong while seeming so tiny on the South America scale. It is exciting to see the progress this country has made.

**Sources:**


Before taking Elementary French 1, I knew absolutely nothing about French culture. I knew where France was located, that the main language was French, and that Paris was a city in France; that is about all I knew regarding French culture or anything. I, unlike many currently in this class, had never taken French before this semester. It has truly been an eye-opening semester. I love getting to learn about other cultures, and I did not realize that I would be able to do so in this class. I thought it was strictly going to be learning how to speak, read, and write. I not only learned about French culture from the book and through culture journals, but I also learned about and presented over Mali, a francophone country.

First, I am going to start off by discussing what I learned about families through the book and culture journals. Couples in France, typically marry later and have fewer kids than families in my culture. French families also tend to be close and have a strong influence on a person’s life; this is very similar to my family. Another similarity between the cultures is that pets, usually cats and dogs, are treated like family. French families also celebrate many religious holidays, including All Saint’s Day, which is different than in my culture.

Friends and leisure activities also differ from France to my culture. Typically, the French only have a few real friends, because friend holds a strong meaning and means they have established a strong bond. They have different words for different types of friends. I only have a few close friends. However, I use the word friend to simplify relationships I have with other people, and I use it to make sure that I do not hurt someone’s feelings. The French devote more time to leisure activities than people in my culture, but the activities themselves are very similar to the activities done in my culture.

The school system, time and fashion are also different between the two cultures. In France, children start at an earlier age. Then, when they go off to university, they have to take an exam in order to enter. Universities in France are also very scattered so that they do not necessarily have a “campus” hence the use of the “fac”, a short form of faculty to designate different colleges, whereas in my culture, they are usually in one area. Professions in France are gendered, but in the United States they are not. When I say time is different, I mean the way they tell time. The French prefer to use military because it is easier than using the twelve-hour time, but where I am from everyone uses the twelve-hour clock. Lastly, fashion is big in French culture. In my culture, it is not; fashion is not a big deal in the Mid-West.

Now I will discuss what I have learned about Mali. Mali is a landlocked country, about twice the size of Texas, in Western Africa. The land is very different compared to the Mid-West. A large part of Mali is desert, specifically the Sahara Desert, with some woodland and pasture. The climate is hot and dry with a very small semitropical zone. The Niger River runs through Mali, and provides fertile soil for agriculture, which is their largest trade. Agriculture is also a very big part of my culture; the Mid-West is known for farms and agriculture.

Mali was colonized by the French from 1880 to 1960. By the middle of the 19th century, the French had begun conquering West Africa.
Around 1880, Mali was fully under the control of the French and was known as the French Sudan, note that the actual Sudan is in East Africa, just below Egypt. In 1958, Mali joined Senegal to form the Mali Federation. However, Senegal split from the union, and the independent Republic of Mali was born in 1960. Since then, the economy has struggled and unpopular governments have been overthrown a few times; the French has even assisted with control. Multiparty elections are now held every five years, and Ibrahim Boubacar Keita is currently the president of Mali.

Mali has a population of around ten million people. Most of that population lives in rural areas. Mali is a multilingual country, but their official language is French. One of the lingua franca (a mixture of languages adopted as a common language) of Mali is Bmana, and it is spoken by eighty percent of the population. The main religion of Mali is Muslim.

Food is very important in almost every culture. In Mali, over half of the household income goes towards food. The types of dishes vary from region to region. However, the staple foods include rice, millet, sorghum, and cereals. These are usually served with sauces made with fish, meat, or vegetables. In my culture, we eat rice with meat and vegetable sauces, but they are not staple foods. It is just something that we each every now and then.

In Mali, there are three different forms of marriage: traditional, religious, and civil. Tradition marriage varies from region to region. Religious marriages are mostly Muslim since that is the main religion. Civil marriages are very popular, because without it, wives and children will not be entitled to social welfare benefits.

**Sources:**


My culture project is on the francophone culture of Quebec, which is located in Canada. Since we started this semester, I learned a lot of information and interesting facts about the language as well as the countries who speak it. Moreover, there are many countries that form part of the Francophone culture, and it is interesting to see the number of people who speak it and the organizations that have French as one of their official languages such as the United Nations.

**Quebec:** Before European arrival and subsequent colonization, Algonquian, Iroquoian and Unit groups inhabited this massive slice of land now called Quebec. In 1534, the French explorer, Jacques Cartier, sailed through the Gulf of St. Lawrence came ashore on the Gaspe Peninsula and claimed this land for France. In 1603, Samuel de Champlain, a French navigator and cartographer, sailed down to St. Lawrence River and founded Quebec city in 1608. Likewise, French-Canadians are the largest group of Francophones in North America, over 95% of the population speaks French and only 1.5% speaks English; also more than a third of the people speak both languages. Moreover, the word “Kebec” is an Algonquian word which means “Where the Rivers Narrows.” Quebec City celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2008. In 1605 Quebec only had 44 people as a total of its population and now it has more than 7,903,000 people, which means that through the years, Quebec has expanded not only in its population but also in education, economy, and social status.

One of the leading religions in Quebec is Roman Catholic that had a lot of influence on Quebec’s education, culture, and political system, as well as the center of French-Canadian life. However, through the years it has changed, and people there have become more secular. Some of the main holidays in Quebec are Christmas, Saint Jean Baptiste Day and Thanksgiving. They celebrate these holidays with their traditional food such as the poutine, cretons, baked beans and pea soup.

Doing this homework and researching really gave a boost to my knowledge because at the beginning I only knew the existence of Quebec in Canada, but I did not know enough historical background about it. So researching helped me to understand better their culture and their gastronomy, which is very different from my country. For example in Guatemala in almost every holiday we eat a tamale, which is made with corn, and also we eat soup made with chicken and rice. But nothing compared to Quebec food. Another difference was the language, Guatemala has 23 Mayan languages, and the official one is Spanish, while in Quebec the majority speaks French.

This assignment helped me to expand my knowledge and appreciate other peoples’ cultures and ways of life. I learned a lot in this class, not only about the language but also about different countries and cultures, which makes each country unique.

**Sources:**


Seychelles
- MacKenzie Duncan

Growing up, I was always a person who loved learning about different histories and cultures. I tried learning what I could about different places and people. However, France, or any Francophone country, before this semester, were honestly never really something I paid much attention to, and I’ve never truly been sure why. This semester, over the course of this class, I’ve discovered more about these rich cultures and become more fascinated with them.

In terms of learning about France, one thing I found interesting is the close bonds that people value. It takes longer for them to truly call someone a “friend”, and if you move into a new area, it takes more time to actually find people to become close to than those who would have been there their whole lives. Whereas within the U.S., a lot of the times we use the word “friend” in a more loose way to even describe acquaintances and those who end up moving around a lot can still find friends from place to place. These bonds also show in families, with people, namely younger people, sticking close to their parents as well as extended families; and while this is true for a number of families in the U.S., a lot of what I see for it would be those from southern states. And one interesting thing that really surprised me was mostly the location of the kitchen in houses; hidden away in a separate part, and no one was really ever allowed in there unless you were very close to the family. The kitchen is the heart of the home, so to tuck it away can make some sense. It was interesting, though, seeing the difference, as in my experiences, kitchens are more open here in the U.S. and more accessible; my kitchen at home is in the front of the house, and everyone gathers in there for the most part.

Learning about the Seychelles was another interesting point for me. I had known very vaguely about the country since middle school, and that it had been both a French and an English colony, and that the country itself was visually gorgeous. Doing the research, even past learning about the music and dance, which were very interesting to note, it was fascinating to see the shared “historical similarities” between it and the U.S.; both had different influences of cultures affecting it, from both eras of colonialism for it, and they are both referred to as “melting pot” cultures, having that blend of different cultures to make something. That blend is also seen in religion, as Catholicism, Hinduism and Islam are the main organized religions of the island, but even with that, magic is still referred back to, and consulted upon, which I found to be pretty interesting. Finally, one of the coolest facts I learned about it, is the fact that it’s pretty female-dominated in terms of family, and more equal in its jobs than a lot of other places; their female Parliament member rate is the highest in the world.
interest in me to take more time to learn about Francophone cultures.

**Sources:**


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**Switzerland**

- Evelyn Munufieh

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**Switzerland**

The cultural name for the people of Switzerland is Swiss. Switzerland is also known as “Confederatio Helvetica.” Confoderatio stands for confederation, Helvetica derives from the Latin word Helvetier, the name of the people who lived in the area which later became Switzerland. The people of Switzerland speak different language such as: German, French, Italian, Portuguese, English, Romansh, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Spanish, Turkish, and other languages. The four nationally spoken ones are; German, French, Italian and Romansh.

Switzerland is located in the Central European Time zone (CET), also known as Middle European Time zone (MET). It is one hour ahead of Greenwich Time (GMT+1). Daylight saving time (one hour ahead of the standard time) starts in early spring and ends in late fall. Switzerland hosts about 20% of the Alps. Approximately 100 peaks are close to or higher than 4,000 meters (13,125 feet) above sea level. Many mountain areas are developed and have trains, cog railways, aerial cable cars, and other means of transportation. Swiss mountains are famous for climbing, skiing, snowboarding, biking, hiking, and other recreational activities. Switzerland hosts many lakes, from the large Lake Geneva to hundreds of tiny little lakes in the mountains. There are also many dammed-up lakes, mainly to drive water turbines of power plants.

Switzerland is known for its cleanliness, safety, efficient infrastructure, and high prices of goods. The Swiss are very time conscious and they respect each other’s privacy. Kindness and politeness in social interactions are expected. In their leisure time, many Swiss pursue their artistic hobbies with a group at least once a week. They paint, sing in choir, sew, sculpt, play the instruments among others.

The Swiss are known for producing cheese, chocolate, watches and Swiss army knives. The Swiss army knife is a pocketknife or multi-tool manufactured by Victorinox AG (and up to 2005 also by Wenger SA). The term “Swiss Army knife” was coined by American soldiers after World War II due to the difficulty they had in pronouncing Offiziersmesser, the German name. August 1st marks the annual celebration of Swiss National (or Confederation) Day. In German it is known as Schweizer Bundesfeier; in French as “Fête nationale suisse”; in Italian as Festa nazionale svizzera and Romansh as Fiasta naziunala Svizra. The date was chosen because the Federal Charter of 1291 was dated at the beginning of the month of August. The document is considered one of the country’s most important founding documents. August 1st was chosen...
because this was said to be the day, in 1291, on which the three forest cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden signed the Federal Charter on the Rütli field, near Lake Lucerne. The official celebration fittingly takes place at Rütli field, where a representational celebration is staged in the location that the signing of the charter took place. Similar to the American Independence Day celebrations, big family gatherings and barbecues are a common feature of the day. Communities across Switzerland also celebrate the occasion with bonfires, fireworks and parades.

**VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY KNIFE**
Taking this class has really made me more appreciative of other cultures because I never thought of other cultures aside from mine and it has interesting getting to know other cultures other than mine and learning from other cultures too. I haven’t been to Switzerland before but it is a nice place to spend time with family or friends on vacations. I would love to visit Basel, which is a city in Switzerland. It is located on the Rhine River near the borders of France and Germany. Basel is known for the country's highest concentration of museums. It is also the site of the world's most influential art market each June.

**SOURCES**


“I chose Switzerland as the country for my Cultural Presentation. For the cultural aspect I was originally going to do Traditions but chose to do Holidays instead of that. I chose to research about Switzerland because it looks like a gorgeous place to visit so I wanted to learn more about Switzerland in general. I was also briefly there during the spring break of 2016 because I while on a train from Venice to Paris, we stopped in Switzerland for border patrol. While I did not step foot on Swiss soil at that time, it sparked a curiosity in me about the country and I would like to actually travel and stay there sometime.

I will now go onto the standard information that has to do with Switzerland that I talked about in my presentation. Switzerland is located in Central Europe, and it also borders Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Liechtenstein. The official languages for Switzerland are German, French, and Italian. According to *World Facts*, the population from July 2008 is 7,581,520. Bern is the capital of Switzerland, and Switzerland originated in 1291, and started as an alliance.

In my presentation I talk about two Swiss holidays. I went over Swiss National Day, which is August 1st and *Sechseläuten*, which is the third Monday in April. Swiss National Day, the most recognized way for celebrating is praying, and singing the national anthem, which is called the *Schweizerpsalm*. Something else that happens is
that Church bells ring at 8 at night in all parts of the country. “...there are speeches, firework displays and parties, all accompanied by the waving of flags and the lighting of lanterns and beacons in the mountains,” (“Summer and Autumn Customs”). To talk about Sechseläuten, “Sechseläuten is an old spring festival that occurs in Zurich every year on the third Monday of April. The rite culminates in the burning of the Böög - a figure of a snowman symbolizing winter, ... According to lore, the faster the Böög’s head explodes the more pleasant the following summer will be” (Thorsen, Combodesign). Also, the Böög has fireworks in its head.

For the US comparisons and contrasts, our national holiday (Independence Day) is like Swiss National Day except we don’t pray on Independence Day usually. I originally thought that we do not have a celebration like Sechseläuten, but someone in class (I have forgotten who that is now) brought up in her that we use bonfires on Independence Day for example so that was not right.

Overall, I have enjoyed learning about and presenting on Switzerland, while comparing and contrasting it with my own culture. It is also interesting that I was able to go to the country I was talking about even if I was on a train the whole time. Going to Paris over spring break was pretty great and I tried to practice my French a little bit. I hope that I am now able to speak French at the Elementary level.

**SOURCEs**


“I have learned a lot about French culture and Mali culture, but I also know that I have barely even scratched the surface.”

- Lily Brockus
Tahiti

- Olivia Kirkendall

Over the course of the year I’ve learned several things about France and Francophone cultures. In studying Tahiti, I learned more about Polynesian culture including the cuisine of Tahiti and the ancient tradition of tattooing, which is found in several Pacific cultures with different patterns denoting different families, clans, tribes, and deeds. Comparing Iowa to Tahiti was also very interesting. To most, Tahiti would be the exotic, tropical paradise with gorgeous black sand beaches and Iowa would be the state with the rolling green hills and the corn. So much corn! And yet to a person from Tahiti, Iowa would be the exotic otherworldly place.

As mentioned above I’ve learned a lot about France and Francophone cultures over the year. One of the things that’s always interesting to me when learning about different cultures is the different kinds of holidays celebrated around the world or how holidays celebrated in the United States are celebrated in other countries. For example, Christmas is celebrated in France until January 6, which is Epiphany whereas most Americans celebrate Christmas for two days only December 24th (Christmas Eve) and December 25th (Christmas Day.)

Some holidays are similar in nature and theme but not the same. Bastille Day is celebrated in France on July 14th to commemorate the storming of the Bastille right at the start of the French revolution, freeing several political prisoners. The event is celebrated with fireworks and parades. The holiday is very like the 4th of July in the United States, which commemorates the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. The event is also celebrated with fireworks and parades. And barbeque. Yummy.

Another aspect of culture that’s always interesting to me is the cuisine or how cultures approach and view food. The French love and appreciate food in a way that’s different from Americans. While there is great American cuisine, a lot of Americans prefer to eat quickly and on the run while the French will take time to savor their meal. Fast food is becoming increasingly popular in France with McDonalds springing up all over Paris.

One of my favorite aspects of French culture is the 10-week paid vacation that workers receive and 35 hours a week they work. It shows that the French value hard work and enjoying life. I believe it’s an attitude that should be adopted by the United States. Most Americans, unlike Europeans will never travel outside their own country. This leads to a lack of understanding or awareness of other cultures. I believe that if we implemented at least a 6-week paid vacation into our culture, it would be very beneficial. Not to mention fun! Imagine being able to fly off to Tahiti to escape Iowan winters.

Over all I’ve had an enjoyable time in this class. The culture and geography aspects were some of my favorite parts! I’ve always loved learning about different cultures ever since I was younger and would watch The Travel Channel for hours. I hope to one day travel back to France! I would love to see Paris or Provence in the spring and summer. I also hope to visit Australia or Tahiti.

**Sources:**


The Vietnamese cultural has been forever changed due to the influence of the French. I chose the country Vietnam because ever since I learned about the country being a colony of France in my Francophone Women in Translation class, which I had no prior knowledge about, I became fascinated with the country. I was particularly fascinated with how it became France’s possession in the first place and how that affects life in Vietnam today. My knowledge of the Francophone culture prior to coming into this French class was already well developed due to my previous class, however I did learn more about French culture in France and in other Francophone countries. I learned about the differences in the French spoken in Québec versus France, in addition to how the French also differs throughout France. I also learned more about the school system in France and some Francophone countries as well as the typical daily routines the French have. Furthermore, I saw many differences and some similarities in the values of the French, the clothing, activities, and so on compared to Americans.

In an overview of the introduction of French culture into Vietnam, including the importance of religion, it is necessary to note the several wars that have taken place in Vietnam. Although France had partial and full control of Vietnam from 1883 to 1945, the French went to war with Vietnam at the start of the first Indochina war in 1946 until their defeat in 1954. A separated Vietnam emerged, which led to another war when communism was threatening to spread across the entirety of Vietnam, in which the US fought in. From the viewpoints of an American, communism is seen as a huge threat that does not allow people to advance in their economic status but stay at a communal level with the rest of society. As a capitalist democracy, America prides itself in being able to have a competitive market where people can increase their wealth from building off of other people.

A huge aspect that has influenced the way that Vietnamese people live even in Vietnam today is the introduction of Christianity. Catholic missionaries from France went to Vietnam with the goal to spread the gospel of Christ and convert people, which they did. Although the Christians were persecuted under the Nguyen dynasty, they experienced a very different treatment when Ngô Đình Diệm was ruler.

Christians, specifically Catholics, were treated very well and were given exclusive jobs in the government. Another aspect of Ngô Đình Diệm’s rule was the persecution of Buddhists. This lead to a monk burning himself in protest of many Buddhists being suppressed and treated poorly. These tactics that Ngô Đình Diệm used to emphasize Christianity in Vietnam were very
harsh. Today, although Christianity is the main religion of America, I know that it was not always that way and that the first natives had their own form of religion before colonizers came to the Americas. Also, the spread of Catholicism in France was similar to the way that missionaries from America spread Christianity through conversion around the world.

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“This assignment helped me to expand my knowledge of and appreciate other peoples’ cultures and ways of life.” – Selica Piloy
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