

UNIVERSITE DE NANTES

ANNEE : 2005/2006

U.F.R DE LANGUES - CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE LANGUES
LEA

SESSION 1- 1er semestre

DIPLOME : CYCLE MASTER : NIVEAU 1

DATE : 12/01/ 2006

UNITE D'ENSEIGNEMENT CONCERNEE : 71

HEURE : 13h30

INTITULE DE L'EPREUVE : LANGUE DE SPECIALITE

SALLE : C12 414

EPREUVE POUR : DA - DA& ASSIDUS (rayer la mention inutile)

DUREE : ___ 3h ___

DOCUMENTS AUTORISES : NON

NOM DU PROFESSEUR RESPONSABLE : ANDY ARLEO

OBSERVATION DU PROFESSEUR :

Read the extract from Stephen Clarke, *A Year in the Merde* (Black Swan, 2005) (see appendix) and then do the following tasks:

Task 1 (3 points, 50 to 100 words)

Provide a brief definition of *culture shock*. Give three examples of behaviour that surprises Paul West.

Task 2 (3 points, 50 to 100 words)

Provide a short definition of *stereotype*. Explain the difference between *facts*, *stereotypes* and *generalizations*. List some facts, stereotypes and generalizations about France and the French in this extract.

Task 3 (4 points, 100 to 150 words)

Provide a short summary of Edward Hall's theory of monochronic and polychronic time. Explain how different conceptions of time may contribute to Paul West's perception of French business culture.

Task 4 (10 pts, 250 to 300 words)

Write a dialogue for the following situation:

As a specialist in intercultural communication, you have been invited to appear on a British talk show with Paul West. The topic is "Doing business on both sides of the Channel". The host has asked both of you to explain what a business person should expect when crossing the Channel to work for a French or British company. Refer to concepts studied in the course, such as context, time and intercultural parameters.

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The year does not begin in January. Every French person knows that. Only awkward English-speakers think it starts in January.

The year really begins on the first Monday of September.

This is when Parisians get back to their desks after their month-long holiday and begin working out where they'll go for the mid-term break in November.

It's also when every French project, from a new hairdo to a nuclear power station, gets under way, which is why, at 9am on the first Monday of September, I was standing a hundred yards from the Champs-Élysées watching people kissing.

My good friend Chris told me not to come to France. Great lifestyle, he said, great food, and totally unpolitically correct women with great underwear.

But, he warned me, the French are hell to live

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with. He worked in the London office of a French bank for three years.

"They made all us Brits redundant the day after the French football team got knocked out of the World Cup. No way was that a coincidence," he told me.

His theory was that the French are like the woman scorned. Back in 1940 they tried to tell us they loved us, but we just laughed at their accents and their big-nosed Général de Gaulle, and ever since we've done nothing but poison them with our disgusting food and try to wipe the French language off the face of the Earth. That's why they built refugee camps yards from the Eurotunnel entrance and refuse to eat our beef years after it was declared safe. It's permanent payback time, he said. Don't go there.

Sorry, I told him, I've got to go and check out that underwear.

Normally, I suppose you would be heading for disaster if the main motivation for your job mobility was the local lingerie, but my one-year contract started very promisingly.

I found my new employer's offices – a grand-looking 19th-century building sculpted out of milky-gold stone – and walked straight into an orgy.

There were people kissing while waiting for the lift. People kissing in front of a drinks machine. Even the receptionist was leaning across her counter

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*Never the deux shall meet*

to smooch with someone – a woman, too – who'd entered the building just ahead of me.

Wow, I thought, if there's ever a serious epidemic of facial herpes, they'll have to get condoms for their heads.

Of course I knew the French went in for cheek-kissing, but not on this scale. I wondered if it wasn't company policy to get a neckload of Ecstasy before coming into work.

I edged closer to the reception desk where the two women had stopped kissing and were now exchanging news. The company obviously didn't believe in glamorous front-office girls, because the receptionist had a masculine face that seemed much more suited to scowling than smiling. She was complaining about something I didn't understand.

I beamed my keenest new-boy smile at her. No acknowledgement. I stood in the "yes, I'm here and I wouldn't mind being asked the purpose of my visit" zone for a full minute. Zilch. So I stepped forward and spouted out the password I'd memorized: "Bonjour, je suis Paul West. Je viens voir Monsieur Martin."

The two women gabbled on about having "déjeuner", which I knew was lunch, and they made at least half a dozen I'll-phone-you gestures before the receptionist finally turned to me.

"Monsieur?" No apology. They might kiss each other, but I could kiss off.

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I repeated my password. Or tried to.

“Bonjour, je . . .” No, my head was full of suppressed anger and linguistic spaghetti. “Paul West,” I said. “Monsieur Martin.” Who needs verbs? I managed another willing smile.

The receptionist – name badge: Marianne, personality: Hannibal Lecter – tutted in reply.

I could almost hear her thinking, can’t speak any French. Probably thinks De Gaulle had a big nose. Bastard.

“I’ll call his assistant,” she said, probably. She picked up the phone and punched in a number, all the while giving me a tip-toe inspection as if she didn’t think I was of the required standard to meet the boss.

Do I really look that bad?, I wondered. I’d made an effort to be as chic as a Brit in Paris should be. My best grey-black Paul Smith suit (my only Paul Smith suit). A shirt so white that it looked as if it’d been made from silkworms fed on bleach, and an electrically zingy Hermès tie that could have powered the whole Paris metro if I’d plugged it in. I’d even worn my black silk boxers to give my self-esteem an invisible boost. French women aren’t the only ones who can do underwear.

No way did I deserve such a withering look, especially not in comparison to most of the people I’d seen entering the building – guys looking like Dilbert, women in drab catalogue skirts, lots of excessively comfortable shoes.

* * *

“Christine? J’ai un Monsieur—?” Marianne the receptionist squinted over at me.

This was my cue to do something, but what?

“Votre nom?” Marianne asked, rolling her eyes upwards and turning the last word into a huff of despair at my slug-like stupidity.

“Paul West.”

“Pol Wess,” Marianne said, “a visitor for Monsieur Martin.” She hung up. “Sit over there,” she said in slow, talking-to-Alzheimer-sufferer French.