November 26, 2021

Department of Romance and Arabic Languages and Literatures

University of Cincinnati

PO BOX 210377

Cincinnati, OH 45221-0377

Dear Professor Migraine-George and Members of the Search Committee,

**Application for the Position of Assistant Professor of French (Global French)**

I am writing to apply for the above-named post and ask you to kindly consider the following information in addition to the other documents I have submitted.

I am currently a postdoctoral fellow funded by the Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et Culture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where I am also a lecturer of French in its Residential College (RC), a semi-independent liberal arts living-learning community. Before coming to Ann Arbor in 2018, I graduated *summa cum laude* from a PhD program in literary studies convened jointly by the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Universität des Saarlandes, receiving both Canadian and German qualifications. I was also a visiting scholar (2017–2018) in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the Universität des Saarlandes where I acted as a substitute for Professor Mechthild Gilzmer. I have successfully taught French language courses to non-native speakers at all levels and advanced undergraduate cultural and literary studies courses of my own design in both Germany and the United States, as well as a survey course of my own design for native speakers of French in the Literary Studies B.A. program at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

My doctoral training took place within both the Literary Studies Department at the Université du Québec à Montréal, and in an interdisciplinary group of doctoral students focusing on cultural studies at the Universität des Saarlandes, with Professor Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Chair of Intercultural Communication and Romance Cultural Studies within the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. Here, I designed and taught French language courses and developed undergraduate literary and cultural studies courses in French. I have taught both beginners and more advanced students French oral comprehension and expression around themes such as territorial inequalities and shared economy, and have designed advanced undergraduate literary and cultural studies courses on migrant writing in Quebec and issues of interculturality and ethnicity in comics and graphic novels. I have also acquired substantial teaching experience at Michigan’s RC over the last two years. In the winter of 2021, for example, I adapted my course on “Migrant Writing in Quebec” to align with the objectives of a third-year seminar in the context of an intensive and semi-immersive language program in the United States. My course pays particular attention to the work of writers of Haitian origin now residing in Quebec. My interest in Haitian diaspora literature is complemented by my ongoing work with the Haitian-American community in southeast and central Michigan as a research fellow and member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee at the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership, a nonprofit corporation based in Detroit and affiliated with the National Park Service. (See further details in my diversity statement.) Building on this experience, I am very interested in developing materials that would meet the requirements of courses such as your “FRENCH3083: Francophone Culture: Caribbean,” and to act as a D&I Resource Liaison at the University of Cincinnati or as a member of its diversity council. My advanced, seminar-style undergraduate course, “From Comics to Graphic Novels: Interculturality and Ethnicity,” provides further testimony to my commitment to celebrating diversity and facilitating inclusion in the classroom. The course examines French, French- and English-Canadian, American, and German graphic narratives published since 2000, with a strong emphasis on intercultural relations. Class discussions focus on how graphic narratives depict intercultural encounters and reflect on transcultural and ethnic issues, addressing topics such as race and cross-cultural misunderstanding through reflections on comics as a medium. I could readily adapt this course to include solely French language works for your students to meet the requirements of a graduate level seminar in French. This course also directly relates to my current research on the use and subversion of ethnic and national stereotypes in recent comics and graphic novels published in Quebec, France, and Germany. I have presented findings from my work on these issues at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association in San Diego and as an invited speaker at Johannes von Moltke’s graduate seminar “Cinema and Migration: How to Look at Refugees” at the University of Michigan. My work has also been published in a recent issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Seminar* (Vol. 56, No. 3–4, November 2020). My research focus, more broadly, is on modern and contemporary Quebec literature and culture, specializing in intercultural approaches and issues, including imagology, theories of cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural intertextuality, migrant writing, and reception studies.

While at the University of Michigan, I have completed my first monograph, based on my dissertation, *Les usages littéraires de Thomas Bernhard et de Peter Handke au Québec. Les modalités d’une affiliation interculturelle*, published on February 3, 2021 by Éditions Nota Benein Montréal. The book, showing the utility of the concept of “affiliation” for the intercultural analysis of surprising and unexpected literary influences, draws on a representative corpus of Québécois novels, short stories, and collections of poems published between 1989 and 2011 that exhibit substantial intertextual dialogue with the works of German language writers Thomas Bernhard and Peter Handke. My research on perceptions of German language cultures in contemporary Quebec literature and culture, as well as on contemporary intercultural literature from Quebec and Germany, has been published in French, English, and German in the following peer-reviewed journals: *Littératures*; *Voix et Images*; *Eurostudia - Transatlantic*Journal*for European Studies*; *Zeitschrift für Kanada Studien (ZKS)*; *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*,as well as in different collections in Germany, including the recent *Klassik als kulturelle Praxis. Funktional, intermedial, transkulturell* (De Gruyter, 2019). I have also presented my work at several international conferences, such as the Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association and the Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries. I also presented a comprehensive summary of my work on perceptions of German language cultures and literatures in Québec as a keynote speaker at the yearly ACFAS congress in May 2021.

I believe that my research and teaching interests – which also include Canadian French-language indigenous literature and culture, as well as disability studies – would both complement and add to your department’s interdisciplinary research profile and the already vibrant range of your undergraduate and graduate curricula. The exposure to cross-cultural communication theories I acquired in Saarbrücken, first as a PhD student and then as a visiting scholar and lecturer, has well prepared me to teach “French for the professions” courses, such as “Business French,” which are important in your undergraduate program. I am able to design advanced courses in Francophone Studies that integrate these theories with the study of a variety of media and topics.In addition, I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the European Studies certificate program and the German Studies major and minor programs at the University of Cincinnati. I was educated in the French language educational system in Canada, grew up in a bilingual environment in Montréal, and therefore feel at ease in all levels of instruction in both French and English. However, I also possess a near-native level competency in German and am affiliated with the University of Michigan’s German Department. In German Studies, my teaching and research interests lie in cross-cultural and human rights issues as depicted in narratives of migration and material culture studies, especially car culture (see further details in my diversity statement). In this sense, some of my recent work has the potential to lead to a fruitful and interesting collaboration with Professor Michael R. Gott.

Finally, I read with great interest the descriptions of your courses on Canadian Francophone culture, including the “French 3033” interdisciplinary seminar devoted to Montreal. I would be eager to contribute to that seminar and others, building on my still very active network of contacts in Canada to develop partnerships for new opportunities to study abroad for your students in Montreal and elsewhere in Quebec.

Given my varied and substantial training and the diversity of my professional experience as a researcher, teacher, and colleague, I am confident in my ability to make an important contribution to the University of Cincinnati’s study programs. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you in an interview. My *curriculum vitae*, transcripts, teaching evaluations, and a diversity statement, are included with this application, but I would be happy to provide any additional materials you might require. Finally, I would like to thank you for considering my application.

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Yours sincerely,

Louise-Hélène Filion