Dear Professor Schilt and Members of the Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for the position of Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies in the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the College of the Holy Cross. I am currently a postdoctoral fellow funded by the *Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et Culture* in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. At the University of Michigan, I am also a lecturer of French in the Residential College (RC): a semi-independent liberal arts living-learning community within this college. Before coming to Ann Arbor in fall 2018, I graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from a PhD program in Literary Studies jointly convened by the Université du Québec à Montréal and Saarland University (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 Saarland University where I, among others, had the opportunity to act as the replacement/substitute professor for Professor Mechthild Gilzmer. My research focus is modern and contemporary French-Language and German-Language Literatures and Cultures, with specializations in cross-cultural issues and approaches, including reception and comparative studies; migrant writing (in novels, plays and volumes of poetry, but also in other media, especially comics and graphic novels); cross-cultural communication theories and imagology/the study of cross-national and cross-ethnic perceptions, images, and stereotypes; car culture (that is, cars as intracultural and transcultural mediators of identity).

My PhD training took place both in a literary studies department at the Université du Québec à Montréal, and in an interdisciplinary group of Ph.D. students with a primary focus on cultural studies at Professor Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink’s Chair of Chair of Intercultural Communication and Romance Cultural Studies within the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Saarland University. At this German university, I designed and taught both French-language courses and more advanced undergraduate seminars in French (“*L’écriture migrante au Québec*”) and in French/German (“*De la bande dessinée au roman graphique. Interculturalité et ethnicité/ Vom Comic zum Graphic Novel. Interkulturalität und Ethnizität*”). These advanced undergraduate literary and cultural studies courses attracted a broad range of students. These included students with Cultural Studies profiles; Intercultural Communication and Franco-German studies majors who were particularly interested in the economic aspects of France-Germany relations; future teachers of French as a foreign language in Germany; students of Romance languages and cultures specializing in both French and Spanish, as well as students of Comparative Literature. I drew constantly on my students’ prior knowledge of a variety of disciplines to establish meaningful links to subjects and theories that were at times completely new to them. I believe that my teaching experience in Saarbrücken has prepared me to contribute meaningfully, among others, to your courses “FREN 308 – Francophone Journeys”, and “Writing Around the Arts/FRE 305”. As outlined in my CV, I have also acquired a substantial teaching experience these past two years at the University of Michigan’s Residential College. In winter 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 a truly intensive and semi-immersive language program in the United States. Other teaching experience at the Residential College that would allow me to assume your elementary and intermediate French courses 1 & 2 is presented in detail in my CV.

I have successfully taught French language courses to non-native speakers at all levels in Germany and in the United States; advanced undergraduate cultural and literary studies courses of my own design in Germany and in the United States, as well as a survey course of my own design to French native speakers in the Literary Studies B.A. program at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Given my thorough training in both continental French *and* Francophone literatures (my B.A. in French-language literatures at the Université de Montréal included a one-year stay abroad at the Université Paris VII – Denis Diderot), as well as in literary theory and the novel, I would welcome the opportunity to teach your courses “FREN 304 - French Life & Letters:19th, 20th, and 21st Centuries”, and “FREN 427: 20th-21st Century Novel”. Furthermore, if there is need, I believe that my interest for motivational theories of emotions would allow me to give a specific form and color to courses such as “The Social Life of Feelings” or “The Politics of Emotions” in the Montserrat program. As a Canadian native speaker of French, I was educated in the French-language educational system, but I grew up in a bilingual environment in Montréal; I therefore feel at ease in all levels of instruction in both French and English. I also possess a near-native level in German and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to your German studies major and minor; in German Studies, my teaching and research interests also involve cross-cultural and human rights issues as they are depicted in narratives of migration.

During my time at the University of Michigan thus far, I was able to complete my first monograph, derived from my dissertation: *Les usages littéraires de Thomas Bernhard et de Peter Handke au Québec. Les modalités d’une affiliation interculturelle*.It was published on February 3, 2021 by Éditions Nota benein Montreal. The book draws on a representative corpus of Québécois novels, short stories, and collections of poems published between 1989 and 2011. The works chosen all exhibit substantial intertextual dialogue with the works of Austrian writers Thomas Bernhard and Peter Handke. Based on the concept of “affiliation”, my book presents a typology of appropriated foreign literary traditions found in contemporary Quebec literature. The typology is useful to study, beyond Quebec, other highly institutionalized literary traditions that originate from minority cultures. My research has also appeared in French, English and German in the following peer-reviewed journals: *Littératures*; *Voix et Images*; *Eurostudia - Transatlantic*Journal*for European Studies*; *Revue d’Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande*; *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).

Since arriving in Michigan in 2018, I have also been able to develop collaborations outside the academic world that benefit the larger community and resonate with my understanding of the Jesuit model of education and its focus on civic engagement. As a research fellow, I currently work with the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership, a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the National Park Service that interprets and preserves southeast and central Michigan’s essential contribution to the development of the automotive industry. In my partnership with this organization, I help MotorCitiesreach out to communities whose contribution to the development of the auto industry has been essential but neglected so far. First, I am involved in the creation and conceptualization of the Making Tracks II website, a follow-up to the already existing site, *Making Tracks: The African American Experience in the Auto Industry* ([*https://www.motorcities.org/making-tracks*](https://www.motorcities.org/making-tracks)) founded approximately ten years ago through a partnership between MotorCities, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, and the Ford Motor Company. This site presents a series of audio clips profiling African Americans who became leaders in the automotive industry. It retraces their migration journeys north to settle in Detroit and the many hurdles they had to overcome as black people to establish themselves in an industry they had largely helped set up. TheMaking Tracks I website currently treats material through the end of the 1940s (1947 – *don’t know how to best phrase this*?). With the Black Lives Matter movement in full swing, MotorCities has decided in the summer of 2020 to develop a new website that will include the period from 1948 to the present day. Since the end of April 2021, I am the primary researcher responsible for selecting the content for the period 1948-1980.

I am also a full member of the MotorCities Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, which includes members of the organization’s board of directors. The committee has identified a number of minority groups whose contribution to the development of Michigan’s auto industry has not (or not sufficiently) been considered in MotorCities’ preservation work. So far, I have acted as MotorCities’ intermediary in approaching French-language groups in the region: our goal in initiating dialogues with certain individuals identified as “key contacts” within these groups is to better understand in what way(s) our organization can showcase their respective contributions to automotive history and thus tell more inclusive automotive histories. Thus far, the collaboration I have established with the Haitian Network Group of Detroit has been especially fruitful: this September, for example, I will record at Real Times Media’s studio of Detroit oral histories with several Haitian American engineers whom I was able to contact through the aforementioned organization and who have accepted to share their own experience and path. Furthermore, the interview I conducted with Mary-France Oudin, a French-American senior program manager at Mahle-Behr USA, has also been published on MotorCities’ youtube page this summer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovrasmb6DNU>.

While these experiences are, of course, grounded in the reality/history of the region I currently live in, they also highlight my efforts to maintain a research practice that is anchored in my community. At the College of the Holy Cross, I would, among others, be interested in taking an active lead in mentoring students in their community outreach projects – I have read with great interest the description of the Student Programs for Urban Development (SPUD) on your website, and especially those programs that involve refugees. If there is interest, I would look forward, for example, to designing for advanced students of French a translation course tied with community engagement – perhaps through a collaboration with a non-profit organization in New England offering shelter and/or legal services to asylum seekers from French-speaking Africa in the United States.

In conclusion, on the basis of my training and professional experience as researcher, teacher, and colleague, I am confident in my ability to make important contributions to the College of the Holy Cross’ French program. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to convince you of this in an interview. My curriculum vitae, statement on teaching, transcripts, three confidential letters of recommendation, and a link to a recent video of myself teaching, are included in my application. I would be happy to provide any additional materials. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Louise-Hélène Filion