French 2500 teaches students, mainly at the graduate level (undergraduates are welcome as long as they understand that this course cannot be used in satisfaction of the language requirement) the skills necessary to read French. The course manages to do this by a) leaving out three of the four skills generally considered to be part of a language (aural, oral, and writing), and by urging students to use the French they have learned as soon as they finish the course: a skill learned this fast is perishable. In the first weeks, attention is given to vocabulary (especially cognates), regular verbs, simple syntax (declarative sentences in the present tense). Quickly however, we move to genuine French texts taken from literature and social sciences and that exemplify more complicated constructions. Students are asked to bring in texts by writers they hope to read in their further studies, and these are used for in-class exercises. The course involves a great deal of translation, both in-class and out of class, of individual sentences and of paragraphs of continuous text. Attempts are made both in class and in the assignments to make the translations as amusing as possible, while still remaining germane to the students’ needs.