Juliette Rogers says simply that she learned French the hard way. In high school, she took all of the offered courses up to French III. Done! Then, in college, her roommate who’d spent a year in France spoke French, gaily, with friends in the dorm. Impressed, Rogers took up the language again in her sophomore year. She found it hard, doubly so, because of what she’d forgotten in just two years. Nonetheless, she flew off to an immersion program at a language institute in France.

That summer, Rogers “fell in love with the language and the culture.” The family she lived with was very inviting. “I went to a wedding with them, and we went on a beach vacation,” she recalls. “It rained, but we played cards, cooked, watched John Wayne movies, and talked. When I came back to the States, I discovered French literature and that was it.”

She began by reading and writing about Colette. This theme of women writers has continued throughout her career. Her most recent book, Career Stories: Belle Epoque Novels of Professional Development, analyzes novels written about professional French women in the years 1880–1914. Her current work focuses on Québec women authors as well as other Francophone authors.

At UNH, Rogers teaches courses in French and women’s studies. She’s also guest lectured in the European cultural studies program. As she moves seamlessly from one genre to the next, she covers history, culture, and current issues in each field.

Rogers’ teaching incorporates a relaxed, conversational style. Students often comment, “Well, when I saw that Julie was teaching it… I signed up immediately.” Rogers encourages a French style of conversation: the topics are demanding, the challenge of articulating an informed opinion in French is steep, and a passionate argument is a given.

This spring, a discussion in Rogers’ French civilization class took on immigration issues in France. The class was diverse, with students from Cameroon, France, and Rwanda along with others who’d studied abroad and novices as well. Under Rogers’ direction, there was full class participation. This is the kind of teaching that leads to fluency and much more.

— Carrie Sherman

“I discovered French literature and that was it.”
— Juliette Rogers