FRENCH

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http://french.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
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Affiliated Faculty Dudley Andrew (Film & Media Studies), Carol Armstrong (History of Art), John Merriman (History)

FIELDS OF STUDY
Fields include French literature, criticism, theory, and culture from the early Middle Ages to the present, and the French-language literatures of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Maghreb.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
A thorough command of French is expected, as well as a good preparation in all fields of French literature. Applicants should submit a twenty-page writing sample in French. This can consist of one twenty-page paper or several shorter papers that total twenty pages.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
(1) Candidates must demonstrate proficiency in two languages (in addition to English and French). Proficiency is defined as the successful completion of one year of study at the college level or reading proficiency at the graduate level. Students must fulfill one language requirement no later than the beginning of their third term of study. The second language requirement must be satisfied before the prospectus can be approved. (2) During the first two years of study, students normally take sixteen term courses. These must include Old French and at least two graduate-level term courses outside the department. They may include one term of an approved language course taken as a means of fulfilling one of the language requirements, and as many as four graduate-level term courses outside the department. A grade of Honors must be obtained in at least four of the sixteen courses, two or more of which must be in courses offered by the department. (3) A qualifying oral examination takes place during the sixth term. The examination is designed to demonstrate students’ mastery of the French language, their knowledge and command of selected topics in literature, and their capacity to present and discuss texts and issues. (4) After having successfully passed the qualifying oral examination, students are required to submit a dissertation prospectus for approval, normally no later than the end of the term following the oral examination.

In order to be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D., students must complete all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus. Students must be admitted to candidacy by the end of the seventh term.

Teaching is considered an integral part of the preparation for the Ph.D. degree, and all students are required to teach for at least one year. Opportunities to teach undergraduate courses normally become available to candidates in their third year, after consideration of the needs of the department and of the students’ capacity both to teach and to fulfill their final requirements. Prior to teaching, students take a language-teaching methodology course.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM
The French department also offers three combined Ph.D.s: one in French and African American Studies (in conjunction with the Department of African American Studies), one in French and Renaissance Studies (in conjunction with the Renaissance Studies Program), and one in French and Film and Media Studies (in conjunction with the Film and Media Studies Program). Students in all of these combined degree programs are subject to all the requirements for a Ph.D. in French, with exceptions noted below. In addition, they must fulfill certain requirements particular to the combined program.

The combined Ph.D. in French and African American Studies is most appropriate for students who intend to concentrate in and write a dissertation on the literature of the francophone Caribbean. Students take sixteen term courses, including Theorizing Racial Formations (AFAM 505), which is a required course for all first-year graduate students in the combined program, and three other graduate-level African American Studies courses: (1) a history course, (2) a social science course, and (3) a course in African American literature or culture. Ten of the remaining twelve courses are devoted to the full spectrum of periods and fields in French and francophone literature and culture; the two remaining courses can be in any field. Students in the combined degree program should fulfill the French department’s language requirements by gaining proficiency in either a Creole language of the Caribbean or Spanish, as well as by demonstrating competence in a second foreign language that is directly relevant to the study of the Caribbean. The students’ oral
examinations normally include two topics of African American content. The dissertation prospectus must be approved by the director of graduate studies both in the French department and in African American Studies, and final approval of the dissertation must come from both departments. For further details see African American Studies.

Students in the combined Ph.D. program in French and Renaissance Studies will take nine courses in French and seven in Renaissance Studies. Students must learn Latin and Italian. The oral examination will consist of seven topics: four in French and three in Renaissance Studies. Both the dissertation prospectus and the final dissertation must be approved by the French department and the program in Renaissance Studies. For further details see Renaissance Studies.

For students in the combined Ph.D. program in French and Film and Media Studies, the oral examination will normally include one topic on film theory and one on French film. Both the dissertation prospectus and the final dissertation must be approved by the French department and the program in Film and Media Studies. In addition, Film and Media Studies requires a dissertation defense. For further details see Film and Media Studies.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program may petition for the M.A. degree after a minimum of one year of study in residence, upon completion of one of the language requirements and eight courses, of which at least six are in French. Two grades of Honors in French graduate courses are required.

Program materials are available on the department’s website at http://french.yale.edu/academics/graduate-program.

COURSES

FREN 610a, Old French R. Howard Bloch
An introduction to the Old French language, medieval book culture, and the prose romance via study of manuscript Yale Beinecke 229, The Death of King Arthur, along with a book of grammar and an Old French dictionary. Primary and secondary materials are available on DVD. Work consists of a weekly in-class translation and a final exam comprised of a sight translation passage, a familiar passage from Yale 229, and a take-home essay. No previous study of Old French necessary, although a knowledge of French is essential. Conducted in English.

FREN 840a, Renaissance Lyric: La Pléiade Edwin Duval
The seminar focuses on a poetic revolution that sought to reinvent French lyric by purging it of all traces of its medieval origins and infusing it with the qualities, forms, and prestige of Greek and Latin lyric. We concentrate together on the best-known works by the two principal poets of this movement, Du Bellay and Ronsard, while each student works independently to become an expert on one of the lesser poets of the so-called Pléiade that formed around them. Emphasis is on close reading of some of the best poems written in French, but due attention is paid to the necessary background in poetics and literary history. Conducted in French.

FREN 865a, Diderot Carol Armstrong
Perhaps the most inventive writer, philosopher, and art critic of the French Enlightenment, Denis Diderot wrote at the conjunction of several eighteenth-century media and disciplines, in particular art; craft and technology; literature; philosophy; and science. It is in that light that this interdisciplinary seminar considers his work, not only in its own right, but also in relation to that of other figures of his time, including artists such as Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, Jean-Baptiste Greuze, and Jean-Honoré Fragonard; writers and playwrights such as Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau; and the philosopher Jean Le Rond d’Alembert, with whom he codirected the great Enlightenment masterwork, the Encyclopédie, along with the illustrator Louis-Jacques Goussier, who undertook most of the illustrations. A central focus is the relations between the project of the twenty-eight-volume Encyclopédie, carried out between 1751 and 1772, with its 71,818 articles and 3,129 illustrations, and that of the Salons written and privately published as letters to the Baron Grimm in La Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique between 1759 and 1771, and 1775 and 1781. We stress the visual, art historical, and art critical significance of Diderot’s thought; and we also consider his novels, letters, and dialogues; his essays on theater; and his philosophical writings on empirical science. Many of these texts are translated into English, but as much as possible we try to read them together in the original French.

FREN 875a, Psychoanalysis: Key Concepts and Their Circulation among the Disciplines Moira Fradinger
Working with primary sources mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpuses, this seminar is an introduction to key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, ending with an exploration of the afterlife of these concepts in other disciplines, focusing on one or two concrete examples. Students gain proficiency in what has been called “the language of psychoanalysis,” as well as the tools to assess how these concepts have been translated into the language of disciplines such as political theory, film studies, gender studies, sociology, etc. Concepts to be studied include the unconscious, the ego, identification, the drive, the death drive, repetition, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and jouissance. Depending on the interests of the group, others can be added (such as the difference between neurosis, perversion, and psychosis). Main examples from other disciplines are the theory of ideology and theories of sexual difference and gender. Commentators and readers of Freud and Lacan are consulted as secondary sources (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others).
FREN 877a, The Libertine Novel  Pierre Saint-Amand
The course studies how this subgenre of the eighteenth-century novel radically transforms its more accepted model and pushed its limits. Leaving the focus of interiority, the libertine novel explores space; characters lose their psychological depth to become bodies, surfaces of pleasure. On the side of heroes and heroines, we consider the effort in the construction of libertine communities. Those experiments with the novel bring it fully into modernity.

FREN 899b, Modernity  Maurice Samuels
The seminar studies literature and art from nineteenth-century France alongside theoretical and historical reflections to explore the significance of modernity. How did historical forces shape cultural trends? How did literature and art define what it means to be modern? Writers to be studied include Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Maupassant, and Zola. Theorists include Benjamin, Durkheim, Foucault, Marx, Simmel, and Weber. We also examine the painting of Manet and his followers. Reading knowledge of French required.

FREN 900b / HIST 667b / WGSS 667b, History of Sexuality in Modern Europe  Carolyn Dean
An introduction to the various lines of inquiry informing the history of sexuality. The course asks how historians and others constitute sexuality as an object of inquiry and addresses different arguments about the evolution of sexuality in Europe, including the relationship between sexuality and the state and sexuality and gender.

FREN 942b / AFST 942b / CPLT 986b, Decolonizing Memory  Jill Jarvis
This seminar introduces students to theories of memory, testimony, and trauma by bringing key works on these topics into dialogue with literary texts by writers of the former French and British empires in Africa. Literary readings may include works by Djebar, Ouologuem, Farès, Salih, Head, Aidoo. Theoretical readings by Arendt, Adorno and Horkheimer, Agamben, Césaire, Derrida, Fanon, Foucault, Mbembe, Spivak.

FREN 946a / AFAM 846a / AFST 747a / CPLT 725a, Postcolonial Theory and Its Literature  Christopher Miller
A survey of theories relevant to colonial and postcolonial literature and culture. The course focuses on theoretical models (Orientalism, hybridity, métissage, créolité, ”minor literature”), but also gives attention to the literary texts from which they are derived (francophone and anglophone). Readings from Said, Bhabha, Spivak, Mbembe, Amselle, Glissant, Deleuze, Guattari. Conducted in English.

FREN 951b / AFAM 822b / AFST 651b, The Francophone African Novel  Christopher Miller
A comprehensive study of the novel – its discourse, aesthetics, and history – in colonial and postcolonial francophone Africa. Authors include Lamine Senghor, Ousmane Socé, Ousmane Sembène, Ferdinand Oyono, Ahmadou Kourouma, Yambo Ouologuem, Mariama Râ, Aminata Sow Fall, Fatou Diome, Calixthe Beyala, Alain Mabanckou. Readings in French; course conducted in English.

FREN 980a, Seminar on the Profession  Pierre Saint-Amand
Open only to French department graduate students entering the job market, this workshop concentrates on the skills and the materials needed for candidacy. Individual and group activities throughout the fall term. Intense focus on the preparation of written materials, followed by training in performative skills. For credit (does not count toward sixteen-course requirement). Graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.