FRENCH

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

Chair
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Associate Professors Morgane Cadieu, Thomas Connolly

Assistant Professors Jill Jarvis, Christophe Schuwey

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 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 (FREN 610) 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. At the end of the first year of study, a grade of Honors must be obtained in at least two graduate term courses taught by core faculty within the French department. By the end of the second year, a grade of Honors must be obtained in at least four graduate term courses taught by core faculty within the French department. The total required number of Honors in French department courses taught by core faculty is thus four. (Core faculty are faculty appointed in French, as opposed to affiliated faculty.) (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 (DGS) 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 658b / CPLT 969b / MDVL 658b / NELC 684b / SPAN 658b, Law and the Science of the Soul: Iberian and Mediterranean Connections  Jesus Velasco
This seminar suggests a research project to investigate the affinity between the legal discipline and the science of the soul, or, if you wish, between the science of the soul and the body of law. The point of departure for our framing argument—the existence of this affinity—is that at different moments in history, the legal science (in the form of legal scholarship, religious law, or even legislation) has toiled to appropriate cognitive processes (the external senses, for instance) and post-sensorial operations (imagination, fantasy, memory, etc.). However, this appropriation has become, at different moments in history, so naturalized, so dissolved, so automatized, that it has become invisible for us, and that, because of this invisibility, the affinity can continue doing a political work that is not always evident to us readers, citizens, and clients of the law. In this seminar we read Iberian and Mediterranean primary sources from different confessions, in different languages, and within different legal and political backgrounds—from pre-Socratic thinkers to al-Ghazali, from Averroes and Maimonides to Alfonso X, from Parisian theologians to Spinoza, etc. Likewise, we read theoretical work that allow us to conceptualize the kind of research we are doing.

FREN 700a / HIST 654a, Readings in Modern European Cultural History  Carolyn Dean
This course covers readings in European cultural history from 1789 to the present, with a focus on Western Europe.

FREN 752b / CPLT 935b / FILM 755b, French Cinema through the New Wave  Dudley Andrew
This seminar uses a sample of twenty films (with clips from many others) to survey four decades of the tradition of French cinema crowned by the privileged moment of the New Wave. Graduate students are asked to challenge the idea of “national cinema” by reporting on some non-canonical or marginal film before midterm. Keeping the culture industry in view, we question the extent to which such a consistently robust cinema has been bound to—or remained partly independent of—a nation that from 1930 to 1970 underwent a depression, a socialist experiment, an occupation, a liberation, and the humiliations of decolonization abroad and social unrest (May ‘68) at home. In addition to the midterm contribution, graduate students write a substantial term paper.

FREN 841b, Plant, Animal, Man: The Necessary “Art of Conference”  Dominique Brancher
This seminar examines the relationships between three terms: man, animal, and plant. Cultural history has long privileged the man-animal dyad. We try to understand how in early modern Europe discursive representations, sensitive to the dynamic interactions between these three communities, have built a shared history. We are brought back to the etymology of the term “ecology”: these three areas of life interact in the same medium, oikos, that can be physical as well as textual. Our investigation thus attempts to sketch an archaeology of Western thought on life, the challenge being to reconstitute a forgotten model of reflection on the community between humanity and other forms of life. Readings in a multidisciplinary corpus that includes medical, legal, and theological productions; agronomic and hunting literature; herbaria; natural history books (Belon, Rondelet, Aldrovandi); travel accounts (Jean de Léry, Thévet); poetry (Ronsard, Baïf, Madeleine and Catherine des Roches); fiction (Alberti, Rostand, Sorel); autobiographical texts (Montaigne, Agrippa d’Aubigné); treatises (Du Bellay, Henri Estienne). Conducted in French.

FREN 861a, Margins of the Enlightenment  Pierre Saint-Amand
This course proposes a critical examination of the French Enlightenment, with a focus on issues of progress, universalism, and race. We confront these notions with approaches that have emerged in the postcolonial field of studies as well as gender studies. Authors from the clandestine and underground philosophical milieu are also studied. We are assisted by contemporary historians and critics of the Enlightenment, principally Foucault, Hunt, and Darnton. Readings are in Mme de Graffigny, Mme de Duras, Boyer d’Argens, Mairobert, Diderot, and Rousseau. Conducted in French.
FREN 875a / CPLT 904a / FILM 617a / SPAN 901a, Key Concepts in Psychoanalysis: Tools for the Critical Humanities  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 aesthetic criticism, political theory, film studies, gender studies, theory of ideology, 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 neurosis, perversion, fetishism, psychosis, anti-psychiatry, etc.). Commentators, readers, and critics of Freud and Lacan are also consulted (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufrey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others).

FREN 885b / AFST 885b / CPLT 735b, Modern French Poetry in the Maghreb  Thomas Connolly
A survey of twentieth- and twenty-first-century poetry written in French by authors from North Africa, including works by Amrouche, Sénac, Khair-Eddine, Laâbi, Nissaboury, Djouk, Farès, Ben Jelloun, Meddeb, Acherchour, Negrouche, Dib, and Bekri. Readings in French, discussion in English. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.

FREN 888b / CPLT 807b / ITAL 888b, The Novel of Historical Event: The Nineteenth Century and Beyond  Jane Tylus
The seminar moves from the traditional idea of the historical novel to other, often more experimental versions of fictions that engage historical events: war, revolution, plague, genocide. We consider how individual lives intersect with and are changed by historical events, and the extent to which individuals are able to understand how history impacts their lives. Is the course of history controllable or even understandable to its participants and bystanders? Does historical knowledge always arrive too late? Primary texts include Manzoni, I Promessi Sposi; Balzac, Le Colonel Chabert; Flaubert, L’Education sentimentale; Verga, Novelle; Tomasi di Lampedusa, Il Gattopardo; Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!: Modiano, Dora Bruder. There are also readings in the history and theory of the novel, as well as works contextualizing issues of nationalism in the nineteenth century. They include essays/chapters by Georg Lukács, Nelson Moe, Roberto Dainotto, Edward Said, Franco Moretti, Peter Brooks, and others. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French and/or Italian.

FREN 898b / CPLT 898b, Fin-de-siècle France  Maurice Samuels
The course examines major French literary and artistic movements of the last decades of the nineteenth century (Naturalism, Decadence, Symbolism) in their cultural context. Weekly reading assignments pair literary texts with contemporary theoretical/medical/political discourse on such topics as disease, crime, sex, poverty, colonialism, nationalism, and technology. Literary authors include Barbey, Mallarmé, Maupassant, Rachilde, Villiers, and Zola. Theorists include Bergson, Freud, Krafft-Ebing, Le Bon, Nordau, Renan, and Simmel. Some attention also paid to the visual arts. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.

FREN 930a / CPLT 734a, War and Memory from WWII to the Algerian War: Archive, Fiction, Theory  Alice Kaplan
The seminar moves from WWII to the Algerian War, comparing classic works of fiction and film (both fiction and documentary) that take on the problem of war and memory through characters and narrative structure. Fictions include: Modiano, Dora Bruder; Camus, The First Man; Sebald, Austerlitz; Toumi, L’effacement; Zeniter, L’Art de perdre; and Djaout, Les chercheurs d’os. Films include: Audieard, Un héros très discret; Ophuls, The Sorrow and the Pity; Resnais, Muriel; and Bensmail, La Bataille d’Alger, un film dans l’histoire. Theoretical works on war and memory include: Roussou, The Vichy Syndrome; Benjamin Stora, Le gangrène et l’oubli; and YFS, “Nœuds de mémoire” and debates on multidirectional memory. Conducted in English.