FRENCH

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

Chair
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Professors R. Howard Bloch, Ardis Butterfield (English), Carolyn Dean (History), Marie-Hélène Girard (Visiting), Alice Kaplan, Pierre Saint-Amand, Maurice Samuels

Associate Professor Thomas Connolly
Assistant Professors Morgane Cadieu, 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 ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
A thorough command of French is expected, as well as a good preparation in all fields of French literature. Scores from the General Test of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) are required. Applicants should submit a twenty-page writing sample in French. The sample 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 (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.

**MASTER’S DEGREES**

**M.Phil.** See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

**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 558A, Translation Controversy in Twentieth-Century French Literature** Alice Kaplan

The course considers major authors of twentieth-century France whose work has given rise to fierce debates over translations and re-translations into English. Authors include Proust, Céline, Camus, Beauvoir, Fanon, and, in a reversal of the issues, the French Faulkner. Theoretical questions include untranslatability; the task of the translator; re-translation and the historicity of the literary text; translation and symbolic capital; and the postcolonial turn in Translation Studies. Seminar work entails close readings of the primary texts, literary history, and translation workshops. Prerequisite: advanced reading knowledge of French. Discussion and papers are in English.

**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 700A, Readings in 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 802A, Medieval Translation** Ardis Buttefield

Using modern postcolonial as well as medieval theories of translation, memory, and bilingualism we explore how texts are transformed, cited, and reinvented in the medieval period. What happens to language under the pressure of crosslingual reading practices? How can the freedom and inventiveness of medieval poetic practices illuminate modern theories of translation? Texts include material in French, English, Latin, and Italian. Proficiency in any one or more of these languages is welcome, but every effort will be made to use texts available in modern English translation, so as to include as wide a participation as possible in the course.

**FREN 822A, Ancients and Moderns** Christophe Schuwey

What does it mean to be new, original, or innovative in literature? On the contrary, what does being traditional imply? What socioeconomic, ideological, and aesthetic issues lie behind those concepts and questions? This seminar addresses these questions at the time they first became central for France, when literature and arts became a market as well as a major political issue. Through
literary and metaliterary works (Molière, Desjardins, La Bruyère, Scudéry, Guéret, Perrault) we reconsider our own relationship to novelty, tradition, and literary creation. In order to get hands-on with the most modern evolutions in the field, we also develop a critical edition of La Bruyère’s *Les Caractères*, a canonical work that looks reactionary in terms of its content and extremely modern in its printing technique. This edition is backed by a Rosenkranz grant for digital humanities in the classroom that will allow us to work with a professional designer. Prerequisite: French reading, speaking, and writing.

**FREN 842a, Sexuality Studies in the French Renaissance**  Staff
In the words of the anthropologist Maurice Godelier, “sexuality is always something other than itself” (a biological phenomenon), and it is sexuality’s social and discursive constructions that we study in this seminar, through a large sample of texts from different genres. By crossing the approaches of gender studies, the history of emotions, and historical anthropology and literary analysis, we look at the abundant speech of sex that characterizes the Renaissance, where prohibition has had the value of incentive, as Michel Foucault has so clearly shown. Readings in erotic/pornographic poetry (Ronsard, Jodelle, Théophile de Viau), travel literature (Cholières), self-portraiture (Montaigne), chronicles and anecdotes (Brantôme, Pierre de l’Estoile), medical literature (Joubert, Paré, Duval), and short stories (*Cent nouvelles nouvelles*). Conducted in French.

**FREN 893b / CPLT 899b, Realism and Naturalism**  Maurice Samuels
This seminar interrogates the nineteenth-century French Realist and Naturalist novel in light of various efforts to define its practice. How does critical theory constitute Realism as a category? How does Realism articulate the aims of theory? And how do nineteenth-century Realist and Naturalist novels intersect with other discourses besides the literary? In addition to several works by Balzac, novels to be studied include Stendhal’s *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Sand’s *Indiana*, Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, and Zola’s *Nana*. Some attention also paid to Realist painting. Reading knowledge of French required.

**FREN 903b, Theories of Marie-Antoinette**  Pierre Saint-Amand
This seminar can be considered an introduction to cultural studies. We approach various fictions of Marie-Antoinette, the last queen of France, through a variety of textual materials. We study in particular the way they have represented and reconstituted the controversial life of the doomed queen. Readings in memoirs, letters, pamphlets, plays. We use corresponding critical analysis of those texts, deploying a number of theoretical approaches: feminist history, gender and queer theory, as well as cultural and historical analysis.

**FREN 929b / CPLT 728b, Chance and Constraints in Literature**  Morgane Cadieu
The course explores experimental prose in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by focusing on *pataphysics, surrealism, Oulipo, the Situationists, New Novel, and post-exoticism*. Topics include inspiration and creativity; automatic writing and constrained literature; determinism and free will; the aesthetics of randomness; exceptions to the rule; materialism and atomism. Works by Jarry, Duchamp, Breton, Debord, Perec, Queneau, Garréa, Beckett, Calle, Volodine. Theoretical readings by Lucretius, Spinoza, Althusser, Derrida, Serres, Nancy. Conducted in French.

**FREN 965b / AFST 965b, On Violence: Politics and Aesthetics across the Maghreb**  Jill Jarvis
A study of twentieth-century Maghrebi texts and films that document, theorize, and critique forms of political violence. How might aesthetic works—novels, plays, poems, torture and prison testimonies, political cartoons, films—run counter to state-sanctioned memory projects or compel rethinking practices of testimony and justice for a postcolonial time? Works by Kateb, Djebar, Mechakra, Djaout, Alleg, Boupacha, Meddeb, Barrada, Binebine, Laâbi, Rahmani, Mouride. Theoretical readings by Fanon, Mbembe, Khatibi, Kiliti, Dorlin, Benjamin, Spivak, Derrida, Laza. Conducted in English. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.