FRENCH

Humanities Quadrangle, 3rd floor, 203.432.4900
http://french.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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Associate Professors Morgane Cadieu, Thomas Connolly

Assistant Professors Jill Jarvis, Christophe Schuwey

Affiliated faculty 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 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 700b / HIST 654b, 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 802a / CPLT 582a / ENGL 545a / MDVL 502a, Chaucer and Translation  Ardis Butterfield
An exploration of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1340–1400), brilliant writer and translator. Using modern postcolonial as well as medieval theories of translation, memory, and bilingualism, we investigate how texts in French, Latin, and Italian are transformed, cited, and reinvented in his writings. Some key questions include: What happens to language under the pressure of crosslingual reading practices? What happens to the notion of translation in a multicultural society? How are ideas of literary history affected by understanding Chaucer’s English in relation to the other more prestigious language worlds in which his poetry was enmeshed? Texts include material in French, Middle English, Latin, and Italian. Proficiency in any one or more of these languages is welcome, but every effort is made to use texts available in modern English translation, so as to include as wide a participation as possible in the course.

FREN 867b, Slavery and the French Enlightenment  Pierre Saint-Amand
This course studies the encounter between eighteenth-century philosophers and the question of slavery. It examines the clash between the Enlightenment claim to universalism and the historical slave trade. Readings include the writings of the philosophes (Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, the Encyclopédie), testimonies of the victims of the trade (Equiano, Cugoano), the discourse of abolitionists (Condorcet, Grégoire), and plays devoted to the discussion of slavery (Gouges, Pigault-Lebrun). Our approach to those texts expands into a variety of critical and theoretical arguments spanning a number of disciplines (history, anthropology, economics, and ecology). Conducted in French.

FREN 871b / AMST 734b / CPLT 645b / ENGL 971b, Fictions of Canada: Colonialism, Nationalism, Postcolonialism  Katie Trumpener
This course explores the literature(s) of Canada in its long history, its considerable linguistic and cultural range, and its complex relationship to political history. Like Canada itself, Canadian literature represents a “contact zone” between First Nations peoples, French and British settlers, and immigrants from Eastern Europe, East and South Asia, and the Caribbean. Particular focus on Canada’s diverse early literatures (from Jesuit hymn to epistolary novel); on the prominent role of women writers across Canadian literature history; on the emergence of an experimental Québécois literature (utilizing Montreal patois as a new literary language) in an era also marked by secularization, modernization, and political separatism; on English Canadian attempts to rethink colonial history; and on the critiques of Canada’s ongoing decolonization process by new generations of indigenous, immigrant, and ethnic writers. This course explores both literary history and literary form; and the work of internationally famous novelists and poets (Leonard Cohen, Marie-Claire Blais, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje) and their innovative local counterparts. Throughout the term, moreover, our discussion of written literary texts (poems, novels, plays) is supplemented by primarily oral texts (Canadian anthems, ballads, folk, rock, and punk songs in a range of Canadian languages). We are thus listening to even as we are reading Canada.
French 874a / CPLT 816a, Marketing and Literature  Christophe Schuwey
Books are not only the medium of great literary works. They are also competing commercial products that, in order to be bought and/or read, must attract and retain attention, spark interest, and excite or meet a specific need. This course examines how markets, production techniques, habits, fashions, or advertising practices shape literary production. Drawing from the Beinecke collections, we study a wide range of diverse early modern French books to rethink the way we approach literature in general, from titles to typography, from structure to the very content of a work.

FREN 880a, Le poème en prose  Thomas Connolly
This seminar looks at the development of the poème en prose, from its beginnings as a response to the inadequacy of French verse forms, which were said to lend themselves poorly to the translation of ancient epic, to its emergence as an independent genre. What constitutes a prose poem, and why do we need to distinguish it from prose, poetry, and even poetic prose? Readings include work by Fénelon, Parny, Baudelaire, Bertrand, Rimbaud, Laforgue, Nerval, Mallarmé, Jacob, Michaux, Ponge, and Char, as well as Hölderlin, Poe, and Rilke.

FREN 899b / CPLT 897b, 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 958a / WGSS 783a, Social Mobility Today  Morgane Cadieu
The seminar examines the representation of upward mobility, social demotion, and interclass encounters in contemporary literature and cinema. Topics include emancipation and determinism; inequality, precarity, and class struggle; social mobility and migration; the interaction between social class and literary style; intersectionality; mixed couples; labor and the workplace; homecomings. We also discuss ways of approaching a contemporary corpus. Works by Angot, Eribon, Ernaux, Houellebecq, Linhart, Louis, NDiaye, Taïa. Films by Cantet, Diop, Kechiche, Klotz. Theoretical readings by Berlant, Bourdieu, Foucault, Nancy, Rancière. Members of the seminar have the opportunity to compare French mobilities to other literary traditions. Conducted in English. No knowledge of French required.

FREN 965b / AFST 965b / CPLT 729b, 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, Djebbar, Mechakra, Djaout, Alleg, Boupacha, Meddeb, Barrada, Binebine, Laâbi, Rahmani, Mouride. Theoretical readings by Fanon, Mbembe, Khatibi, Kilito, Dorlin, Benjamin, Spivak, Derrida, Lazali. Conducted in English. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.