FRENCH

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The Department of French has two distinct but complementary missions: to provide instruction in the French language at all levels of competence, and to lead students to a broad appreciation and deep understanding of the literatures and cultures of France and other French-speaking countries.

The major in French is a liberal arts major, designed for those who wish to study one of the world’s richest cultures in depth. The department offers courses devoted to authors, works, and literary and cultural movements that span ten centuries and four continents. The curriculum also includes interdisciplinary courses on relations between literature and other areas of study such as history, law, medicine, religion, politics, translation, and the arts. Majors are encouraged to explore all periods and genres of literature in French, as well as a wide variety of critical approaches.

Excellent knowledge of a foreign language and a mature, informed appreciation of a foreign literature open doors to many professions. The French major provides ideal preparation for careers in a wide range of fields from law and diplomacy to journalism, teaching, academia, and the arts. Recent graduates have gone on to selective law schools and graduate programs in French and comparative literature. Others work in business, government, primary and secondary education, and a variety of nongovernmental agencies and international organizations.

French can be taken either as a primary major or as one of two majors, in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS). Appropriate majors to combine with French might include, but are not limited to, African American Studies, African Studies, English, Film and Media Studies, Global Affairs, History, History of Art, Humanities, Comparative Literature, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Theater and Performance Studies, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Regulations concerning the completion of two majors can be found in the Academic Regulations, section K, Special Arrangements.

COURSE NUMBERING

Group A courses (FREN 110–159) This group consists of language courses that lead directly to courses counting toward the major. Preregistration is required for all Group A courses except FREN 125 and 145. FREN 121 (the stand-alone L2) is offered only during the fall term. For this reason, students placed into L1 or L2 who were not enrolled in a fall-term course will have to wait until the next fall to enroll. For further details, students should consult Ruth Koizim (ruth.koizim@yale.edu), the language program director.

Group B courses (FREN 160–449, not including Group C courses) This group contains more advanced courses that are taught in French and count toward the major. FREN 160 and 170 are gateway courses that prepare students for courses numbered FREN 200 and above. Courses in the FREN 180–199 range are advanced language courses. Courses numbered 200–449 are advanced courses in literature and culture. The 200–299 range contains courses devoted to broad, general fields defined by century or genre; the 300–449 range contains courses devoted to specific topics within or across those general fields.

Group C courses This group comprises courses taught in English; readings may be in French or English. Two term courses from this group may be counted for credit toward the major.

PREREQUISITES

Candidates for the major should take FREN 150 or the equivalent during the first or second year. Prospective majors are strongly encouraged to take at least one literature course numbered 170 or above before the end of the sophomore year.

PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

The departmental placement exam in French is accessible online. Dates and information for the exam will be available on the French department website, in the Calendar for the Opening Days of College, and on the Center for Language Study website. Placement exam results remain valid for one year.

All students who have not yet studied French at Yale (except those who have had no previous exposure to French whatsoever) are expected to take the departmental placement exam. Students who studied abroad over the summer with non-Yale programs must take the placement exam to be eligible to receive credit for their work.

Students who earned superior scores on standardized tests may be able to enroll in a course designated L5. The department strongly recommends, however, that advanced students of French take the departmental placement exam in order to be directed to the most appropriate courses. Students who earned a score of 5 on the Advanced Placement exam, a score of 6 or 7 on the advanced-level International Baccalaureate (IB) exam, a rating of C1 on the CEFR European test, or an A or B on the GCE A-level exam are normally placed into a course at the 150 level and above.
REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The standard major The standard major consists of ten term courses numbered 160 or above, including a one-term senior essay (see below). One of these ten courses must be FREN 170 or the equivalent, which should be completed early in a candidate’s studies; at least four must be Group B courses numbered 200 or above. Students may count no more than two courses in the FREN 180–199 range and no more than two courses conducted in English (Group C) toward the major. With prior approval of the DUS, a maximum of four term courses taught outside the Yale Department of French but bearing directly on the student’s principal interest may be counted toward the major. Up to two of these may be taken in other departments at Yale, and up to four may be taken as part of a Year or Term Abroad or summer study abroad program. However, the combined number of courses from other departments and from study abroad may not exceed four. (The DUS may grant exceptions to this limit for students who spend two academic terms in an approved study abroad program.) Relevant first-year seminars may count toward the major, with permission of the DUS.

Translation track Students may elect to pursue the translation track within the French major. Translation track majors are expected to take a minimum of two courses in French translation as two of the ten credits required for the standard major, or twelve credits required for the intensive major. Within the department, this requirement can be fulfilled by taking FREN 191 and FREN 192. Students who opt for the translation track may take up to four courses numbered 180–199, rather than the standard two courses.

The intensive major The intensive major is designed for students who wish to undertake a more concentrated study of literature in French. It is recommended for students considering graduate study in French or in comparative literature. The intensive major consists of twelve term courses numbered 160 or above, including a one-term or two-term senior essay (see below). At least five courses must be from Group B and numbered 200 or above. The requirement of FREN 170 and the stipulations for courses in the 180–199 range, courses conducted in English, and courses taken outside the department are identical to those for the standard major.

Credit/D/Fail One required course taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the major (excluding the senior requirement).

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

All majors must write a senior essay showing evidence of careful reading and research and substantial independent thought. Essays may be written in either French or English and must be prepared under the direction of a ladder faculty member in the Department of French. Students planning to pursue advanced work in French after graduation are encouraged to write their senior essay in French.

Students writing a one-term essay enroll in FREN 491 in the senior year. A one-term essay may be written in either the fall or the spring term and should be approximately thirty pages in length. A preliminary statement indicating the general area to be addressed and the name of the adviser must be submitted to the DUS by April 16, 2021 (fall-term essay), or November 5, 2021 (spring-term essay). A one-page prospectus and bibliography are due September 17, 2021 (fall term), or January 21, 2022 (spring term). A rough draft must be submitted to the adviser by October 29, 2021 (fall term), or March 25, 2022 (spring term). Two copies of the final essay are due in the department by December 1, 2021 (fall term), or April 18, 2022 (spring term).

Students electing a two-term essay for the intensive major must select their subject and adviser by the end of the junior year and enroll in FREN 493 and 494 during the senior year. The essay should be approximately sixty pages in length. A preliminary statement indicating the general area to be addressed and the name of the adviser must be submitted to the DUS by April 1, 2021. A one-page prospectus and bibliography are due September 17, 2021. Students must submit an initial rough draft to their adviser by January 21, 2022, and a complete draft by March 25, 2022. Two copies of the final essay are due in the department by April 18, 2022.

In place of the thirty-page senior essay for the standard major or the sixty-page senior essay for the intensive major, translation track majors undertake a literary translation of similar length to the senior essay, working with a member of the French Department ladder faculty. The senior translation essay, FREN 492 or 495 and 496, should include a critical introduction, of a length to be determined by the student in consultation with the directing faculty member. The same submission dates as the one-term essay and the two-term essay apply to the translation track essay. Standard major translation track students should sign up for FREN 492, and intensive major translation track students should sign up for FREN 495 and 496 for the fall and spring, respectively. Materials submitted for the translation essay cannot be the same as the materials submitted for any translation courses. Do not hesitate to contact the DUS if you have questions about this rule.

ADVISING

Students in the major are encouraged to take as many advanced courses as possible in all historical periods from the Middle Ages to the present. Candidates for the major should consult the DUS as early as the beginning of the sophomore year and no later than the fall term of the junior year. Schedules must be approved and signed by the DUS. Students planning to study abroad or to petition for completion of two majors should contact the DUS during the sophomore year.

Special Divisional Major The department will support the application of qualified students who wish to pursue an interdisciplinary course in French studies. Under the provisions of the Special Divisional Major, students may combine courses offered by the French department with subjects elected from other departments. Close consultation with departmental advisers is required; candidates for a Special Divisional Major should consult the DUS in French by the fall term of the junior year. For further information, see Special Divisional Majors.
STUDY ABROAD

Students are encouraged to spend a term or a year abroad, for which appropriate course credit is granted. Summer study abroad may also, in some cases, receive course credit. Further information may be obtained from the Center for International and Professional Experience and from (ruth.koizim@yale.edu) Ruth Koizim (ruth.koizim@yale.edu), the study abroad adviser for the Department of French.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisite FREN 150 or equivalent

Number of courses
- Standard major and translation track — 10 term courses numbered 160 or above (incl senior req);
- Intensive major — 12 term courses numbered 160 or above (incl senior req)

Specific course required FREN 170 or equivalent

Distribution of courses
- Standard major — at least 4 courses in Group B numbered 200 or above; no more than 2 courses numbered FREN 180–199; no more than 2 courses conducted in English;
- Translation track — same as standard, except min of 2 translation courses and no more than 4 courses numbered FREN 180–199;
- Intensive major — same as standard, plus 1 addtl Group B course numbered 200 or above

Substitution permitted With prior approval of DUS, up to 4 term courses outside French dept, as specified

Senior requirement
- Standard major — one-term senior essay in French or English (FREN 492); Translation track — one-term literary translation essay (FREN 492); Intensive major — one-term (FREN 491) or two-term senior essay in French or English (FREN 493, 494); Translation track, Intensive major — two-term literary translation essay (FREN 495, 496)

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Excellent knowledge of a foreign language and a mature, informed appreciation of a foreign literature open doors to many professions. For this reason, the French major provides ideal preparation for careers in academics, law, diplomacy, journalism, the arts, business, education, and many other fields.

French courses numbered FREN 110–159 are primarily language courses; the majority of entering first-year students enroll in one of these. Most higher-numbered courses are devoted to the study of French and francophone literature from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century, and to aspects of French and francophone culture in many different times and places.

PLACEMENT

The departmental placement exam is accessible online over the summer. Dates and information for the exam will be available on the French Department website and on the Yale Center for Language Study website.

Students who have not yet studied French at Yale, except for those with no previous formal or informal exposure to French whatsoever, are expected to take the departmental placement exam. Students who studied abroad over the summer through non-Yale programs must take the placement exam in order to be eligible to receive credit for their work and to ensure placement in the appropriate course should they wish to continue their study of French.

The department strongly recommends that students who earned a score of 5 on the Advanced Placement French exam, a score of 6 or 7 on the advanced-level International Baccalaureate (IB) exam, a rating of C1 on the CEFR European test, or an A or B on the GCE A-level exam take the placement exam in order to be directed to the most appropriate course. Nevertheless, they may enroll in a course designated L5. Normally a course numbered 150 and above is the most appropriate option.

Students who wish to begin taking French in the spring are advised to take the placement exam over the summer. Placement exam results will remain valid for one year.

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED LANGUAGE STUDY

The French Department offers a Certificate of Advanced Language Study. A certificate adviser, typically the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), advises students on the certification process and certifies to the University Registrar’s Office that students have completed the stated requirements before the end of eight terms of study. The Certificate of Advanced Language Study, once certified, is listed on student transcripts. Once you have fulfilled the requirements indicated below, email (morgane.cacieu@yale.edu) Thomas C. Connolly (thomas.c.connolly@yale.edu) (DUS) and Bethany Hayes (bethany.hayes@yale.edu) (Registrar) and include a copy of your academic record.

Requirements

Students seeking to earn the certificate are required to take four courses beyond the L4 level in their chosen language, at least two of which must be Yale courses designated as L5. Additionally the French department requires that a minimum of one of the four required courses be a French department course listed at the 200 level or above. All courses must be taken for a letter grade, and students must
achieve a grade of B or above. With the approval of the adviser, one advanced non-L5 course, conducted in the target language, such as an independent study course or a graduate seminar may count toward certification requirements.

The certificate adviser may also approve the substitution of up to two credits earned during study abroad and taught in the target language to count toward the certificate requirements. If the adviser approves courses taken outside of Yale for inclusion in the certificate requirements, students must take the necessary steps to ensure those courses appear on their transcript.

Credit/D/Fail No courses taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the requirements of the certificate.

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

Professors R. Howard Bloch, Dominique Brancher (Visiting), Marie-Hélène Girard (Visiting), Alice Kaplan, Pierre Saint-Amand, Maurice Samuels

Associate Professors Morgane Cadieu, Thomas C. Connolly

Assistant Professors Jill Jarvis, Christophe Schuwey

Senior Lecturers Lauren Pinzka, Maryam Sanjabi, Alyson Waters

Senior Lectors Kathleen Burton, Ruth Koizim, Soumia Koundi, Matuku Ngame, Françoise Schneider, Constance Sherak, Candace Skorupa, Vanessa Vysosias

Lector Leo Tertrain

View Courses