FRENCH

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

Chair
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Professors R. Howard Bloch, Dominique Brancher, Ardis Butterfield (English),
Marlene Daut, Carolyn Dean (History), Alice Kaplan, Pierre Saint-Amand, Maurice
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Associate Professors Morgane Cadieu, Thomas Connolly

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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 fourteen 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. Methods and Techniques
in the Italian and French Classroom (FREN 670) is also required for students in their
second year. 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. PROGRAMS

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 Early Modern Studies (in conjunction with the Early Modern 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.

French and African American Studies

This program 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.

French and Early Modern Studies

The Department of French offers, in conjunction with the Early Modern Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in French and Early Modern Studies. For further details see Early Modern Studies.
French and Film and Media 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. Students who withdraw from the Ph.D. program may be eligible to receive the M.A. degree if they have met the requirements and have not already received the M.Phil. degree. For the M.A., students must successfully complete one of the language requirements and eight courses, of which at least six are in French. Two grades of Honors in French are required, and the remaining grades must average High Pass.

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

COURSES

FREN 610a / MDVL 615a, 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 670b / ITAL 570b, Methods and Techniques in the Italian and French Language Classroom  Anna Iacovella
This course creates a substantial apprenticeship program for second-year graduate students. Rising teaching fellows are exposed to a variety of methodologies and perspectives historically and currently applied in teaching Italian and French with reference to global education. In order to maximize all learning opportunities, students analyze and discuss several methods without dismissing or favoring some over others. The intent is to encourage students to develop their own teaching styles, drawn from a number of important approaches to language pedagogy. At the same time, far from focusing only on methodologies and practices, the course strives to integrate other aspects of language education as well, and students have the chance both to observe classes and to develop and teach several classes of their own during the term.

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 836b, Laziness at Work and the Work of Laziness in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries  Dominique Brancher

To each era, its indolence. In its contemporary meaning, “paresse” or laziness tends to be evoked in relation to work and is inseparable from the question of productivity (consider recent debates regarding “burnout”). The purpose of this seminar is to bring to light more complex issues related to laziness by returning to the origins of “paresse” as it is represented in France in the texts and iconography of the Early Modern period. Our goal is to recover the spiritual, ethical, and medical repercussions of laziness, as well as its philosophical, cultural, and more specifically literary implications. Was it simply conceived in opposition to work, or did it propose a more protean category for thinking about the relationship to time and space? We consider the mechanisms of subjection of the idle body (“corps libertin,” “corps mondain”), as well as its modalities of “resistance,” a notion that will prove to be somewhat different to that propounded by Foucault. Primary texts include Erasmus’s *Adagia*, a humanist reappropriation of ancient traditions, to representations of the supposed laziness of so-called “exotic” peoples in travel literature, “epic” laziness in Ronsard’s unfinished *La Franciade*, libertine laziness in *L’Ile des hermpahrodites*, lazy gallantry in Madeleine de Scudéry’s “De la Paresse,” and, of course, Montaigne’s “nonchalance.” Readings and discussions in French. Prerequisites: ability to read, speak, and write in French.

FREN 841a, 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, Thevet); 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 875a / CPLT 904a / FILM 617a / GMAN 617a / SPAN 901a, Psychoanalysis: Key Conceptual Differences between Freud and Lacan I  Moira Fradinger

This is the first section of a year-long seminar (second section: CPLT 914) designed to introduce the discipline of psychoanalysis through primary sources, mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpuses but including late twentieth-century commentators and contemporary interdisciplinary conversations. We rigorously examine key psychoanalytic concepts that students have heard about but never had the chance to study. Students gain proficiency in what has been called “the language of psychoanalysis,” as well as tools for critical practice in disciplines such as literary criticism, political theory, film studies, gender studies, theory of ideology, psychology medical humanities, etc. We study concepts such as the unconscious, identification, the drive, repetition, the imaginary, fantasy, the symbolic, the real, and jouissance. A
central goal of the seminar is to disambiguate Freud’s corpus from Lacan’s reinvention of it. We do not come to the “rescue” of Freud. We revisit essays that are relevant for contemporary conversations within the international psychoanalytic community. We include only a handful of materials from the Anglophone schools of psychoanalysis developed in England and the US. This section pays special attention to Freud’s “three” (the ego, superego, and id) in comparison to Lacan’s “three” (the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real). CPLT 914 devotes, depending on the interests expressed by the group, the last six weeks to special psychoanalytic topics such as sexuation, perversion, psychosis, anti-asylum movements, conversations between psychoanalysis and neurosciences and artificial intelligence, the current pharmacological model of mental health, and/or to specific uses of psychoanalysis in disciplines such as film theory, political philosophy, and the critique of ideology. Apart from Freud and Lacan, we will read work by Georges Canguilhem, Roman Jakobson, Victor Tausk, Émile Benveniste, Valentin Volosinov, Guy Le Guafey, Jean Laplanche, Étienne Balibar, Roberto Esposito, Wilfred Bion, Félix Guattari, Markos Zafiropoulos, Franco Bifo Berardi, Barbara Cassin, Roman Jakobson, Maurice Goderier, Alenka Zupančič, Juliet Mitchell, Jacqueline Rose, Norbert Wiener, Alan Turing, Eric Kandel, and Lera Boroditsky among others. No previous knowledge of psychoanalysis is needed. Starting out from basic questions, we study how psychoanalysis, arguably, changed the way we think of human subjectivity. Graduate students from all departments and schools on campus are welcome. The final assignment is due by the end of the spring term and need not necessarily take the form of a twenty-page paper. Taught in English. Materials can be provided to cover the linguistic range of the group.

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 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 900b / HIST 667b / WGSS 667b, History of Gender and 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.
The cultural record of humanity is undergoing a massive and epochal transformation into shared analog and digital realities. While we are vaguely familiar with the history and realities of the analog record—libraries, archives, historical artifacts—the digital cultural record remains largely unexamined and relatively mysterious to humanities scholars. In this course students are introduced to the broad field of digital humanities, theory and practice, through a stepwise exploration of the new architectures and genres of scholarly and humanistic production and reproduction in the twenty-first century. The course combines a seminar, preceded by a brief lecture, and a digital studio. Every week we move through our discussions in tandem with hands-on exercises that serve to illuminate our readings and help students gain a measure of computational proficiency useful in humanities scholarship. Students learn about the basics of plain text, file and operating systems, data structures and internet infrastructure. Students also learn to understand, produce, and evaluate a few popular genres of digital humanities, including, digital editions of literary or historical texts, collections and exhibits of primary sources and interactive maps. Finally, and perhaps the most important lesson of the term, students learn to collaborate with each other on a common research project. No prior experience is required.

FREN 958a / WGSS 783a, Social Mobility and Migration  Morgane Cadieu
The seminar examines the representation of upward mobility, social demotion, and interclass encounters in contemporary French literature and cinema, with an emphasis on the interaction between social class and literary style. Topics include emancipation and determinism; inequality, precarity, and class struggle; social mobility and migration; the intersectionality of class, race, gender, and sexuality; labor and the workplace; homecomings; mixed couples; and adoption. Works by Nobel Prize winner Annie Ernaux and her peers (Éribon, Gay, Harchi, Linhart, Louis, NDiaye, Taïa). Films by Cantet, Chou, and Diop. Theoretical excerpts by Berlant, Bourdieu, and Rancière. Students have the option to put the French corpus in dialogue with the literature of other countries. Conducted in French.

FREN 970a or b, Directed Reading  Jill Jarvis
By arrangement with faculty.

FREN 971a or b, Independent Research  Jill Jarvis