

**BROWN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH STUDIES
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**



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INTRODUCTION

Our Department's headquarters, the beautiful Rochambeau House, which we share with Hispanic Studies, has an efficient computer network, elegant gardens, and generous space for seminars, lectures, movie screenings, or friendly intellectual exchanges and conversation. The fifteen graduate students currently in our program form a supportive and cohesive group. A graduate student representative, elected by all the graduate students, functions as liaison among the different generations of graduate students in the department, between the graduate students and the faculty, as well as between students in French and those in other departments at Brown. Since 1993, the graduate students in the French department have organized an international colloquium called "Equinoxes," which takes place every spring. This colloquium has regularly attracted participants from the United States, Canada, France and other francophone countries. Keynote speakers are selected by the students and have included former Ph.D.s and colleagues from Ivy Leagues and other institutions.

Every year, a number of graduate students are involved in exchange programs with the Universities of Bourgogne and Lyon. These programs, which involve teaching English to French students, are an important part of the cross-cultural and professional training of our students. Graduate students may also spend a year or a semester at another Ivy League university (through the inter-Ivy exchange), attend courses at Harvard during the semester, or participate in a Mellon Study Group through a grant from the Graduate School. During the summer, students may take part in the Dartmouth Institute of French Cultural Studies or the Cornell School of Criticism through a fellowship from the Cogut Humanities Center.

OUTLINE OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D.

1. The Department of French Studies requires sixteen courses for the Ph.D. These include tutorials, independent study projects, and courses in other departments. Individual course schedules and study programs are worked out with the Director of Graduate Studies. All graduate students must complete the Graduate School requirement of 24 tuition units. (For further information, see "Tuition Credit vs. Academic Credit" on the Graduate School website.)
2. The following courses are standard requirements: FREN 2900: Teaching Methods; and Departmental seminars and study courses at the 2000-level. Depending on students' previous preparation, these requirements may be waived with the approval of the Graduate Committee.
3. During Year 3 (students entering with Bachelors degree) / Year 2 (students entering with Masters degree), students complete their course work and take a two part preliminary examination, individually planned around topics selected from their studies.

4. During the remainder of their time in the program, students research and write the dissertation. Depending on whether or not they enter the program with a Masters degree, students are expected to complete the program in five or six years.

5. The foreign language requirement may be satisfied by coursework or by passing an examination in one foreign language other than French. In many cases, students will need to acquire mastery of a foreign language beyond this minimum requirement for research or teaching purposes.

6. Financial aid is available in a variety of forms: fellowships for students in their first year, teaching assistantships beginning in the second year, and dissertation fellowships for two semesters during the fifth or sixth years. The Graduate School guarantees four years of summer funding. Students should note the Graduate School requirement that all students teach for at least one semester during their sixth year. All financial awards are accompanied by a full tuition waiver and medical insurance.

7. The Graduate School requires all Ph. D. candidates to complete at least one year as a Teaching Assistant as part of their professional training. The practice in French Studies is for students to serve as Teaching Assistants for three or four years.

8. Students are required to respect the deadlines prescribed (Milestones) for completion of various components of the Ph.D. program. A schedule of Milestone Requirements appears at the end of this document.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A.

1. Courses to be taken each semester are chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. One year of course work (eight, predominantly 2000-level courses) with a thesis (an essay of 50-60 pages) satisfies the degree requirements for the terminal M.A. Alternatively, students satisfy the M.A. requirement without writing a thesis by completing two years of course work (sixteen, predominantly 2000-level courses).

3. Candidates for the M.A. are expected to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a foreign language other than French by passing a test, taking an appropriate course, or demonstrating that they have done university-level work in that language.

4. Students who have completed graduate-level work in French Studies at another institution should petition for Transfer Credits during the second semester of their first year at Brown.

COURSE WORK

1. General Information

The Graduate Program in French Studies offers training in a wide spectrum of genres, periods, and critical approaches, including cultural studies, literary and philosophical history, gender studies, narrative theory, postcolonial studies. Other course offerings include such fields as sexuality studies, social history, theater and film studies. In addition to required graduate seminars offered by the Department, students may take courses in other relevant departments at Brown (Africana Studies, Comparative Literature, History, Modern Culture and Media, etc.), as well as French Studies courses at the 1000-level. Students take four courses per semester during their first year and three per semester in the second year, and continue to take seminars and independent studies as necessary until completion of the Preliminary Exams. In addition to graduate seminars, there is a required course in Teaching Methods (FREN 2900), which is taken in the spring semester of Year 1.

2. Courses

A. Until students have completed the first part of their preliminary exams, they are required to take all of the graduate seminars offered by the Department. Class sessions are devoted to brief lectures by the professor and to the exchange, discussion and critique of ideas. In addition to participation in class, students give oral presentations and write term papers in consultation with the instructor.

B. Graduate students may also take undergraduate 1000-level courses for graduate credit. In such instances they will usually be required do supplementary research, reading, and writing suited to their preparation and to the nature of the course. In consultation with the instructor, they may also assist in the classroom by giving presentations and conducting discussions.

C. FREN 2910 or 2920 (Tutorials or Independent Study courses) - Students may supplement course offerings through tutorials on topics suggested by members of the staff. Those topics may reflect current research developments or research interests of individual professors. Students, in turn, may propose Independent Study topics to individual members of the faculty. FREN 2910/2920 independent study courses enable students to examine closely particular literary, textual or linguistic problems or techniques and to investigate subjects not covered in regular course offerings. Students normally take no more than two FREN 2910/2920 courses (or independent study courses in other departments) per semester, and staff members usually teach no more than two per semester. Student and professor usually meet at least once every two weeks.

D. FREN 2970 (Preliminary Examination Preparation) and 2980 (Reading and Research)

Students register for these classes while preparing their Preliminary Exams and while writing their dissertations, respectively.

3. Required Course

FREN 2900 (Teaching Methods). All doctoral candidates take this course for graduate credit in the spring semester of Year 1, in preparation for teaching (see I, 7). Candidates for a terminal M.A. may also enroll in this course. It includes training in such areas as the psychology of foreign language learning, techniques of instruction, planning and structuring a course, textbook criticism, production of materials, and use of technology. Class observations and in-class practice teaching are an integral part of the course.

Any request to waive or modify the above requirements must be addressed in writing to the Graduate Committee of the Department of French Studies. Such requests will be considered with respect to FREN 2900 only when the student presents evidence of both training for teaching and extensive teaching experience upon beginning graduate study at Brown.

4. Performance Expectations

At the end of each semester, students receive a Course Performance Report (CPR) for each seminar or course they have taken. Students who fall behind schedule, or whose academic performance is deemed unsatisfactory, receive written notification of steps needed for improvement. Every January, the Graduate Committee meets to make recommendations to the Graduate School concerning student funding (teaching assistantships and dissertation fellowships). In order to qualify for continued funding, students must fulfill Milestone Requirements as listed in the schedule below.

5. Incompletes

In exceptional circumstances only a student may request an "INC" as a grade for a course, denoting an incomplete. Incompletes require the prior consent of the faculty member teaching the course. Students are strongly advised against requesting incompletes: they can greatly impede progress through the program and can have a significant impact on the annual evaluation. Deadlines for making up incompletes are as follows: for courses taken in Semester I, by mid semester of Semester II; for Semester II, by the first day of the following semester. These deadlines can be extended only at the request of the instructor. However, any incomplete that remains one calendar year after the end of the semester in which the course was taken turns into an "NC" ("no credit"), and the student will have to make up that credit by taking another course.

6. Departmental and University Resources for Academic Support

A. The faculty mentor program within the Department is designed to offer additional academic support to students in our program.

B. Students who have a disability or other condition that might require accommodation or modification of any of these course procedures should inform the Graduate Advisor as well as their instructors by speaking with them after class or during office hours. As part of this process, students should be registered with Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) and provide an academic accommodation letter from them. For more information, contact SEAS at (401) 863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.

FOR RECENT AND CURRENT COURSE OFFERINGS, PLEASE REFER TO THE CURRENT COURSES SECTION OF THE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE:

<https://www.brown.edu/academics/french-studies/courses/graduate-courses>

THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

1. General

The purpose of the Preliminary Examination is to assess students' knowledge of their chosen field of specialization, to evaluate their command of theoretical methods employed in the field, and to ensure that they possess the critical skills needed for scholarly research.

Students take Preliminary Exams during Year 3 (students entering with Bachelors degree) or Year 2 (students entering with Masters degree) of study. The exams test students' general preparation in French Studies as well as their ability to conduct independent research. The Department's Graduate Committee reviews students' examination fields before approving them. It oversees the administration and evaluation of Preliminary Exams, establishes procedures and schedules, and reports on students' progress to the entire Department.

There are two Preliminary Exams.

2. First Preliminary Exam

The First Preliminary Exam is a "Coverage Exam," intended to demonstrate knowledge of the corpus of French and Francophone literature. It is meant to complement work pursued in previous study and to ensure that students have studied works and authors from all areas. The written exam takes place the week before Labor Day, Year 3 (Bachelors) or Year 2 (Masters). Preparation begins the previous semester in accordance with the following chronology:

A. In February of spring semester of Year 2 (Bachelors) / Year 1 (Masters), students meet with the Graduate Advisor to identify THREE periods to be covered, drawn from the following list:

The Middle Ages; The Renaissance; The 17th century; The 18th century; The 19th century; The 20th and 21st centuries; Francophone Literature.

B. Over the course of spring semester, students meet with faculty members representing each of the chosen areas to establish a reading list of 10 works per area, and to discuss the texts, contexts, and possible approaches. Those three faculty members constitute the First Preliminary Exam committee.

A comprehensive list of literary works and secondary readings for each period/area (Graduate Reading List) is available on the Graduate Studies website: https://www.brown.edu/academics/french-studies/sites/brown.edu.academics.french-studies/files/uploads/FS_Graduate%20Reading%20List.pdf

Students choose from or modify that list in consultation with the members of their committee.

C. By May 1, students give the Graduate Advisor their reading list consisting of 30 works (10 works per area). Each list is accompanied by a short statement (200-250 words) in which students describe the themes or questions that they consider to be most compelling in the works comprising the list. Each committee member develops a set of 2 exam questions, based on the pertinent list and statement.

STUDENTS MUST HAVE LISTS APPROVED BY THEIR COMMITTEE BY MAY 1 TO BE PERMITTED TO TAKE THE EXAM AT THE END OF SUMMER.

Summer funding is provided on the assumption that students will devote the summer to reading and preparing for the exam.

D. The take-home written exam. The week before Labor Day (end of August), students are given 4 days to write 3 essays of 6-8 pages each (approximately 1500-2000 words per essay), in French. Students are given a choice between 2 questions for each of the three essays.

E. Oral Exam. 10-15 days after the written exam, students meet with the First Preliminary Exam committee to discuss their essays. During this discussion, the student may be asked to develop parts of the written exam or to explore other works on the reading list. The exam is evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Students who fail any part of the exam have the right to repeat it one time, as directed by the committee.

3. Second Preliminary Exam

The Second Preliminary Exam is a “Research Exam,” taken during Year 3 (students entering with Bachelors degree) / Year 2 (students entering with Masters degree). In comparison to the Coverage exam, the Research exam entails a more elaborated cultural, critical, and theoretical approach. It is taken in accordance with the following procedures:

A. General

Immediately following completion of the First Preliminary Exam, and no later than October 31 of Year 3 (Bachelors) / Year 2 (Masters), students constitute a committee of two professors working in the field(s) of primary interest, with a view to preparing for the Second Preliminary Exam. The Second Preliminary Exam is prepared throughout Year 3/2 and its final, oral component is taken no later than May 31 of Year 3/2.

The Second Preliminary Exam has 3 components: Independent Study, Paper and Exam.

B. B. Independent Study

In fall of Year 3/2 students register for FREN 2970 (Preliminary Examination Preparation) under the supervision of one of their committee members. During the semester they read broadly within their chosen fields, developing, and modifying as necessary, a list of primary and secondary works that has been constituted in consultation with the professor. Those readings are designed 1) to provide a basic level of competence for eventual research and teaching within a recognized scholarly field, and 2) to provide the groundwork for more focused research undertaken in the spring semester.

C. Paper

In the spring semester students again register for FREN 2970 (Preliminary Examination Preparation) and write an article length paper (6500-8000 words) on a precise topic within their field. The particular perspective or emphasis of the paper is determined by the research interests of each student. The basis for the paper is a corpus of primary texts, literary or otherwise; and a secondary, theoretical or methodological corpus (books or articles). The extent of each corpus will be determined in consultation with the director and/or committee, but they must provide for detailed knowledge of primary materials and comprehensive understanding of critical work associated with those materials.

The paper will represent an original contribution that complements published work in the field. It is submitted to both committee members no later than April 15 of Year 3 (Bachelors) / 2 (Masters). It should be written in the language in which the student plans to write the dissertation.

D. Exam

Once the paper has been accepted by both members of the committee, a copy of it is made available to any faculty member wishing to read it. The paper is presented by the student at an oral exam lasting approximately one hour. The student explains such matters as how their readings and interests led them to their topic, what problems were encountered in the course of research and writing, and directions for future research. The student presentation is followed by questions from committee members concerning aspects of the paper, its relation to the field, and the primary and secondary texts that form its basis. The exam is normally conducted in the language in which the student plans to write the dissertation.

The following assessments of the exam are possible: pass with distinction, pass, conditional pass, and fail. Students who fail any part of the exam have the right to repeat it one time, as directed by the committee. Students who pass begin immediately to prepare the prospectus.

PROSPECTUS

1. Following completion of the Second Preliminary Exam students name two members of their committee, comprising a Director and First Reader. Both Director and First Reader are normally members of the Department of French Studies. The Second Reader is added at an appropriate time in consultation with the Director. The Second Reader is normally from outside the Department of French Studies, either from another department at Brown or from another University.
2. The prospectus is drafted in close consultation with the Director and First Reader. It consists of a succinct statement of aims and methods of inquiry and approach, comprehensive information concerning what has and has not been done on the topic, a tentative outline of sections and chapters of the dissertation, and a pertinent bibliography. The prospectus will also include the names of the dissertation Director and the First Reader. It should be written in the language in which the student plans to write the dissertation. The usual length of a prospectus is 3500-4000 words (not including bibliography).
3. Before the prospectus can be formally approved, students are required to schedule a discussion with the Director and First Reader that is designed to ascertain whether, on the basis of the prospectus, they are ready to proceed with researching for, and writing the dissertation.

Once the Director and First Reader have approved the prospectus, a copy of it is forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who then forwards it to the Graduate Committee. Once the prospectus has been approved by the Graduate Committee, students are informed that they have advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D.

TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

1. Teacher training is an essential component of the Graduate Program in French. Students receive training both before they begin teaching and while they are Teaching Assistants. They normally teach only one course each semester in order to ensure timely completion of their graduate work.
2. Students take Teaching Methods (FREN 2900) for credit before they begin teaching. The content of this course includes items such as the following: the psychology of the learning process in foreign language teaching; methods and techniques; planning and structuring a single class, the week's work, a semester's work; textbook criticism; production of materials; use of teaching aids, such as audio-visual and computer based materials.
3. All students complete at least one year of teaching in the Department, and most teach for three or four years. The Language Committee assigns Teaching Assistants a section of FREN 0100, 0200, 0300, 0400, 0500, 0600, 0610 or 0620 in keeping with their teaching performance and the needs of the Department. The Language Committee seeks to give students experience at as many different levels as possible. Teaching Assistants work under the supervision of a faculty course coordinator who meets regularly with all TAs, visits their sections at least once per semester, and writes a Teaching Performance Report (TPR) at the end of the semester. Two copies of each TPR are forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies, and one copy is given directly to the student.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

1. The Department regularly offers workshops on professionalization: one on preparing abstracts and papers for conferences; one on preparing article manuscripts for publication; and one on preparing for the job market.
2. At least once a year, the Department will organize a workshop during which a student (or students) will circulate among other students and at least one professor a seminar paper to be revised for publication. Students preparing their Second Preliminary Exam are encouraged to present their work in this context. The purpose of the workshop is to provide the student/s with constructive feedback for revisions.
3. Preparation for the job market, in particular for an academic career, requires careful consideration of current trends and preferred fields. Students should discuss such questions in close consultation with their advisor(s).

The Department works actively with students as they prepare for the job market. Dissertation advisors review their advisees' dossiers (cover letter, research statement, teaching portfolio, etc.), and the DGS organizes mock interviews for students prior to the MLA or a campus visit.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

1. For the M.A. candidates are expected to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a foreign language other than French or English, either by passing a test or taking an appropriate course, or by demonstrating to the Department's Graduate Committee that they have done previous work in that language at an acceptable level (equivalent to FREN 0500, a fifth semester language course at Brown).

2. For the Ph.D.: In order to be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D., students should have a minimum competence in one other language (besides French and English). Such competence is demonstrated:

A. by satisfactory completion (B grade or better) at Brown of language courses at levels comparable to FREN 0500 or above. Students should keep in mind that only language courses on the 1000-level will be accepted for graduate credit.

B. by taking one of the reading courses especially designed for graduate students by different departments at Brown (e.g. GRMN 0220, etc.);

C. in special circumstances, the Department's Graduate Committee may waive the requirement on the basis of the student's previous record of work in that language at the college or university level.

D. Beyond this minimal requirement, the Department strongly encourages students to achieve a superior command of at least one other language in addition to French for the Ph.D. This language should be chosen for research or teaching purposes. (For instance, Latin for a student working in Medieval Literature or Arabic for a student of North African Literature.) In such cases, the Department is willing to allow students to do some advanced course work (above 1000) in that language in place of normal graduate course work, or after they have taken the preliminary examination.

MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL THESES

1. The M.A. Thesis

The M.A. thesis is optional. Students may earn the M.A. degree either by completing one year of full-time study (eight courses) and writing a thesis (an essay of 50-60 pages) or by completing two years of full-time study (sixteen courses) without a thesis. The majority of students opt not to write an M.A. thesis.

2. The Doctoral Dissertation

A. The Ph.D. dissertation (or thesis) is primarily a demonstration of students' capacity to treat profoundly a problem of some complexity, to communicate the results of their thoughts and findings and to show the implications of the latter for the chosen field. In this respect, it offers ample scope for original research and creative thinking. At the same time it is a training exercise that enables students to perfect techniques of critical and scholarly analysis. It is important to maintain a sensible balance between these functions. The goal is to achieve a meaningful contribution to the understanding of literature, culture, or language.

B. Students consult with appropriate faculty members concerning the feasibility of their proposed dissertation topic and the selection of a director. Both the Director and First Reader will normally come from the Department. The Second Reader will normally be from outside the Department of French Studies, either from another department at Brown or (where appropriate) from another University. In close consultation with the dissertation committee, students draft their dissertation prospectus as soon as possible after completion of the Second Preliminary Exam, and have it approved no later than December 31 of Year 4 (Bachelors) / Year 3 (Masters). In the prospectus, they give a succinct statement of their aims, define the methods of inquiry and approach, demonstrate knowledge of what has and has not been done on their topic, tentatively outline the sections and chapters of the dissertation, and include a pertinent bibliography. The prospectus also includes the names of the dissertation director and the first reader. The usual length of a prospectus is 3500-4000 words (not including bibliography).

C. Once the dissertation committee has discussed the prospectus with the student, and approved it, it is forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who then forwards it to the Graduate Committee. The DGS informs students once their prospectus has been approved by the Graduate Committee.

Students become candidates for the Ph.D. only when the Graduate Committee has approved their dissertation prospectus. Students advance to candidacy no later than December 31 of Year 4 (Bachelors) / Year 3 (Masters). Candidacy is also contingent upon fulfillment of the language requirement.

D. Once the dissertation has been completed and accepted by the three members of the dissertation committee, an oral examination (approximately 1.5 hours) takes place. This examination, called the Dissertation Defense, consists of a public presentation and discussion of the thesis. (Approximately one week prior to the defense, the candidate leaves a complete copy of the dissertation in the Department Manager's office for the faculty to read.)

The purpose of the defense is to assess the rigor and value of the findings set forth in the dissertation. During the first fifteen minutes of the defense the

candidate offers a brief oral overview of the thesis, its contribution to literary studies, and possible plans for future expansion. The major portion of the exam (somewhere between 60 and 90 minutes) consists of a dialogue in which the candidate responds to questions of the committee and other faculty. The author of the dissertation is expected to voice cogent, well-informed answers and to demonstrate professional expertise in the domain to which the thesis makes its contribution.

The Graduate School requires that all three readers accept the thesis. At the end of the defense, the readers consult in private and vote on whether to pass the dissertation.

MILESTONE REQUIREMENTS

Students' year-by-year advancement through the program, and specifically the Department's commitment to a sixth year of funding, are conditional upon fulfillment by each student of a series of milestones. Departures from the deadlines listed below will be approved only in exceptional circumstances such as illness or other factors beyond a student's control. Milestones are as follows:

	Students entering with Bachelors degree	Students entering with Masters degree
1. Pass French 2900	May 31, Year 1	May 31, Year 1
2. Constitute 1 st Prelim. c'tee (3 members)	Jan. 31, Year 2	Jan. 31, Year 1
3. Have 1 st Prelim. Lists approved	May 1, Year 2	May 1, Year 1
4. Pass 1 st Prelim.	Sept. 30, Year 3	Sept. 30, Year 2
5. Constitute 2 nd Prelim. c'tee (2 members)	Oct. 31, Year 3	Oct. 31, Year 2
6. Submit 2 nd Prelim. paper	April 15, Year 3	April 15, Year 2
7. Complete coursework	May 31, Year 3	May 31, Year 2
8. Pass 2 nd Prelim.	May 31, Year 3	May 31, Year 2
9. Constitute dissertation c'tee (Dir. + 2 nd reader)	May 31, Year 3	May 31, Year 2
10. Satisfy Language Req.	Dec. 31, Year 4	Dec. 31, Year 3
11. Advance to Candidacy (Prospectus approved)	Dec. 31, Year 4	Dec. 31, Year 3
12. Submit 1 st chapter	May 31, Year 4	May 31, Year 3

*For more information on the requirements and structure of the graduate program, and the application process, please contact our Director of Graduate Studies, **David Wills** (david_wills@brown.edu)*