French

Overview

Major in French at Connecticut College and you will develop linguistic and cultural fluency, regardless of your starting point. The benefits of studying French extend far beyond knowledge of the language and the Francophone world. When you speak only one language, it’s hard to grasp the extent to which language itself shapes our thoughts, perceptions and values. As a French major, you step outside your own linguistic framework and acquire a different view of the world. You learn to recognize and value cultural differences and to look at issues from different perspectives. With this understanding, you are well-prepared for advanced studies and career opportunities in a limitless range of fields.

Special Opportunities

Many courses are co-offered with other academic departments, including anthropology, film studies, Africana studies, and gender and women’s studies. Classes are small and faculty are attentive. You are challenged to hone your critical thinking skills and augment your language study with the perspectives and analytical modes of many disciplines. Some French majors pursue a certificate with one of the College’s interdisciplinary centers or with the museum studies program.

International Opportunities and Study Abroad

You can hone your language skills on campus in the language lab or at the French table in the dining hall. As a French major, you study abroad for at least one semester and possibly an entire year. Many students go to France, but in recent years, others have studied literature and native crafts in Senegal and Cameroon, family health and economic development in Mali, and environmental issues in Madagascar.

Meredith Boyle
French major, CISLA scholar

Q: Why Connecticut?
A: First, the location of campus—the coastal New England feel was similar to my hometown and not too far away from my family. Second, I found the academics interesting. I was drawn to the strong International Relations department, along with the many opportunities to internationalize my major including CISLA, study abroad, and a minor in French (which eventually became a major).

Q: Why did you decide to study French?
A: I studied French since elementary school and actually had my mind set on taking Chinese when I got to college. I quickly realized that Chinese wasn’t for me (after only 2 classes), and decided to focus instead on perfecting my French skills. I became interested in the politics and culture of France—issues that I would explore in subsequent French classes and which would become the focus of my senior year CISLA Senior Integrative Project.

Q: What was your most challenging or rewarding class?
A: French 404: The Art of Speaking. I was always timid in classes and not keen on oral participation, especially in a foreign language. It was instrumental in easing my transition into my semester abroad. I would consider it a requirement for students seeking to study in France who plan to take courses in French while abroad. Not only did it greatly improve my speaking skills, but the class also improved my confidence in speaking up in all of my classes.

Q: Where and why did you study abroad?
A: I studied in Paris at Sciences Po through the Middlebury School in France. My primary motivations for studying abroad were to gain international experience and improve my French skills. Through CISLA, I also spent a summer interning for the French Ministry of the Interior.
Faculty

James Austin, Associate Professor of French
B.A., Pomona College; M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Yale University
French film; Proust

Ronan Chalmin, Senior Lecturer of French
“Diplôme d’Études Approfondies,” Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille III, France; Ph.D., Yale University
18th-century literature, philosophy and science; the French and Atlantic Revolutions; Revolutionary Eloquence

Nathalie Etoke, Associate Professor of French and Africana Studies, French Department Chair
B.A., M.A., University of Lille III, France; Diplôme d’études approfondies, University of Cergy-Pontoise, France; Ph.D., Northwestern University Africana studies, LGBT in the Afro-diasporic context; Melancholia Africana; cultural studies (immigration, post-Colonial French identities, French Hip Hop and urban films)

Benjamin Williams, Visiting Assistant Professor of French
B.A., University of Virginia; Ph.D., Princeton University French cultures and literatures of the 19th and 20th centuries

Selected Courses

The French Cultural Experience; Words in Translation; Civilization Through Conversation; French Cinema; Cities On the Screen: Constructing Urban Space in the Cinema; New Wave Film; Then And Now; Black Blanc Beur Cinema/Literature

About Connecticut College

Connecticut College educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society. A leader in the liberal arts since in 1911, the College is home to nationally ranked programs for internships, community action, arts and technology, environmental studies and international studies. Our beautiful 750-acre arboretum campus is located in the historic New England seaport community of New London, Conn.

Examples of Student Research in French

Norah Hannel ’14
The Role of Language in Shaping Emotional Phenomenology

Lauren Potter ’14
The Impact of French Culture on the LGBT Movement in France

Megan Maffucci ’13
Historicizing Vichy: Holocaust Memory and French National Identity

For more information, visit www.conncoll.edu/academics/