French and Francophone Studies

French Studies

The French program emphasizes a critical understanding of the French-speaking world by focusing on language skills, analytical tools, and the study of a variety of kinds of cultural expressions. These studies are one effective way of gaining a deeper understanding of the world, which is an important element of a liberal arts education. The department offers courses in French literature and culture and the literatures and cultures of Francophone Africa, Canada, Asia, and the Antilles. Students of French may study abroad in Strasbourg and Clermont-Ferrand in France and in Dakar, Sénégal.

Coursework and off-campus experiences are complemented by on-campus opportunities that maintain and improve a student’s language skills and expand students’ understanding of the Francophone world. These opportunities include viewing French language films, reading French publications, conversing with classmates and native speakers at the French table, and attending area cultural events.

Faculty members meet students inside and outside the classroom, participate in campus activities, and counsel students regarding graduate and professional career choices in music, high school and college teaching, science, publishing, government, international trade, international banking, non-governmental organizations, and other fields. French students at Kalamazoo College have a high rate of acceptance when applying for French government teaching assistantships for teaching English in France after graduation.

Placement

All incoming students who have previously studied or have had significant exposure to French must take the College’s placement test. Students with three or more years of high school French will not be placed into FREN 101. Those students who wish to receive credit for language courses that they have taken at another college or university before enrolling at Kalamazoo College must take the French language placement test and test into a higher-level course than the one for which they are seeking transfer credit. Any appeal of the placement test results should be directed to a French faculty member.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Credit for the Major or Minor

Students who took AP or IB examinations in French must still take the Kalamazoo College French placement test. An Advanced Placement (AP) score of 4 or 5 in French language can be counted as one credit toward the French major or minor provided that the student take French 203 or beyond as her/his first French course at the college. IB scores of 5-6-7 on the Higher Level may count toward a major, minor, or concentration at the discretion of the department faculty.

Requirements for the Major in French

Number of Units

Eight units are required, not including FREN 101, 102, or 201, but which may include the SIP. No more than two of these units (in either language, literature, or culture) may be earned during Study Abroad. No more than three units total may be earned off campus through any combination of study abroad, AP, IB, transfer credits or inter-institutional enrollment.

Required Courses

FREN 301 Introduction to French and Francophone Studies (prerequisite to all 400-level courses)
FREN 490 Senior Seminar
At least two additional units in 400-level courses on campus

French majors are encouraged to develop appropriate cognate programs in areas such as History, Political Science,
Economics, Music, Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology, International and Area Studies, or International Economics and Business. HIST 244 and 245 are highly recommended for French majors.

Units from Study Abroad
French majors are expected to participate in a study abroad program and acquire a high level of language proficiency.

Only two units to be used toward the major in French may be earned in a long term (6 month) or an extended term (9 month) program. One unit only from a short term (3 month) program may be used.

Those who did not take French 301 before Study Abroad will normally take that course upon their return to campus, but should consult with the department before doing so. All students will then take the senior seminar plus the requisite number of 400 level courses (possibly including a SIP) in order to complete the French major.

Requirements for the Minor in French

Number of Units
Six units are required, not including FREN 101, 102, or 201, but which may include the SIP.

Required Courses
FREN 301 Introduction to French and Francophone Studies

Electives
Five courses chosen from the following (at least three must be at the 400 level): FREN 202, 203, 401, and above.

Units from Study Abroad

1. A student may count only one unit from study abroad towards the minor in French. The unit, which must have been taught in the French language, may be in the literature of the Francophone world, or in language, or in a cultural/topical course pertaining to the Francophone world. Please consult the department.
2. Normally, students who go on Study Abroad before taking French 301 will take that course upon their return to campus, but they should consult with the department before doing so.

French courses

FREN 101 Beginning French I
Introduction to the French language and the French-speaking world. Students begin developing competency in the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) through communicative activities and cultural exploration.
Prerequisite: Placement test if student has any prior experience with French.

FREN 102 Beginning French II
Further development of the four skills through continued exploration of the French-speaking world. Students will work to acquire the linguistic skills and cultural knowledge needed to navigate a variety of cultural settings.
Prerequisite: FREN-101 or Placement Test

FREN 201 Intermediate French
The refining and expansion of communicative skills. Students develop critical thinking and cross-cultural competency by reading, discussing, and writing about authentic texts.
Prerequisite: FREN-102 or Placement Test

FREN 202 Conversation and Composition
Critical explorations of the French-speaking world through focused reading, discussion, and related written and speaking assignments.
Prerequisite: FREN-201 or Placement Test

FREN 203 Engaging With Texts
Students enrich their vocabulary and increase their sensitivity to nuance while examining a wide variety of texts (fiction, non-fiction, image, film, songs, etc.). New reading skills will result in the ability to produce texts (both oral and written) in a wide variety of styles. Students begin to acquire a more sophisticated knowledge of the intricacies of the French-speaking world while putting into practice more complex forms of written and oral expression.
Prerequisite: FREN-202 or Placement Test

FREN 301 Introduction to French and Francophone Studies
An interactive, discussion-based course helping student acquire skill in the reading and interpretation of French and other Francophone texts, presented in their cultural and historical contexts. Course offers opportunities for refinement of written and presentational skills.

Prerequisite: FREN-203 or Placement Test

FREN 401 Topics in French and Francophone Cultures
Reading, research, and discussion on selected topics and issues in the French-speaking world. Please consult with the instructor about the current topic. Past topics have included "Immigration in Contemporary France" and "Le handicap: a multi-disciplinary approach." May be repeated for credit if content is different.

Prerequisite: FREN-301

FREN 420 Medieval and Renaissance French Literature and Culture
A study of texts and other cultural artifacts (such as art and music) from the cultures of the High Middle Ages through the French Renaissance. Genres include courtly/Arthurian romance and poetry, comic theater, essays, comic and serious prose fiction, and Renaissance lyric poetry. Students will examine the transition from a church-centered culture to a human-centered (humanist) society and the changes in subject matter and writing practices brought about by this transition.

Prerequisite: FREN-301 or FREN-301S

FREN 435/FREN 490 Advanced Literary and Cultural Studies
Courses focused on major authors, cultural and philosophical movements, or themes in the French-speaking world. Topics will vary according to student or faculty interest. May be repeated for credit if content is different.

Prerequisite: FREN-301 or FREN-301S

FREN 490/FREN 435 Senior Seminar
Topics in French and/or Francophone literatures, culture, and history. Recent topics have included Vietnamese History and Culture; Francophone African Literature; Intercultural Encounters; and Camus, the Algerian.

Prerequisite: FREN-301; Senior French major or permission.

FREN 495 French Film in Context
In this course, we will view and discuss a variety of French-language films from the 1980’s to the present representing a cross-section of genres, themes, and directors. We will use these films as a vehicle for understanding a sampling of historical and cultural contexts in the French-speaking world.

Prerequisite: FREN-301

FREN 593 Senior Individualized Project
Each program or department sets its own requirements for Senior Individualized Projects done in that department, including the range of acceptable projects, the required background of students doing projects, the format of the SIP, and the expected scope and depth of projects. See the Kalamazoo Curriculum -> Curriculum Details and Policies section of the Academic Catalog for more details.

Prerequisite: Permission of department and SIP supervisor required.