

**Department of French  
Yale University**

# **GRADUATE PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

This document supplements the policies of the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences governing doctoral programs, which can be found here:

<http://gsas.yale.edu/academics/programs-policies>

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**DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH  
YALE UNIVERSITY**

**GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES FOR THE FRENCH DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

Fulfilling the requirements for a PhD in French is a complex process, requiring collaboration between students and their professors. During the years of their work toward the degree, students should actively monitor their own progress and prepare for upcoming requirements and deadlines. The document that follows is designed to help students do this, and students should review this document at least once each year, or whenever approaching a new stage in the doctoral program.

A visual timeline charting a 6-year process toward the PhD is available in the appendix of this document.

The Department recommends that students develop and maintain working relationships with a number of different professors over the course of their doctoral studies. This becomes especially important at the dissertation stage, when it is possible that writers may feel isolated within their own work. At least three professors should be acquainted with a student's research work at all stages of its development and through all the phases of the Ph.D. program; this will help to create a strong advising and professional mentoring network.

Students should also:

- petition for non-terminal degrees (M.A. and M. Phil.) as soon as they are eligible (see requirements).
- be prepared to meet various deadlines within and outside the Department, including those for the European exchanges (see appendix) and fellowship applications.

**THE DISSERTATION AND THE PROFESSION**

Students, particularly those in the last three years of the program, should strive to maintain a good working balance between time that they devote to their primary task—completing the dissertation—and time spent developing professional skills.

The dissertation is the centerpiece of the PhD and serves as the foundation of a scholarly career. Completing an outstanding dissertation is a consuming and demanding task that requires serious and sustained focus; writing one takes time, and distractions should be kept within limits. The Department strongly urges students to consult with their advisor before making any ancillary commitments during their dissertation writing years, and to maintain a dialogue on the best uses of their time. The dissertation should be mostly completed by the time the student enters the job market, normally in the fall of the sixth year.

The Department also recognizes the demands of professionalization in contemporary academia and works to help students prepare for a full range of activities. Students and their professors should communicate regularly about professional development and about ways to enhance each student's potential contributions. Opportunities to publish articles and to participate in conferences should be carefully considered.

The Department actively supports student participation in conferences, in two ways. Every two years, the graduate in French organize a colloquium at Yale with backing from the Department and other sources. Students are responsible for all aspects, both intellectual and practical, of running the conference. In the years when they are not organizing a conference, students invite a distinguished lecturer to give a talk in the Department.

The Department also encourages graduate student participation in conferences outside of Yale. Each student should participate in a conference at least once during their graduate career. In order to support conference participation, the Department offers each graduate student \$1000 (to be used for transportation, hotel, and meals only) during the course of each year of their time at Yale. The funds can be used for one or two conferences, up to that maximum of \$1000. In order to secure funding, **students must submit to the DGS, for approval, no later than one month before the conference:**

- a petition requesting funds, explaining the purpose and relevance of participation in the conference
- a budget
- a copy of the letter of acceptance
- an abstract of the paper

Support for travel to conferences (up to \$800) is also available from the Graduate Student Assembly: <http://gsa.yale.edu/ctf>

In addition, students who are on the job market and are traveling to the MLA Convention for interviews are entitled, one time only, to financial support for transportation, hotel, and meals. When the MLA is in the Northeast, the maximum is \$500, when elsewhere \$750.

The Yale Graduate School offers a wide array of professional training, from basic writing tutoring to all aspects of pedagogy. See the following resources:

- The McDougal Center: <http://gsas.yale.edu/life-yale/mcdougal-graduate-student-center>
- The Yale Teaching Center: <http://teaching.yale.edu/>
- The Writing Center: <http://gsas.yale.edu/academic-professional-development/yale-center-teaching-learning/graduate-writing-center>

## **MPhil Degree**

The French Department offers the Master of Philosophy degree, in accordance with the rules as set up by the graduate school (see Bulletin), to students who have completed the course and language requirements (with four grades of Honors, of which at least two must be in French graduate courses) and passed their oral qualifying examination. Students are not eligible for the Master of Philosophy degree until after one academic year of resident graduate study at Yale.

## **PhD Degree**

There are six requirements for the Ph.D. in French: I) Courses, II) Language requirements, III) Oral qualifying examination, IV) Teaching, V) Admission to Candidacy, and VI) Dissertation

## I. Courses Required

### Courses

Normally **fourteen** term courses must be taken during the first two years of graduate study. These must include: Introduction to Old French (610) or its equivalent, and two graduate-level semester courses outside the French Department. French 610 emphasizes the acquisition of a reading knowledge of Old French texts. No one can be exempted from taking French 610 or its equivalent except by passing an examination similar in nature and scope to the final examination in the course. French 670, Methods and Techniques in the French Language Classroom, is also required in the second year of study.

The fourteen required courses may include one semester course in a foreign language, taken to fulfill the department's language requirements. They may also include as many as four graduate-level semester courses outside the French Department.

At the time of course selection, students should consult both with the DGS (who must approve their schedules in order for registration to be complete) and with their faculty advisers. **Students in their first year are allowed to register for only three elected seminars during the first semester.**

### Special Courses

French 970a, 970b. Under the guidance of a member of the graduate faculty a student may, once per year, study independently a subject of the student's choice. Students should obtain the consent both of the proposed instructor and the DGS at the beginning of the semester during which they plan to take French 970. No faculty member will direct more than one such special course in a given term. This arrangement is designed to give greater flexibility to the program of studies and to prepare students for the sort of independent research required by the dissertation.

### Course Grades

At the end of the first year of study, a student who does not have a grade of Honors in two graduate term courses taught by core faculty\* within the French department will not be allowed to register for a third term. At the end of the second year of study, a student who does not have a grade of Honors in two graduate term courses taught by core faculty within the French Department during that second year will not be allowed to register for a fifth term. The total required number of Honors in French department courses taught by core faculty is thus four.

\*core faculty means faculty appointed in French, as opposed to affiliated faculty

### Deadlines and Extensions

Students are expected to observe the deadlines for their final assignments. In order to ensure equitable evaluation of all students in any given course, extensions of time for completing the work of the course are not given except in extraordinary circumstances. If an instructor finds it appropriate to grant an extension and the DGS approves, the instructor reports a temporary grade of Incomplete (I), which may be converted to one of the usual grades by February 27 for fall term courses and August 29 for spring term courses. If the course is completed, the "I" will be slashed and the letter grade entered, with the date noted; otherwise, the Incomplete remains as the permanent grade.

N.B. Although final grades are due by the date prescribed in the Graduate Catalogue, students must adhere to deadlines for submission of their work that are established by their professors, allowing adequate time for appraisal of their work before grades are due.

## Acceleration

A reduction in the number of courses required by the Department may be granted in recognition of graduate course work that a student has completed elsewhere. Credit is often granted in recognition of an MA in French, but this is not automatic. Granting the MA depends on the nature of the previous work, the student's standing at Yale, and the graduate faculty's assessment of a student's general level of preparation. **Up to two courses can be waived.** Candidates for acceleration will be asked to petition the Department for acceleration in their third term, after a full year of eight courses, of which seven courses must be taken in the Department. Credit for previous work is granted by vote of the Graduate Faculty. With the completion of 8 Yale courses, students remain eligible for the MA.

## Advising

Graduate students should bear in mind that the principal dissertation adviser will not be their only adviser during their graduate training, and that collaborative advising, and mentoring is welcomed and supported in the Department. Beginning with coursework during the first two years and extending into the process of completing the Oral Qualifying Examination, there will be many opportunities for students to build relationships with faculty members based on shared research interests and rapport. These faculty members may serve as oral exam advisers, dissertation co-advisers, dissertation committee members, dissertation readers, professional mentors, and eventually as recommenders who will write letters for the student's job applications.

Each entering graduate student is assigned a faculty adviser according to their mutual areas of interest. The rapport with the faculty adviser is usually an informal one, designed to support the student in the early years of study; the adviser consults with the student about choice of courses and is available for mentoring and guidance. Meanwhile, the DGS also meets with all first- and second-year students at the beginning of each semester to discuss course selection and formal program requirements; the DGS has final authority in approving each student's schedule. No faculty member will be assigned more than two or three advisees from among students in their first two years. Upon becoming acquainted with the Department, a student may decide to change advisers, with the consent of the new adviser. The dissertation director (or co-directors) eventually replaces the adviser.

Refining the focus of dissertation research and choosing the dissertation adviser(s) is a process that will unfold organically during the first three years of study, as the student prepares for their oral exam and then begins dissertation research and writing.

The GSAS Guide to Advising Processes includes guidelines and resources to inform the process of choosing a faculty adviser:

[https://gsas.yale.edu/sites/default/files/page-files/gsas\\_advising\\_processes\\_guide\\_0.pdf](https://gsas.yale.edu/sites/default/files/page-files/gsas_advising_processes_guide_0.pdf)

## II. Language Requirements

Proficiency in two languages (in addition to English and French) is required for the PhD. The Department defines proficiency as the successful completion of one year of study at the college level or reading proficiency at the graduate level.

Students may choose any languages that they believe will be relevant to their research. Latin is recommended for students of French and Francophone literatures and is indispensable for scholars in all periods before 1800. Arabic and Tamazight are strongly recommended for students planning to do work on Maghrebi literature; an African language is strongly recommended for those focusing on other parts of the African continent, as is Creole for those working in the Caribbean. The other Romance

languages and German remain important languages for conducting research, of course. Students should consult with the DGS about their decisions for fulfilling the language requirement, and the DGS must approve the choices.

The department's course on Old French is required for all and does not count as one of the two additional languages.

### **Timing**

One language requirement must be fulfilled no later than the beginning of the third semester and in order to qualify for the MA. In exceptional circumstances, the DGS may grant extensions of up to one year beyond the third semester. The second language requirement must be fulfilled before the prospectus can be approved.

### **Students can fulfill a language requirement in the following ways:**

- a transcript from undergraduate or summer language study, showing two semesters or equivalent with grades of B or better. This work must have been completed no more than 3 years earlier, or in some cases it may be completed during the summer after the student's first year in the PhD program. The DGS may require detailed information about the coursework.
- passing a reading/translation exam administered by a language department at Yale (Spanish, German, Italian, etc.)
- passing, with a grade of B or HP or better, a language-for-reading course given at Yale at the graduate level (e.g. German for Reading)
- passing, with a grade of B or HP or better, a seminar at Yale conducted in the target language (this includes undergraduate courses)
- for Creole, Tamazight, and other languages for which this is appropriate, students may pass an oral proficiency test administered by the Yale Center for Language Study.
- in Latin, passing a reading/translation exam in the French department; or two summer sessions at Yale or another summer program (at Yale: total of 10 weeks, equal to one full year), with grades of B or better
- the DGS, at their discretion, may accept other evidence of language competence, such as (but not limited to) completion of secondary education at a school that principally uses the language in question.

### **III. Second- and Third-Year Progress Evaluation**

During the summer following the student's first year of study, the DGS will collect and review course feedback reports and grades from the instructors who taught the student during the fall and spring terms of their first year. Before registration for the third semester, the DGS will meet with students entering the second year of study in order to discuss their progress in the graduate program and to ensure that the student has met the academic requirements for courses during the first year, which is to obtain at least two grades of Honors in graduate courses taught by core faculty in French. The purpose of this meeting is to give the DGS and each student an opportunity to communicate clearly about the student's progress, and to reflect and problem solve as appropriate.

Before the final date of registration for the fifth term, or as soon thereafter as the record of required courses is complete, the graduate faculty will reflect together on evaluations and grades that each student has received during their first two years of coursework in order to ensure that each student has shown

evidence that they are able to proceed toward successfully completing the subsequent requirements for the PhD. By this point, a student must have obtained four grades of Honors in graduate courses, of which at least two must be in French department courses.

The next step toward the PhD is to complete the Oral Qualifying Examination.

#### IV. Oral Qualifying Examination

##### Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to test students' ability to conduct preliminary research in carefully selected areas of interest and to communicate them clearly and coherently to a group of interested scholars. The exam emphasizes dialogue and open discussion, as well as the ability to present material in an engaging pedagogical manner, in particular during the textual analysis section of the exam. An important aspect of the exam is the student's ability to define a topic (through creating the reading lists), to meaningfully engage a group of people, to arouse their interest in a potential research topic, and to present and defend informed viewpoints. These are the qualities of a successful teacher and scholar. The examination is also designed to demonstrate students' mastery of the French language, their command of selected and carefully defined topics in the literature, and their ability to present and discuss literary texts in ways connected to larger debates and issues.

##### About the Exam

The oral qualifying examination will take place during the student's third year of residence.

Students should begin to formulate exam list topics at the end of their third semester, and to communicate with faculty members about advising each of the exam list topics. At the end of the fourth semester, the oral exam committee will meet together with the student for the Pre-Orals discussion, which is a meeting whose purpose is for the student to present their topics to the committee in order to hold an organizing discussion about the scope, range, and connections among the list topics.

The Oral Examination must take place at least three months after the Pre-Orals meeting. In order to begin the dissertation prospectus and advance to candidacy in a timely manner, the Department recommends that students complete the Oral Examination as soon as possible, ideally at the end of the fifth semester; the exam must be completed **before spring break of the sixth semester**.

For students who receive acceleration credits, this schedule will be negotiated on an individual basis with the DGS.

The exam is conducted in French. It takes place in one two-hour session. The exam consists of:

- Four topics (25 minutes each), including one that is directly related to the student's envisioned dissertation research. No notes are permitted for this portion of the exam.
- A close textual analysis of a poem or prose passage (20-minute presentation plus 10 minutes of questions). Notes are permitted for this section, but the student may not read aloud from a prepared text. The student should approach this part of the exam as an opportunity to hone and demonstrate their pedagogical skill.
- Optional: design and present a course syllabus. In consultation with their exam advisers, a student may choose to replace one of the 4-exam lists with a syllabus presentation. Students who choose this option will design and present a course syllabus as one part (10-minute presentation plus 15 minutes of questions) of their oral exam; they may thereby leave the exam with a polished syllabus draft that can be used in future teaching and in their job applications.

Students have a major say in elaborating and developing the areas of interest which eventually become the topics of their Oral Examination. It is up to each student to shape the exam in a manner that colludes with and develops their skills, interests, and preferences. The very act of formulating and refining the exam topics is as much a part of the exam as is the choice of a subject for a research paper. Students should circumscribe a coherent area of inquiry, be it historical, generic, theoretical, intertextual. They may wish to focus on a writer, a school, a movement, and theoretical problem, a comparative axis, an interdisciplinary approach, or a transhistorical issue. They are expected to articulate their topics rigorously and coherently, to defend the validity of the topics, and to demonstrate the relevance of their approach to the texts at hand. Often students find it necessary to read and consider more texts than eventually make it onto their reading lists in order to sharply define the topics. Students should approach the Pre-Orals meeting and discussions with exam advisers as an opportunity to facilitate this refining process.

The exam is conceived so as to allow for the plurality and interdisciplinarity that is built into literary studies and, more specifically, into our department. Students should bear in mind that they will be addressing faculty members who may have various interests, approaches, and intellectual styles; part of the exercise consists of testing their ability to communicate their insights and arguments to people who may not share their approaches or perspectives. Therefore, there can be no strict, recipe-like guidelines.

Unnecessary but all-too-real anxiety can be avoided by not trying to anticipate the precise expectations of an examining committee, and by focusing on developing one's own informed approach to and perspective on the selected materials.

Plurality does not mean arbitrariness. Whatever approach a student chooses, they should come to the exam informed about both the specifics of the texts discussed and about their historical and theoretical contexts; they should be prepared to support their points with relevant examples. At the same time, an exam topic is not a dissertation prospectus nor is it a mini dissertation. Students are not expected to have formulated a "thesis" of their own about each of the chosen topics so much as they are expected to offer informed insights into the historical, conceptual, and larger theoretical implications of the subjects that they treat. Even the exam topic that is closely related to the dissertation is meant to outline and explore a general area of interest or a particular corpus of texts rather than to pinpoint an original idea or to fully develop and argument about it. That is, students need not know precisely what their dissertation topic will be at this stage—only the broad field and perhaps some of the central questions that it will cover.

## **Exam Procedures**

The first step is for the students to prepare a summary of their graduate work to help identify both strengths and lacunae. This can take one of two forms: either a list of courses taken at Yale and other graduate institutions or a copy of the student's latest Yale transcript. Next, the student should prepare a list of areas of interest that might be developed into orals topics; generally, they should prepare at least **four** areas of interest. Then, the student should meet with the DGS to present the course list (or transcript) and proposed topics in order to discuss their background, interests, topics, as well as procedures and timing for the exam. The DGS will seek to ensure that the topics augment the student's coursework in meaningful ways and will discuss with the student their selection of the examining committee. Normally, the committee will consist of four members, one of whom may come from another department; the Chair of the committee must be a core faculty member in French. Upon selection of the committee, the student may either contact the examiners directly or may request that the DGS do it. The topics are not approved until the Pre-Orals meeting.

The Pre-Orals meeting is to take place at least three months before the Oral examination; normally, this meeting will be scheduled for the end of the fourth semester. The purpose of this meeting is to collectively discuss the students' chosen topics and to help them clarify the details, enrich their bibliographies, pare down if necessary, and bring additional viewpoints to each topic. Most importantly, the Pre-Orals provide a forum in which students and examiners can appraise and comment on the general configuration of the



exam. Students should not wait until they have read everything on their bibliographies before scheduling the Pre-Orals; this meeting is not an examination but a dialogue. At least a day before this meeting, the student is expected to provide each examiner with a document containing the lists and provisional bibliographies for each topic. At the meeting, the student will briefly present what they intend to achieve with each topic. A brief discussion follows these short presentations. Remember, this is not an examination. It is a conversation designed to support the student and to generate intellectual coherence across the lists.

After this point, students should meet regularly with their examiners to report on their progress and discuss their findings. These discussions are not “rehearsals” of the exam, but an occasion for the student to sharpen their perception of the topics and for the examiner to suggest ideas, comparisons, bibliographical references, limitations, and further connections. The exam lists may be further edited and refined through this process. In other words, preparation for the exam is an important dimension of the exercise.

**One week before the day of the exam, the student must send a complete bibliography—including all four topics—in a single document to all members of the examination committee.** These bibliographies should be presented in a single document with a cover page and should include complete references as well as indicate which professor is in charge of which question. Since the complete bibliography will go on file in the Department and remain available for other students to consult, it should be reviewed and proofread carefully. At this point, each examiner should respond with approval of the bibliographies, after which no further changes are permitted.

**Textual Interpretation Section:** the student will receive a poem or short prose passage 24 hours before the exam, in order to prepare their textual interpretation. The textual selection will be chosen by the director of the exam committee. This part of the exam lasts **30 minutes** (20 minutes presentation followed by 10 minutes of questions). It is essentially an exercise in pedagogy. The student may choose whether to do this section at the beginning or the end of the exam. There is no prescribed methodology for this exercise. The goal is for the student to demonstrate how they would present a text to a class of advanced undergraduates. The student should explain the text in a coherent manner and make its significance come to life. While the student may choose to discuss formal elements such as rhyme and metrics, they are not expected to deliver a formal *explication de texte* in the French manner. The student should provide a compelling interpretation of the poem or passage as a whole. **Students may rely on notes for this section, but they may not simply read a prepared presentation.**

The rest of the exam consists of four topics agreed upon between the student and the examiners. The student is examined on each topic for 25 minutes **without the aid of notes or texts**. The student has the option to begin the discussion of each topic with a brief (2 minute) statement about the list. If a student selects the syllabus option, they will bring a copy of their prepared syllabus to present concisely (10 minutes), followed by questions from the examiner and committee (15 minutes). At the conclusion of the exam and after deliberation of the committee, the Chair of the committee will announce the result to the student and then will offer an oral evaluation of their performance.

In the event of an unsatisfactory performance on the exam, the committee will decide if all or part of the exam can be retaken. If the committee determines that the student’s performance does not merit a second exam, the student will be withdrawn from the program at the end of the term.

Within two weeks after the exam, the Chair of the committee will present to the student a detailed written report countersigned by the other members of the committee. The student is strongly encouraged to discuss their exam individually with the members of the examining committee after reading the report.

## V. Teaching

Teaching is an integral part of the preparation for the PhD. All students are expected to teach during two of their six years of graduate student; this is part of their training as future scholars and teachers. Before they can begin teaching, students must take the teacher preparation program offered by the department. Students meeting the requirements specified in the departmental teaching certification will receive a formal certificate attesting to their attainment of language teaching qualifications.

Student teaching usually takes place during the third and fourth years of graduate study, and usually consists of teaching one class of first- or second-year French language. Students may not teach during the first two years of study. If the opportunity arises for a student to teach in another department (for example, as a section leader in a large lecture course in History or History of Art) and if such teaching can be justified by compelling academic considerations (e.g., it will advance a student's research through experience teaching in a field closely related to their dissertation topic), then a student may, with written permission of the DGS, substitute one such course for one term of teaching within the department. Students may not teach more than one class per term, or more than two classes per year.

At the discretion of professors teaching undergraduate literature courses, graduate students may also be selected to act as teaching assistants. This opportunity is available only in the final year of teaching, after the student has completed at least two semesters of language teaching at Yale. Independent of enrollments in the undergraduate literature course, a graduate student teaching assistant works as an apprentice to the professor: they attend all sessions of the course, do all the reading, contribute to and facilitate discussions, and will lead the class or lecture on a given topic as the professor deems appropriate. The teaching assistant will *not* be solely responsible for grading or clerical work, as this opportunity is designed to train them as literature professors. This opportunity may be taken once, for one semester (either fall or spring). It replaces the graduate student's language teaching for that semester.

### Pedagogical Training

Pedagogical training and mentoring of graduate students are a top priority in the Yale French Department. French 670, Methods and Techniques in the French Language Classroom is also provided to all graduate instructors by members of the staff of our language teaching professionals. Course chairs advise and supervise graduate student instructors throughout their period of language teaching work. At regularly held course meetings, students will learn about practical applications of various methodologies in relation to the level and content of the particular course. Additional training and support are available. These include pedagogy workshops, an excellent library of teaching resources and databases, and the experience of the entire faculty. Students working as teachers will receive classroom observation followed by one-on-one debriefing with the course chair and/or the language program directly to ensure that they get regular and reliable feedback about their teaching. At the end of the semester, each instructor receives a written evaluation of their performance from the course chair.

Additionally, the Center for Language Study at Yale offers a Certificate of Second-Language Acquisition, which the French Department recommends but does not require for its PhD students.

Complete information about the Certificate can be found at:  
<http://cls.yale.edu/certificate-second-language-acquisition>

## Types of Teaching

There are four different types of teaching opportunities available to graduate students in French. All graduate students are required to teach at least one year of language before they move on to other teaching options, listed below. These options are contingent on the availability of courses and professors; some require competitive applications.

- 1) Language courses, beginning with the department's adopted first year textbook.
- 2) Teaching assistantship in a large undergraduate lecture course, such as the course on the modern French novel in translation taught by Professor Kaplan and Professor Samuels. In this case graduate instructors lead a discussion section and attend all sessions of the course.
- 3) Teaching assistantship in a professor's undergraduate seminar. This is a unique opportunity to teach alongside an experienced professor, to share in leading the class, and to receive pedagogical mentoring.
- 4) The Associates in Teaching (AT) program offered by the Graduate School and the Center for Teaching and Learning. Through this program, doctoral students work jointly with a cooperating faculty member to conceptualize or redesign, plan, and deliver an undergraduate course. It is a competitive program. See: <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/Associates-in-Teaching-Program>

Options 2, 3, and 4 are available for one semester only.

For more detailed information about graduate student teaching at Yale, see the GSAS page on the topic: <https://gsas.yale.edu/academic-requirements/teaching-fellows-requirements/teaching-levels-types>

## III. Admission to Candidacy

When students have completed all pre-dissertation requirements, including the prospectus, they are "admitted to candidacy" by formal vote of the graduate faculty of the Department of French. Admission to candidacy must take place well before the end of the seventh term of study. The Graduate School will allow no student who has not been formally admitted to candidacy to register for an eighth term of study.

## IV. Dissertation

The requirements for the PhD degree culminate in writing a dissertation, a piece of independent research that permits a candidate to establish a claim to expertise in the field of literary studies. Once accepted by Yale University, the thesis will become available to the public. The Department's standards of judgment stress scholarly rigor, originality, and methodological innovation. The Department does not prescribe a single approach or format for the dissertation. It is willing to consider alternative formats and presentations, such as a series of essays united by subject or methodology, a sustained treatment of a single author, a large-scale translation project, or a digital project. Similarly, the scope of the dissertation is not narrowly defined; it may be interdisciplinary, encompassing such areas as music, art, philosophy, and literatures beyond French. The Department will address the criteria for dissertation projects on a case-by-case basis, through the process of designing and refining the prospectus.

## **Directors, Prospectus, and Readers**

After passing the oral examination candidates must choose a dissertation director or directors. Any member of the Graduate Faculty may serve as director, whether junior or senior. Students may wish to work with two co-directors to gain additional perspectives on their research. At least one director must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in French.

After consulting adequately with the director(s) of the project, a student must submit a formal prospectus to the DGS. Instructions for the format of the prospectus are available from the departmental graduate registrar. Early in the process of preparing the prospectus, the student should consult with the relevant librarian or librarians at Yale, who will be able to offer substantial help and guidance about research paths and methods.

The usual time to complete the prospectus is during the sixth semester, soon after completing the oral examination. Students should do everything possible to adhere to this time frame, even though it is technically permitted to continue work on the prospectus during the seventh semester. The aim should be to move through the prospectus process efficiently in order to begin work on the dissertation. The Graduate School rules specify that the prospectus must be completed and approved during the term following the oral exam and at least six months before the dissertation is submitted.

The dissertation prospectus should be **approximately 15 pages**, not including the bibliography. It should be specific and concise, outlining the central questions, corpus, and scope of the project. No prospectus should exceed 20 pages.

## **Ad Hoc Prospectus Committee**

Once the adviser(s) and the student have agreed on a complete draft of the prospectus, the student should submit copies of the draft to an ad hoc prospectus committee. This committee should be composed of the dissertation director(s) and at least two other professors, who may come from inside or beyond the Department. This committee convenes for the sole purpose of refining and improving the prospectus. It is not a permanent dissertation committee, nor will its members necessarily serve as official readers once the dissertation is completed and submitted (although they might serve as readers). The ad-hoc committee meeting begins with a short oral presentation by the student. The committee members may then suggest changes and improvements to the prospectus.

The committee meeting must take place before the last graduate faculty meeting of the semester and should allow time for revisions before that meeting. At the final faculty meeting of the semester, the graduate faculty will vote whether to accept the prospectus and admit the student to candidacy.

## **Dissertation Writing**

Completed dissertations are read and evaluated by three readers designated by the DGS in consultation with the candidate. Candidates approaching the end of their writing process should bear in mind the Graduate School deadlines for submitting dissertations, which fall considerably earlier than the end of a given semester.

While the director(s) remain(s) primarily responsible for advising all stages of the dissertation, candidates should feel free to consult with other faculty at and beyond Yale during the course of their writing. If two faculty members co-direct a dissertation, then one of them may also serve as a reader.

It is essential that candidates keep in touch regularly with their director(s), reporting on their plans and submitting work as it progresses, chapter by chapter. Candidates should also feel free to consult with their readers and other faculty members within or beyond the Department. Before the final submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School, a completed first draft must be submitted for approval to the director(s). If the project undergoes substantial modification during the course of writing—beyond the typical transformations that attend writing such a substantial research project—then the candidate may be encouraged to submit a revised or new prospectus for approval.

The dissertation is usually written in English. It may also be written in French, with permission from the DGS and the dissertation director(s).

There is no prescribed length for the dissertation. Two hundred and fifty pages is average, but dissertations can be shorter or longer, within reason and according to the demands of the subject. Previous dissertations are publicly available in the Yale University Library for candidates to consult.

The normal time to completion of the PhD at Yale is six years. However, as a courtesy, the Department reviews dissertations that are submitted after the student's period of registration, up to a maximum of ten years after the student's admission to candidacy. After the student's period of registration has ended, the Department will not assign a new director, nor approve a new prospectus.

### **Procedures for Submitting the Dissertation**

All candidates for the PhD must submit their dissertations directly to the Registrar of the Graduate School in accordance with the Registrar's timetable and requirements. Candidates should request a copy of the Graduate School's instructions on physical requirements for dissertations and should consult the Graduate School catalogue for submission dates.

In addition, French Department Ph.D. candidates should inform the DGS of their intention to submit a dissertation at least one month in advance of the Graduate School deadline. The DGS will assign three readers to review the dissertation for the Department and the Graduate School. Readers are chosen according to availability and area of expertise. Candidates are invited to suggest possible readers for the dissertation. The dissertation adviser normally does not serve as one of the readers.

Each of the readers of the dissertation prepares an official report. The report includes six criteria for evaluation: (1) Command of the literature of the subject; (2) Originality; (3) Insight and judgment; (4) Clarity; (5) Style; and (6) Master of the method used in research. The ratings in each area and for the dissertation as a whole are: Distinguished, Very Good, Good, Fair, or Unacceptable. The report also includes narrative feedback and recommendations concerning eventual publication of the manuscript.

After the Graduate Faculty of the Department has voted on the dissertation, the candidate will be informed of the vote and provided with a copy of the readers' reports. The Degree Committee of the Graduate School then meets to vote on final approval of the dissertation and the degree. After the meeting of the Degree Committee, the students are informed by the Dean of the Graduate School whether or not they will be awarded the Ph.D.

## SUPPLEMENT ON EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH ABROAD

The Department strongly encourages graduate students to spend a year abroad while they are working on their dissertations, which will usually fall during their fifth year of study. The purposes of this time abroad may include archival and field research, developing contacts with writers, scholars, artists, and other intellectuals, language training, and general familiarization with a specific culture or context.

A principal program to support research in France is the Department's longstanding exchange with the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, detailed below. Candidates whose research focuses on literatures from beyond France should seriously explore possibilities to support extended research in their geographical area of interest. It is possible for students to draw on Departmental support, if available, for these studies.

Only students who will have passed their oral examinations by the following fall are eligible to study abroad. Chief among the criteria according to which students qualify for research study abroad are the following:

- current status (including seniority, completion of prospectus, etc.)
- degree to which they will benefit from immersive research time in a French-speaking context;
- the degree to which a student's work is likely to benefit from a year abroad;
- past academic performance at Yale.

All students who plan to conduct research abroad—whether on the ENS exchange or elsewhere—should apply for funding both from outside sources as well as from the Department.

Interested students should be ready to complete these applications during the fall for the year preceding their year abroad, or earlier. This depends on grant application deadlines and requires significant advance planning and preparation. In other words, candidates should begin to plan for these applications directly after the prospectus is approved.

Students must petition the department to approve research abroad and must request funding in writing.

### ENS Paris

The basis of Yale's longstanding exchange with the French system is the Ecole Normale Supérieure, which sends instructors to Yale each year and welcomes four of our students as *pensionnaires étrangers*. The ENS provides each of our students the following: a room, free of charge, at the Rue d'Ulm location; the privileges associated with student status (entry to courses, seminars, libraries, etc.); and access to inexpensive meals at the ENS restaurants.

The ENS does not provide any stipend. Living expenses—which, because of the free room, need not cover rent—must therefore come from other sources: a University Dissertation Fellowship (UDF), an outside fellowship, or a departmental fellowship (if available). See below on funding.

### Research outside France

Students whose dissertation is concerned with a geographical area outside of France should explore possibilities for research and travel in their area of interest. Such students should consult with their adviser well in advance and seek to prepare contacts in the places that are relevant. Ideally, a student would spend a full academic year in the country of interest, but if funds do not permit this, a shorter stay can also be supported. The student should also seek institutional affiliation—for instance, with a local university or a

research institute such as the American Institute for Maghrib Studies or the West African Research Association—as this will facilitate research and collaboration.

Since a departmental fellowship might not be sufficient to support a full academic year outside of the longstanding ENS exchange, students using departmental fellowships for study in places other than France may, if necessary, limit their time abroad to one semester. If openings are available, they may teach at Yale during the other semester. They should, of course, consult with their adviser(s) and the DGS to determine the most suitable plan for their research.

## **Funding for Research Abroad**

### Departmental Fellowships for Research Abroad

Students offered a position in the Department's exchange with Ecole Normale Supérieure should all apply for outside funding (see below). If outside funding is not secured, these students may choose between:

- 1) using their University Dissertation Fellowship (UDF), which provides the full Yale stipend. Students who return to Yale after using their UDF in Paris will be supported by teaching during their sixth year of study; this should be their final year, during which they also prepare applications for jobs.
- 2) applying for departmental funds—if they are available—according to a timetable established by the DGS. The amount of the departmental fellowship varies from year to year, depending on available funds and the value of the dollar.

Students who apply for departmental funds to be used for research conducted *outside* of the traditional ENS exchange must submit a petition, a budget, and a timeline to the DGS.

### Outside Sources of Funding

In 2016, the MacMillan Center announced guaranteed funding for qualified graduate students research abroad. It is possible that the availability of these resources will change from year to year. Students should examine opportunities for research funding from the MacMillan center, and they should also continue to seek funds from outside Yale, which can be both highly prestigious and more generous.

Students should inform themselves well in advance about fellowships that support dissertation research. The following section names only a few of the most obvious sources. Further information is typically available from the DGS, from advisers, and from the Graduate School Fellowship Office:

<http://gsas.yale.edu/funding-aid/fellowships/gsas-other-fellowships>

- **The Bourses Chateaubriand:** This French Government Fellowship is awarded by a committee working for the French Embassy, for research in France. Candidates apply independently, directly to the French Embassy in New York (<http://www.chateaubriand-fellowship.org/>).
- **Fox Fellowships:** <http://foxfellowship.yale.edu/>
- **Fulbright Fellowships** for doctoral research. Students should be aware that the deadlines for Fulbright Fellowships tend to be far earlier than for other fellowships, typically in early September of the year before travel.
- **Bourses Marandon:** Candidates must be U.S. citizens, be affiliated with an American college or

university, become members of the SPFFA (Société des Professeurs Français et Francophones d'Amérique) at the time of their application and have a sufficient command of spoken and written French to pursue their proposed studies and/or research. Detailed information at <http://spffa-us.org/Bourses.html>

- **Gilder Lehrman Center** for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition offers Graduate Research Fellowships: <http://www.yale.edu/glc/index.htm>
- **Clara Levillain Prize:** The European Studies Council at the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale administers this prize. Grants are available to students beginning research on a project with a strong and direct connection with French language or culture. Summer award. <http://studentgrants.yale.edu/welcome.asp>

**NB: The following fellowships typically have November deadlines.**

- The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) offers **Mellon Fellowships** for Dissertation Research in Original Sources: <http://www.clir.org/fellowships/mellon>
- The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) offers a Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF): <http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/idrf-fellowship/>