

PhD Program In French and Comparative Literature Studies
(Effective Fall 2020)

- French/ICLS students complete the requirements for the MA set by the Department of French while also meeting course distribution requirements established by ICLS
- French/ICLS students are only required to take two courses focusing on topics before 1800 (French program students take a minimum of three)
- French/ICLS students may take the ICLS Introductory course to meet the French Department Literary/Cultural theory requirement
- French/ICLS students satisfy the language requirement set by ICLS rather than the one set by the Department of French
- MPhil oral examinations are conducted by an interdisciplinary faculty committee, as required by ICLS.
- The form and length of the dissertation prospectus follow ICLS guidelines. Prospectus reviews for French/ICLS students are conducted by ICLS

In addition to this document, please refer to the [Institute for Comparative Literature and Society](#) website.

A) Coursework

16 courses of which a maximum of 4 may be taken in other departments and a maximum of 1 for R credit (other than the required R-credit courses).

At least 3 courses must be taken in the area of literature/culture before 1800. These courses must be in at least two different fields/periods, e.g. medieval & 18th century. At least 2 must be taken in the French Department.

The following courses are required (see course descriptions below)

- i) First-year Proseminar (fall)
- ii) First-year Practicum/MA direction (spring)
- iii) Second-year Practicum in Language Pedagogy
- iv) Literary & Cultural Theory in the French and Francophone Context (or equivalent course in literary/cultural theory such as the ICLS Introductory course)
- v) Students beyond the MPhil must enroll in a minimum of 1 semester of the Dissertation and Professional Development Workshop.
- vi) Students must participate in the Department Lecture Series in years 1-2 and for at least 2 additional semesters of their program.

B) Other Requirements

- i) MA essay

The MA essay is written under the guidance of a French Department faculty member with expertise in the chosen area. During the preparation of the essay, students enroll in the Research Practicum, which provides training in conducting and presenting research. Students plan, outline and workshop parts of their MA essay in the Practicum. The essay is usually completed over the summer and must be submitted within the first two weeks of the 3rd semester. The MA essay can take various forms, e.g. analysis of the critical literature on a particular topic; formulation of an argument bearing on one or more literary works or a cultural/historical question. It is approximately 25 pages in length and should be accompanied by footnotes and a detailed bibliography. It is usually written in French.

ii) Oral Examination

By the end of the 5th semester, students sit a 2-hour oral examination with a 3-person committee. For non-ICLS certificate students, 2 members of the committee must be French Department faculty. For ICLS affiliated students, at least 1 member must be in the French department. Students prepare 3 reading lists that are relevant to their planned dissertation work and that represent areas of future teaching competency.

iii) Explication de texte

Following the oral exam, the student is given one week to prepare a close reading of a passage related to their interests. They present their reading orally to a committee of 2 faculty members, one of whom should be the intended sponsor of their dissertation.

iv) Prospectus

By the end of their 6th semester, students submit a dissertation prospectus. This should outline the dissertation project, establish its methodology/disciplinary grounding and explain how it contributes to or intervenes in existing debates and conversations in the field. The proposal should be 4-8 pages in length and should be accompanied by a bibliography. The prospectus must be approved by the proposed dissertation committee and the DGS.

v) Demonstration of advanced competency in a language other than English or French

Competency may be demonstrated by a translation exam offered by the relevant Columbia department or 4 semesters of coursework or the equivalent. Students should be able to explain the relevancy of the language to their academic training & are encouraged to learn/improve a language that could be significant their research.

vi) Dissertation and Defense

The dissertation must be written under the direction of a sponsor in the French Department. Non-ICLS students must have at least one additional committee member from the French Department. As per Columbia University rules, the dissertation must be written in English and defended before a 5-member committee in a 2-hour oral examination.

Descriptions of Required Courses

i) Proseminar: Introduction to Research in French Studies

This course offers an introduction to the main genres of academic writing (e.g. seminar paper, *explication de texte*, conference abstract, article) and to choosing a good paper topic. We also work on close reading techniques and consider how these have been deployed by literary and cultural theorists including Fredric Jameson, Paul de Man and Naomi Schor. The class ends with a final examination in the form of an *explication de texte*.

ii) Practicum in Writing & Research

Using skills developed in the fall semester Proseminar, students undertake a supervised research project culminating in the MA thesis. Topics covered include: using the libraries; bibliographic methods; digital humanities; professional associations and conferences; directions in the field. During the Practicum students outline and workshop parts of their MA essay.

iii) French & Francophone Literary and Cultural Theory

This course introduces major questions and schools of literary and cultural theory with an emphasis on the thought of French-language theorists.

iv) Dissertation & Professional Development Workshop

Students workshop prospectuses, dissertation chapter drafts and conference and grant proposals. The course also orients students to professional opportunities and to the job market.

v) Department Lecture Series

The lecture series convenes twice during the semester for a total of 4 meetings a year. Students enroll for 3 years, receiving 1 credit for each year or ½ credit for a semester. The course is run by a faculty adviser with input from students, who help to identify and recruit speakers for the following year. Students may also be invited to introduce speakers and moderate discussions/ lead the Q&A. The series strives to include a broad range of fields and periods.

The Program Year by Year (will vary somewhat depending on students' individual situations and programs)

Year 1

Fall semester Proseminar

Spring semester Research Practicum/MA direction

Fall and spring Lecture Series (1 credit)

Up to 6 additional courses

Year 1 summer

Complete MA essay

Year 2

Submit MA essay by mid-September

Fall and spring lecture sequence (1 credit)

Pedagogy course

Up to 5 additional courses

Teaching

Year 3

Fall and spring lecture sequence? (1 credit)

Oral Examination (fall)

Explication de texte (fall)

Prospectus defense (spring)

Teaching

Year 4

Teaching

Dissertation Workshop?

Fall and spring lecture sequence? (1 credit)

Year 5

Dissertation fellowship

Dissertation Workshop?

Fall and spring lecture sequence? (1 credit)

Defense?

Year 6

External fellowship/Teaching

Dissertation Workshop

Defense?