

THE FIELD

Faculty members from across the French-speaking world work with students to reach a high level of proficiency and gain a broad knowledge of one of the world's most dynamic cultural traditions. The program offers a rigorous educational experience focused on critical thinking and analysis. It is particularly well suited to careers in fields in which expertise in French is directly relevant or a valuable complement. Those careers include information technology, artificial intelligence, international environmental policy, government and public service, communications and journalism, research, public health, the hospitality industry, fashion, business and international relations, international trade and economic diplomacy, localization management, translation and interpretation, as well as high school and community college teaching or graduate study. Requirements are flexible enough to allow students to combine the liberal arts and skill-oriented components of their major with other related programs of study, including majors and minors in other fields and certificate programs. An academic year or semester program in Paris or in Montpellier is recommended for all students interested in French language and culture. Students are also encouraged to pursue double majors.

A minor in French and francophone studies is available.

THE MAJOR

The minimum total number of credits required is 36. A maximum of six credits of courses at the intermediate level (240, 246, 250) may be counted toward those credits required for the major. Students must demonstrate proficiency at the intermediate level by achieving a grade of B+ in French 240. Students who do not do this complete French 250. All other courses must be at the 300-level or above with a specific distribution of courses in language, literature, and culture, plus the Junior Year Writing and the senior seminar, which fulfills the integrative experience requirement.

THE MAJOR WITH CONCENTRATION IN TEACHING

The major with a teaching concentration prepares students to earn a teaching license in French for grades 5-12. Students interested in this option should apply during the second semester of their sophomore year to the Secondary Teacher Education Program (STEP) at the UMass College of Education. For more information about STEP, consult the Educator Licensure Office, in particular the program's admissions policies. Students complete major requirements as other French majors and additional courses in education studies. Study abroad in France or another francophone country is strongly advised. The program aims for balanced competence in the fields of French studies and the teaching of foreign languages, culminating in a student teaching practicum during the last semester. Students completing STEP receive an initial license, which allows them to seek employment as a middle or high school French teacher. The initial license is valid for five years, during which students must complete the additional necessary coursework (generally a master's degree) to obtain a professional license.

OTHER OPTIONAL CONCENTRATIONS

Students are encouraged to complete minors and certificate programs in other areas. A great variety of programs is available at UMass Amherst and the Five College system. Among these are the certificates in journalism, international relations, African studies, film studies, translation and interpreting studies, as well as the minor in modern European studies.

HONORS

Contact the departmental honors coordinator for information on how to pursue honors opportunities within the major.

STUDY ABROAD

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of a year or a semester studying in France or another francophone country. The program sponsors an exchange agreement with the Université Paris Diderot (formerly the Université de Paris 7). Students are directly enrolled in courses with French students in a wide variety of fields. French language courses for foreign students are also available, as are teaching internships in local schools. In addition to Paris Diderot, UMass sponsors an exchange with Université Paris Dauphine – Paris 9 for students with business and technology-related interests. For students with less experience in French, programs in French language and culture at the Institut Catholique de Paris are available. UMass Amherst also maintains a long-standing relationship with the University of Minnesota's Study Abroad Program in Montpellier. Programs in several other French cities and French-speaking countries are also an option.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

French and francophone studies can open the door to a wide variety of career opportunities. French is the fifth most widely used language in the world, with speakers spread over five continents. It is the third most important business language (after English and Chinese) and the fourth most common language on the internet. Moreover, it is the second most important language in international organizations, serving as an official working language in the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Olympic Committee, and in dozens of other international political, business, and cultural organizations across Europe, Africa, and the Americas. France, with the sixth largest economy in the world, serves as the primary driver of economic opportunity across the francophone world.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

The humanities focus on human creativity, endeavor, and culture. The imaginative and creative arts—literary and performing—derive from life and teach about human behavior and constructs of social reality. The history of social, political, and economic systems illuminates and shapes the present and future. Students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts are expected to broaden their perspectives on individual and cultural expression within their own and other societies, to understand the development and evolution of the discipline of study in relation to the culture from which it emanates, and to learn the methods by which knowledge in the discipline is gained.

Office: 314 Herter Hall
Phone: 413-545-2314
Website: umass.edu/french