

MA PROGRAM IN FRENCH (FRIT)

Graduate Student Handbook, 2020-21



**SCHOOL OF
LANGUAGES
LITERATURES
& CULTURES**

Table of Contents

[Admission](#)

[Advising](#)

[M.A. Options](#)

[M.A. without thesis](#)

[M.A. with thesis](#)

[Course Requirements](#)

[M.A. Core](#)

[400-level courses](#)

[Auditing courses](#)

[Courses Taken Outside the Department](#)

[Comprehensive Examination](#)

[Written Examination](#)

[Research Paper](#)

[M.A. Reading List](#)

[M.A. Examination Committee](#)

[Requirements for Students Receiving Graduate Teaching Assistantships](#)

[Course registration](#)

[GTA Orientation and Teaching Practicum](#)

[Other Requirements](#)

[GPA Requirements](#)

[English Proficiency Requirement](#)

[Full-time and Part-time Status: Credits and Units](#)

[Application for Diploma and Important Dates](#)

[Time Limit for the M.A. Degree](#)

Admission

Entry into the M.A. program is open to students having an undergraduate degree in some field of French Studies. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required. All foreign applicants whose native language is not English are required to take the TOEFL examination (Test of English as a Foreign Language). An overall Grade Point Average of at least 3.00 (on a four-point scale) at the undergraduate level is also required.

Advising

Entering students are advised in their first semester by the Director of Graduate Studies or a designated professor. By the end of their second semester, students should choose a permanent advisor and register this choice with the Director of Graduate Studies. Final responsibility for meeting Graduate School requirements and deadlines rests solely with the student.

M.A. Options

Students, in consultation with their advisor, may choose one of two options to complete the M.A. requirements:

M.A. without thesis

This degree requires a minimum of 30 credits, of which not less than 18 must be selected from courses numbered 600 or above. In lieu of a thesis, students must present a Qualifying Paper of between 25 and 30 pages in length as evidence of their ability to do independent research. The Qualifying Paper may be an extension of a paper prepared for a graduate level course, but it must be written in excess of course requirements under the supervision of the student's research director; up to two credits of French 798 may be used for this purpose. The topic of the Qualifying Paper must fall within the area of concentration selected by the student. The M.A. Qualifying Paper defense committee consists of two faculty members. The defense must be scheduled to occur no later than three weeks prior to the last day of classes.

M.A. with thesis

This degree requires a minimum of 24 credits, of which not less than 12 must be selected from courses numbered 600 or above. A further six credits of FREN 799 (thesis research) are required. The M.A. Thesis Committee consists of 2 faculty members in addition to the student's thesis director, who serves as chairperson. The written thesis, a minimum of 80 pages in length, is followed by an oral examination, about an hour long, which must be scheduled to occur no later than three weeks prior to the last day of classes.

Course Requirements

M.A. Core

All students follow the M.A. "Core" which has been designed to provide a common base of knowledge while at the same time affording an opportunity to specialize in an area of their choice. All M.A. students, regardless of their chosen area of concentration, are required to follow this program, to the extent that relevant courses are offered during the student's M.A. career. The Core consists of:

- One (1) course on Theory or History of Ideas (e.g., Introduction to Literary Theory, French Intellectualism, Post-Colonial Theory, Feminist Theory, The Enlightenment, Thinkers of the Renaissance and Baroque Periods)
- One (1) course on French linguistics (e.g., SLA, History of the language, Sociolinguistics, Structure of Modern French)
- Three (3) courses on culture/literature from three different periods

Beyond the Core, courses may be selected to constitute an area of concentration in literature, cultural studies, Francophone studies, language and linguistics, etc.

400-level courses

No more than four courses at the 400-level may be counted toward the M.A. degree. Courses below the 400 level are not applicable to the M.A. degree

Auditing courses

Courses taken on an “audit” basis may not be counted towards the course requirements.

Courses Taken Outside the Department

Students may transfer a maximum of six credits of relevant graduate courses taken in other departments or accredited universities, upon the recommendation of the student's advisor and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. In the case of the M.A. degree, such credits must have been earned within the total five year time limit for completion of the M.A. degree at the University of Maryland. In accordance with Graduate School policy, students may be granted permission to take courses at local universities belonging to the [D.C. Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#). The request must be approved by the student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Credit by examination

Credit by examination is not available to graduate students in the French program.

Comprehensive Examination

All students in the M.A. Program must successfully pass the Comprehensive Examination. The exam has two separate components: a Written Examination testing knowledge based on the student's [personal reading list](#) and the Research Paper, which includes the writing of either a Thesis or Qualifying Paper and its defense. The two components (a written exam and a research paper followed by an oral defense) are scheduled separately and may be sequenced in any order.

Full-time students are expected to take their Comprehensive Examinations in their fourth semester. The written exam must be scheduled to occur no later than three weeks prior to the last day of classes.

Written Examination

The written examination counts for 60% of the total grade and consists of two parts: Part I (20%): *Commentaire de texte* (1.5 hours), Part II (40%): Essay questions (2 @ 20% each, 3 hours.). Both sections are based on the student's personal reading list. For both parts of the exam, students will be able to choose between two questions. Students whose native language is English may choose to write the response to one question on the exam in English; students whose native language is French must write one response in English. This choice may be made on either section of the exam (Part I or Part II). Students have four and a half hours to complete the written examination, typically on a computer provided by the Department). The exam is graded by the [M.A. Examination Committee](#).

Research Paper

The second part of the Comprehensive exam is worth 40% of the total grade and includes the completion and defense of either an M.A. Thesis or a Qualifying Paper. Students must select their topic and committee by the end of the semester preceding their final semester (typically the third semester for full-time students). The Thesis or Qualifying Paper, which is defended during the student's last semester, must be submitted to readers at least three weeks prior to the defense date, which must be at least three weeks before the last day of classes. The Qualifying Paper may be an extension of a paper prepared for a graduate-level course. On average, the defense of either a Thesis or the Qualifying Paper lasts approximately one hour and is usually conducted in the language in which the Thesis or Qualifying paper will be written. The Research Paper is graded by the student's chosen committee of two faculty members (for the Qualifying Paper), or three faculty members (for the Thesis).

M.A. Reading List

All students are responsible for compiling a personal reading list under the supervision of their personal graduate advisor (also their research director). The Reading List includes all of the works (books, articles, excerpts) assigned in seven (7) of the courses taken while in the program. Each faculty member who has taught one or more of these courses may add up to five additional readings per course. Reading lists must be approved by the members of the examining committee before the end of the semester that precedes the written exam (typically the third semester for full-time students).

M.A. Examination Committee

All students will select an M.A. Examination Committee in consultation with their advisor. For non-thesis students, the Written Examination and the Research Paper will be evaluated by two (2) faculty members. For students who have selected the M.A. Thesis option, the Committee will be composed of three (3) faculty members.

Requirements for Students Receiving Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Course registration

For students studying full-time in the M.A. program, a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) will ordinarily be awarded for a period not exceeding four semesters. All graduate students receiving financial aid should register, no later than the end of the Drop-Add period each semester, for the full number of credits for which they have received tuition remission (i.e., five (5) credits for half-time GTAs, ten (10) credits for full-time GTAs, twelve (12) credits for Fellows). These credits may be taken as coursework or as research hours (e.g., 798, 799).

GTA Orientation and Teaching Practicum

In addition, all new (first-semester) Graduate Teaching Assistants must enroll in a 1-credit teaching practicum in their initial semester (e.g., FREN709 or SLLC601). All Graduate Teaching Assistants, new and returning) are required to attend the bi-annual pre-semester Orientations and Professional Development Workshops organized by the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, typically one week to ten days prior to the beginning of the Fall semester and three to five days prior to the beginning of the Spring semester.

Graduate Teaching Assistants are expected to know and abide by the duties and responsibilities of GTAs detailed in the Official GTA Offer Letter, forwarded to the student at the time the offer of an assistantship is made. Additional expectations will be made clear during the TA Orientation and in expectation setting meetings held during the academic year with the TA Coordinator. Failure to meet these expectations in a satisfactory manner may result in the Graduate Teaching Assistantship not being renewed.

Other Requirements

GPA Requirements

The Graduate School requires that graduate students maintain a B average for all graduate courses taken in their program. A student whose average falls below 3.0 upon completion of nine credit hours is automatically placed on academic probation for the following full semester. If the average remains below 3.0 for three

consecutive semesters of enrollment, the Graduate School requires that the student withdraw from the University.

English Proficiency Requirement

Non-native speakers of English must submit TOEFL exam results to the Graduate School with their application. Based on these results, students may be advised to take a written expression course from the Maryland English Institute or a basic writing course given by the English Department. This course will not count towards the degree.

Full-time and Part-time Status: Credits and Units

Program requirements are measured in “credits,” and thirty (30) credits are required for the M.A. degree. However, the University of Maryland uses a different scale to verify students’ full-time status. Students who hold fellowships should pay close attention to this requirement (as well as foreign students who do not receive financial aid). Note that all course levels (e.g., 400, 600, 700, 800) do not carry the same number of “units.” Consult the [Graduate Catalog](#) for details.

Application for Diploma and Important Dates

Application for the diploma must be made by the [due dates stipulated by the Graduate School](#).

Time Limit for the M.A. Degree

Although [Graduate School regulations](#) allow a maximum of five years for the completion of all requirements for the M.A. degree, the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures provides full-time students a maximum of four semesters of financial support to qualified students. It is therefore expected that Teaching Assistants will complete all requirements for their degree by the end of their second year.