The French major at the U of M gives you the chance to get an advanced level of understanding of the French language, but also historical and contemporary aspects of French culture.

You’ll begin your studies by focusing on the language aspect of your major. When you move on after the beginning and intermediate levels of French language study, you’ll have the opportunity to study a variety of topics related to French culture including literature and culture from three broad historical periods: Middle Ages and Renaissance, early modern France, and modern and contemporary France. You will also have the opportunity to study literature from Africa, the Caribbean, and Quebec.

Your degree in French gives you a background to further your use of the French language. With a liberal arts degree, you’ll also gain skills in critical thinking, persuasive writing, and public speaking that translate to any career.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study French and Italian Studies at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts highlight the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also
where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.

Meet Our Students

Perhaps the first thing we think of when we think about Paris right now is the recent fire at Notre Dame. Jami Watson, a student in French at the U of M, was studying in Paris during the last academic year. She said that the experience of being in Paris when the fire broke out was “surreal to witness in person.”

Read more about Jami’s story, and learn more about our undergraduate program.

Student Experiences

Learning Abroad Options in French Studies: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy

“Majoring or minoring in French Studies means opening yourself up to the rich diversity of the French-speaking world. Studying abroad offers the unique opportunity to discover that world by finding yourself in it.”

—Bruno Chaouat, Department of French and Italian

Learn more about study abroad for French Studies majors.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader
Meet Our Faculty

New to the University of Minnesota, Assistant Professor Jennifer Row highlights the different ways her love for French has impacted her life and research. “I love how everyone here is intellectually curious, and I find inspiration from different fields and adjacent departments that I would never have expected.”

Read more about Professor Row's work.

Meet Our Alumni
“Studying in the humanities is about striving to wander and wonder, which coincides with the idea that learning is joyful in that it never ends,” says Alexandre Dubois (PhD ‘19, French studies), who now teaches at the University of Mississippi. His dissertation explores the relationship between poetry and imperial expansionism, as seen in the growth of international railways.

Read more about Alexandre's story.

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.”

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”
-- Dean John Coleman

You might also explore

French and Italian Studies
Art History
Global Studies
Music

Associated Careers

Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations Managers; Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers; Interpreters; News Analysts, Reporters, and Correspondents; Postsecondary Teachers; Translators

Admission Information

FRESHMAN: Admission information

TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below!

- Course plans before transferring
- Estimated time to graduation
- Career preparation in CLA
- Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
- Connecting with major/minor departments