

Majoring in French and Francophone Studies



Qui?...Moi?!

The Essence of a Liberal Arts Education

While you may have a very clear idea of how you want to earn your living upon graduating from Bates, you have chosen to attend a Liberal Arts college, not a trade school or pre-professional institution, *per se*. You have embraced the notion of an education that will expose you to a broad range of subject areas and disciplines in a small, residential academic setting with a low professor-student ratio. Bates will certainly be your calling card to employment upon graduation, but the college is equally dedicated to educating life-long learners. These two trajectories are clearly and happily linked: employers of Bates graduates consistently praise the Bates candidates' ability to synthesize, imagine and problem-solve based on a broad base of knowledge and experience. The major in French and Francophone Studies embodies and promotes these liberal arts values exceedingly well.

Diversity of Perspective

The major requirements (see attached description) ensure that students encounter a multiplicity of perspectives and approaches to the French-speaking world; we work to build cultural competency at each level of study. Beginning in even the introductory level language class, students are encouraged to investigate Francophone culture as it is inflected by race, ethnicity, sex and gender, sexuality, colonialism, scientific inquiry, regional identity, and the politics, aesthetics and efficacy of various modes of cultural transmission—to name but a few of the areas of expertise of our faculty. Classes, as compared to larger majors, are small, intimate, welcoming and diverse: the French and Francophone Studies academic program and extra-curricular agenda have provided an enriching meeting ground for heritage speakers, second language learners, international students and assistants, and local francophone affiliates.



Diversity of Experience

The major in French and Francophone Studies values learning and growth in the field in multiple ways:

- A diverse sequence of courses in language and culture focusing on language learning in cultural context from the elementary to advanced seminar level—all courses within the French and Francophone Studies section are taught exclusively in French.
- Study Abroad, viewed as a valuable, if not essential, component of the major's experience. Majors typically spend at least one semester, some an entire year, in a francophone country. Students have studied in a variety of cities in France—Paris, Aix, Grenoble, Nantes, Rennes, Tours—as well as in a number of francophone countries outside Europe—Senegal, Madagascar, Cameroun, Morocco and Mali, among others.
- Oral History Projects, as an option for completing the capstone experience based in the local francophone community.
- Weekly French Table at Commons and activities sponsored through the Francophone club and by the French Language Teaching Assistant.
- Regular gatherings with majors to share academic work and progress towards graduation.
- Assistantships with professors in beginning and intermediate language classes as well as with their research.
- Guest speakers, film makers, and on (and off) campus conferences.
- An impressive array of cultural activities provided through the local Francophone community focusing on issues important to French and Francophone Studies, for example, The Franco-American Heritage Center, Museum L-A, the Festival Franco-fun, and the opportunity to meet and interact with a variety of authors and artists who explore the French-Canadian immigrant experience.

Language Proficiency

And you accomplish the goals of your liberal arts education—*en français!*



One of the most immediately evident outcomes of the major in French and Francophone Studies is proficiency in the French language. The department encourages its majors to attain the highest possible degree of fluency in oral and written expression. To this end, the department strongly encourages at least one semester's study abroad with a program that strictly enforces the exclusive use of French; all of the departmental offerings are in

French; most advising and social interaction takes place in French; and the faculty purposefully guide majors' curricular trajectories in order to obtain an advanced level of proficiency as evidenced in the oral presentation of their senior portfolio. While French may be more the means to your liberal arts education than the goal, it is undeniable that the ability to express oneself with fluency is a profoundly beneficial—if not to say remunerative—outcome: more than a few Bates graduates now work in francophone settings where their ability to conduct both social and professional exchanges in French was essential to their hiring and promotion.

The teaching of the French language at Bates is thoughtful, relevant and dynamic. You are taught by professors with many years of experience in language pedagogy, from the most time-honored traditions to the latest technological innovations, including blogs, interactive, on-line syllabi, film production and a host of options available through the Language Resource Center adjacent to the department. Classes are limited to 22 students and are often sectioned one day a week for small group study; while we employ language teaching assistants from abroad and from our major pool, all courses are taught and administered by professors within the department.

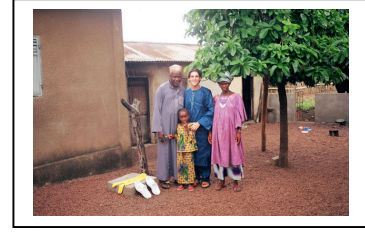
Esprit de corps

The group of majors in French and Francophone Studies is small and intimate—typically around a dozen. Students know the four faculty well and are mentored by each of them in small classes and meetings throughout their time in the department. They also come to know each other well and socialize, study and prepare coursework and other tasks for the major together—at French Table, in faculty-sponsored dinners out in Lewiston or on their own time in self-designed study groups. For some students, French and Francophone Studies is one of two majors, but it is not uncommon for them to speak of this as their academic "home."



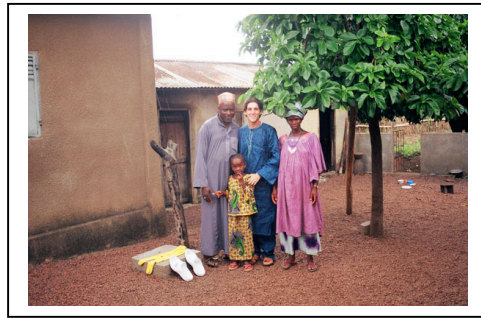
And beyond...

To allay the fears you may have when faced with the question, "But what do I *do* with a French Major?!" consider this range of possibilities from majors from the past:



Michelle Gomperts, Manager, Microcredit Summit Conference (Washington, DC)
Marcia Larned, Financial Analyst, Parisbas (New York)
Justin Sullivan, Green Contracting and Developing (Washington, DC)
Angela Jones, Ph.D, Psychologist (Boston)
Timothy O'Neill, Ph.D graduate student, Linguistics (University of Delaware)
Paul Frisoli, Peace Corps, Guinea; pursuing M.A. in International Education at Umass.
Alexandra Battestin, Legal Assistant, Sullivan and Cromwell, Paris (Law School applicant)
Carole Caldarone, French Teacher, Carver, Mass.
Erica Chapman McPartland, Translator, Furlong, PA
Kate Bishop, Project Manager in Development, Cameroun; Ph.D Student, University of Indiana (Anthropology)
Nancy Bakey, French Teacher, Somerville, MA
James Carlson, Peace Corps, Uzbekistan; Law Student, dual degree Cornell and Paris I, Panthéon Sorbonne
Rebecca Dessain, Teacher of English, Sanofi-aventis, Paris

Paul St. John Frisoli
Class of 2002
Major: Francophone Studies
Minor: Economics



Armed with a dangerous guttural “r” and a quick draw of the cigarette lighter, I graduated from Bates College in 2002 with a major in Francophone Studies and a secondary concentration in Economics. The former, French language and francophone cultures have been a life long passion, while the latter appeased my parents’ endless question of “What are you going to do with a French degree?” I’d like to think that they’ve eaten their words a bit in the last 5 years or so. I’ll tell you why.

A month after I graduate from Bates, I became a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Fouta Djallon which is a region of Guinea, West Africa. Nestled in Timbo, a mountain village in a valley, I taught middle school Math (in French of course) while I also worked with the village youth group to spark HIV/AIDS awareness amongst their peers. Living without running water, electricity, and a computer was a bit of a stretch for me, but I learned to go to bed when the sun went down and get up at the 5am prayer call. From 2002 – 2004, I felt a bit disjointed from home life, but I cherish the adventures, life lessons, and people that I met because they have helped me find a big part of who I am. I resided in Guinea for another year where I was fortunate enough to work at the *Institut National de Recherche et d’Action Pédagogique* (INRAP), a branch of the Guinean Ministry of Education. I jumped right into the use of radio and other media for educational purposes where I worked with a training team of highly skilled Guinean educators. We toured the country training school administrators and teachers on the use of student-centered learning and teaching techniques along with how to adapt radio and audio media into the classroom.

After hundreds of hours on bumpy dirt roads and sleeping with mosquitoes, I trekked back to the States to “settle down.” Equipped with an “r” that rolled like the hills of the Fouta Djallon and an endless supply of friendly greetings, I enrolled in the Master’s of Education program at the Center for International Education (CIE) at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst. I wanted to study the theory and practices of the types of development work that I had been doing in the Peace Corps. Somehow the travel bug still fluttered inside me. CIE sent me to Madagascar and the Comoro Islands in the Spring of 2007 to work on a radio education project. Chaotic as it was, I simultaneously helped write radio scripts while I also finished my master’s thesis.

Currently, I’m pursuing my doctorate at CIE/UMass where I’m studying, teaching, recruiting for the Peace Corps, and more. This year, I’ll be working in Senegal on a CIE project called LIRE (Learning Initiatives for Rural Education) where I’ll be collaborating with teachers in local schools in Senegal who teach multi-grade levels. My academic interests are extremely varied, but I plan to focus on issues surrounding technology in French speaking Africa. This includes the ways that youth are using computers and cameras for non-formal educational and employment opportunities, the meanings that youth attach to these media, and how power, agency, and creativity interplay in the use of technology. My dissertation research will be done in Guinea, where I will get the chance to reconnect and

reminisce with old friends and family.

Needless to say, my family is somewhat speechless. I am an “exemple” of what you can do with a degree in French. Take your language skills into an interdisciplinary field. Trust me, you’ll have too many options from which to choose and too much to do! Good luck!

Justin Sullivan
Class of 1997
Major: French



My trajectory in a nutshell:

Program Assistant to Professor Read (6 months) in Nantes for the fall semester abroad;
'Travel Consultant' (i.e. glorified telemarketer) for EF Education (Boston, 6 months);
Executive Assistant to Advertising Agency (New York, 1 year);
Business Owner of Sullivan Painting (New York, 3 years);
Graduate Student, Fletcher School (Boston, 2 years);
Government Consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton (DC, 3 years);
Business Owner of Impact Construction and Consulting (DC, 1 year so far, but probably for the rest of my professional life).

The details:

At Fletcher, I studied environmental policy and international business. Met some fantastic people, and yes- Fletcher does have a foreign language requirement and test, which was passed with flying colors, all these years later.

At Booz Allen, I consulted for the National Park Service, Dept. of Homeland Security, and Dept. of Defense. I helped them to manage their large swaths of facilities and worked to develop energy management strategies. When I felt I could do more interesting things on my own, I left and started my own company. Now I employ 4 people doing green construction stuff. If you're interested in the boring stuff, you can check out our website: www.impactbuilt.com

My recommendation has always been to major in a subject that:

1. Is interesting
2. Has fantastic, inspiring faculty (I'm being very serious here)
3. Can provide a tangible skill.

Life is short, so do what you like. If you don't see an automatic correlation to a job, who cares- as long as you can demonstrate a high level of success in your chosen major you will be an attractive candidate for most positions available to college grads. Now, if you're still taking the same approach in grad school (like some of my Fletcher friends), then you're in trouble. Grad school is the time for focus. Undergraduate is the time for learning and exploration. Competence really is the key, not subject matter.

For me, it was always going to be French- it was always interesting to me (since high school) and it had the most inspiring teachers (also since high school). The tangible skill thing, I think I realized a bit more in hindsight. I can communicate with different cultures, and learn different perspectives. This makes me a better human being, and a better business person. Now we're drifting into opinion, but if people want to hedge, definitely minor in economics, or take a good number of classes in economics. It's important stuff, and can give you a solid base, but I don't consider under-grad level econ and political science stuff quite as difficult to pick up on your own. Language, however, requires time and attention- two luxuries that aren't as easy to come by after college is finito. I was lucky to realize this when I taught myself guitar in college. I'd never be able to do that now! Also, it almost forces you to spend a year in a foreign country. Another experience that you'll never get again (unless you get to go to Nantes after you graduate).