

Department of French and Francophone Studies

Major and Minor Portfolio Requirement 2026

In addition to satisfying the course requirements listed in the catalogue, all majors and minors submit a portfolio of their work to the French faculty at the end of their senior year (Monday April 27, 2026). Majors will discuss during a “soutenance” with all faculty of the department their portfolio during the second week of the short term. For FFS minors, there is NO "soutenance" or defense, and the expectations for written work to be included are reduced. **Please consult with your advisor early on about expectations.**

Purpose



The portfolio both encourages a synthesis of students’ work in the major and the minor, and provides an appreciation of the many ways in which their knowledge of the French language and Francophone literatures and cultures has been acquired and has proven to be transformative. It allows students to demonstrate a range of learning in multiple curricular and co-curricular experiences such as study abroad, classroom learning, work, internships, research projects, travel, writing, and performance. With the portfolio we require students to reflect upon the meaning and the trajectory of their major or minor. After completion of the major or the minor, certain components of the portfolio are very useful in applying to graduate schools or for employment.

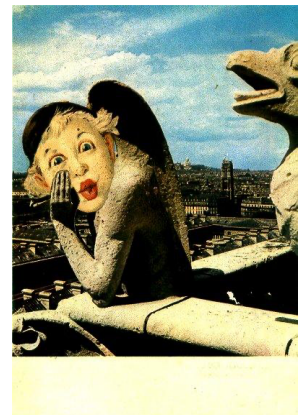
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Procedure: Majors and minors work with an advisor as they create their portfolios during the Winter semester. Portfolios normally include the following for Majors and Minors:

1.) **For major and minors:** A list of courses in French and relevant courses in other disciplines. Syllabi may be included, especially for courses taken outside of Bates.

2.) **For major and minors:** A personal statement/essay, that may include (but is not limited to) a discussion of the genesis, motivation and evolution of one’s language acquisition, insights into literary texts and other forms of cultural production, and reflections upon study and experience in Francophone cultures. This essay should also address how courses in FFS developed an awareness of students’ own positionality regarding issues of equity and inclusion. Finally, students should comment on the various analytical and communicative skills they acquired and how some might apply their life after Bates. This personal statement should attempt to synthesize the student’s experience in French and be built around two or three inspirational quotes from French or Francophone authors or filmmakers; as a complement to these quotes, students may also select one or two inspirational or representative images (pictures, photos, or other visual icons) that help explain their experience in the major or the minor. (Length 4-5 pages double spaced + images)



Créer, *c'est* se Souvenir.

Victor Hugo

3) For majors only: A representative paper in French that the student has written for a course during their tenure at Bates or abroad that demonstrates depth and breadth in the study of Francophone Studies. This may take the form of a thesis chapter or an essay that focuses on a particular issue or theme and studies resemblances and differences in texts/film from different periods or geographical areas of the Francophone world (see description of the “senior essay” that may serve this purpose); it could also be selections from francophone interview project (see description of theses and the “oral history project”).

4) For major and minors: A minimum of three papers written during the student’s course work at Bates or elsewhere. A creative piece is welcome. One should not be embarrassed to choose earlier work as well as later in order to show progress over the course of the past four years. These may be submitted with professors' corrections in the state that they were returned.

Other possible material for the portfolio includes, but is not limited to: any journal or similar document written during a course, STU, or trip to a Francophone country; any of various media produced over one’s career that testify to skills in oral French, perhaps from different moments of the undergraduate experience; anything else that will enhance the student’s presentation of the major or minor in French, such as photos, programs from performances, reports from internships, etc.



Deadlines for the class of 2026:

For both majors and minors, the deadline for the first draft of the personal reflection/declaration is Monday April 13. Send your 4-5 page draft with quotes and pictures to your FFS advisor and the chair of FFS adaugero@bates.edu.

Final submission for the entire portfolio (no exception) Monday April 27. Send your Portfolio using the distributed template to your FFS advisor and the chair of FFS adaugero@bates.edu.

For FFS majors, the soutenance, or "defense," is between May 12-13 2026. All FFS faculty read the majors’ portfolio and have a 20 minute discussion with each person.

PS. There is NO soutenance/defense of the portfolio for FFS minors.