

EMORY UNIVERSITY
2021-2023 Assessment Report for Educational Programs
Assessment Period Covered: September 1, 2021 – May 31, 2023

Program: French PhD	Date Submitted: June 1, 2023
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I. PROGRAM MISSION

The French department offers a doctoral program with a strong critical and interdisciplinary focus. In addition to their respective specialties in French literatures, the faculty pursue research in related disciplines such as philosophy, aesthetics, psychoanalysis, health humanities, postcolonial and migration studies, multilingualism, visual culture, and intellectual history. Our interdisciplinary curriculum helps PhD students to: (1) engage in conversations across disciplinary boundaries; (2) understand the nature of French-language literatures and the theory that informs and shapes our understanding of these literatures; (3) become acquainted with critical traditions that have in recent decades oriented literary critical studies; and (4) gain proficiency in the theory and practice of second language acquisition. Graduate courses reflect the faculty's interest in viewing French literatures from multi-disciplinary critical approaches, emphasizing both the close reading of texts and theories of interpretation.

II. PROGRAM CONTEXT (Please provide a brief overview of your program with any relevant information that will help the reader to understand the data presented (annual number of graduates, length of time, professional preparation, interdisciplinarity, etc.).)

Our program admits 2-3 students per year and graduates an equal number of students each year. Our PhD program provides 5 years of funding, though most of our graduates take an additional year to complete their degree, devoting a 6th year to dissertation writing and job market preparation. Students are professionalized extensively throughout their 6 years in the program from coursework to oral examinations, dissertation prospectus writing and defense, as well as dissertation research and writing. Graduate students in our program are encouraged to take 10 courses within the PhD program in French and 4 other courses within or outside the program. Students are encouraged to pursue certificates in other disciplines should they choose. All students participate in a Pedagogy Seminar in their second year when they begin teaching French language and literatures. Students continue teaching in their 3rd, 5th and optionally in their 6th year in the program. Professionalization and mentorship are the cornerstones of our PhD program that prepares students for careers in and outside the academy in the scholarship and pedagogy of global French literatures and theory.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to formulate or pose a research question or scholarly project.
2. By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to conduct independent research using methods appropriate to the field of French Studies
3. By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to communicate the results, findings or new interpretations of their scholarly work.
4. By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to communicate discipline-specific knowledge to students and/or the public.
5. By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to critically evaluate scholarly work and/or research in the field of French Studies.

IV. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Methods of Assessment

Direct Assessment:

1. Graduate coursework
2. PhD Qualifying Examination
3. PhD Oral Examinations
4. Teaching Evaluations
5. Dissertation proposal defense
6. Dissertation approval

Indirect Assessment:

- a. Invited participation in Graduate Student Recruitment Colloquium
- b. Conference presentations
- c. Awards
- d. Successful research funding applications
- e. Publications
- f. Teaching
- g. Job market preparation
- h. Organization of departmental and University-wide events
- i. Placement
- j. Mentorship

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #1: By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to formulate or pose a research question or scholarly project.

Method of Assessment:

In every graduate course that students take in the French PhD program, they are required to write a final paper (1) on a research question of their choosing and backed by original research. These papers are written in either English or French, but students must write at least one paper every semester in each of these languages. Student papers are assessed on the precision, depth and creativity of their formulated research question and subsequent research. Students who write the strongest papers in their coursework are invited to present their work at our annual Graduate Student Recruitment Colloquium (a) held in February.

Some of these papers may turn into conference presentations (b) and/or publications (e) and/or launch the dissertation project (6).

The dissertation proposal (5) presents a scholarly project based on an original research question(s) that is accompanied by an appropriate survey of the field and proposed methodology and bibliography. Students defend their proposal before a committee of professors/scholars in their 4th year.

Graduate student awards earned (c), successful research funding applications for dissertation research or training (d), conference participation (b) and any ensuing publications (e) verify relevance and scholarly potential of project and the intervention it makes within the field of French Studies.

The final approval of the dissertation (6) by all dissertation committee members confirms that this outcome is in fact achieved.

The relevance of the scholarly project to the field of French Studies often ensures placement (g) after effective job market preparation (f).

Achievement Target:

The French PhD program aims to ensure that 100% of students who are admitted into the PhD attain this outcome by successfully earning ABD status by the end of their 4th year and beginning research on the dissertation. The quality of the dissertation, as approved by the committee and other scholarly activities (conference participation, research funding, publications) that result, attests to the potency of the research questions posed.

Summary of Assessment Results:

Between September 1, 2021 and May 31, 2023, 4 new students entered the program: 3 in 2021 and only 1 in 2022 (as 1 other student experienced visa-related delays due to political unrest in Iran), 5 earned candidacy (2 in Spring 2021, 1 in Spring 2022, 2 in Fall 2022). All 5 dissertation proposals were evaluated by dissertation advisors (Bennington, Loichot, Nouvet and Xavier) as innovative in their formulation of research questions on topics such as the concept of liberty in Haitian literature, environmental agency in African literature and collage art, the ethics and aesthetics of infancy in French philosophical writing, spatiality and hybridity in French 'banlieue' cinema, the question of being in French literature and philosophy. 4 of the 5 students who earned candidacy were awarded the entirety of their internal PDS funds for travel and broader interdisciplinary training (Dartmouth Summer Institute of French Cultural Studies), language training (Arabic, Haitian Creole, German) and/or research abroad (Algeria, Senegal, France). 4 of the 5 students also participated in national and international conferences. 1 student received a Mellon Public Humanities grant to pursue a project adjacent to their dissertation research.

In the Spring 2022, 1 student submitted his dissertation after a defense and final approval by all his committee members. Another student submitted his dissertation in Fall 2021. 1 more student submitted her dissertation in Spring 2023. Among the 3 who submitted dissertations between September 2021-May 2023, 2 of the 3 earned awards from external departments or programs (Kristine Mann Prize in African Studies 2022, Martha and Bill Dobbs Outstanding Graduate Teaching Fellow Award for 2022-23, HASTAC Scholars Fellowship at FCHI 2021-

23, Mellon Foundation Digital Ethnic Future Consortium Award 2022) and internally (Perry Dissertation Completion Fellowships, though one declined the fellowship).

2 of the 3 students who graduated between September 2021-May 2023 secured 6th year funding by earning a Dean's Teaching Fellowship for Tech-Enhanced Teaching at Emory and a Perry Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the French PhD program. 1 student declined two other dissertation completion fellowships (David R. Scott Graduate Fellowship and Perry Dissertation Completion Fellowship) in order to take a third one of her choice. The student who did not opt for 6th year funding, did so because he left the state to take a job as a part-time translator while concluding his dissertation.

The French PhD program was able to offer an internal summer research award in Summer 2022 and Summer 2023 and allocated one quarter of the fund's earnings to 7 students in 2022 and 11 students in 2023 who presented a convincing summer research project proposal. This exercise in applying for summer funding by putting together a research proposal and budget was another way to professionalize students to meet this outcome.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

As Covid related delays in research progress are easing, we hope to encourage and support our students in increasing their applications for external funding, international research, and national training opportunities.

SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #2: By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to conduct independent research using methods appropriate to the field of French Studies

Method of Assessment:

Research papers written for graduate courses (1) in the Department of French begin to develop and hone aptitudes to conduct independent research using literature, theory and criticism in the field of French Studies. Research may include consultation of textual archives at Emory or elsewhere. Some of this work may be presented at our annual Graduate Student Recruitment Colloquium (a) and/or at conferences (b) and/or through publications (e).

The dissertation proposal (5) constructs a plan of research that is carried out and developed throughout the writing of the dissertation (6). External or internal funding secured to pursue research and/or further training (d) confirms that research is being conducted using recognized methods in the field of French Studies.

The final approval of the dissertation (6) verifies that research has been conducted and interpreted for the field of French studies. Conference presentations (b) and publications (e) that emerge out of the work of the dissertation further reinforce this outcome.

Achievement Target:

The French PhD program aims to ensure that 100% of students who are admitted into the PhD attain this objective during the tenure of their dissertation and by securing faculty approval of the dissertation as submitted to the Laney Graduate School.

Summary of Assessment Results:

Between September 2021-May 2023, 3 students in their second, third and sixth years of the program were invited to present research papers written for their courses or as part of their dissertation in French Studies at our Graduate Recruitment Colloquium. Among those having reached candidacy, competitive internal PDS funding was secured to pursue on-site research in Senegal, Algeria and France.

Students at all stages of the program presented a total of 44 papers at 18 national conferences (American Comparative Literature Association, African Literature Association, 20th & 21st Century French and Francophone Studies, Caribbean Studies Association, Modern Languages Association, SAMLA, NEMLA etc.) and 14 international conferences (Australia, Algeria, Canada, France, Tunisia). They also presented 7 guest lectures at Emory.

All 3 completed dissertations between 2021-23 were evaluated as satisfactory and obtained approval by all their committee members for submission to the Laney Graduate School. One of the dissertations was praised as demonstrating a very high level of “theoretical sophistication” and deemed “an original intervention into the fields of African and French Studies.” One was evaluated as “innovative in its creative interface between literary readings and digital cartography.” Two were also flagged for their hurried and uneven readings across chapters of the dissertation. Two dissertations were somewhat compromised in length due to over engagement in other scholarly activities (workshops, fellowships, additional teaching and outside employment, the demands of a favorable job market).

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

In students’ annual evaluations, we have encouraged our students to reduce their participation in national and international conferences to no more than 2 a year. We have noticed a trend in recent years towards more conference presentations because many can be attended virtually. We are concerned that this is taking away from the quality of the research and students’ time to completion. We are also asking students in their final years to devote a little less time to professional activities outside the dissertation to ensure better quality in the research output and the especially in the writing phase of the project.

Finally, we reintroduced a workshop on job market preparation in the Spring to encourage students to begin preparing their application materials over the summer and better manage their time commitments during the academic year.

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #3: By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to communicate the results, findings, or new interpretations of their scholarly work.

Method of Assessment:

Students in the French PhD program are trained to communicate results, findings and new interpretations of their scholarly work throughout their academic coursework (1) in French Studies, during the preparation and passing of the PhD Oral Examinations (3), at the time of the dissertation proposal defense (5) and in the form of the dissertation (6).

Students further pursue this goal through conference presentations (a/b), successful funding applications (d), earning awards (c), publications (e) and preparation for the job market (g).

Successful placement (i) of PhD program graduates in academic positions confirms the achievement of this outcome.

Achievement Target:

The French PhD program aims to ensure that 100% of students who are admitted into the PhD attain this target by presenting at conferences, publishing and securing an academic position upon completion of the degree.

Summary of Assessment Results:

Between September 2021-May 2023, 3 students successfully submitted their dissertations and completed their degree. Among these 3 students, 2 presented at 3 national conferences and gave 1 invited talk at Emory. 2 of the 3 had at least 1 published peer reviewed article and at least 1 more publication in the pipeline at the time of graduation. 1 student also had several digital publications. The 3rd student had an article in the pipeline at the time of graduation. Among our 3 PhD graduates, 1 secured a tenure track position at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, 1 was selected for a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Global Racial Justice at Rutgers University and 1 took an alt-ac position as a consultant to the UN Women Executive Director's Office.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

We are impressed that even this smaller cohort secured 100% employment in academia or beyond putting their scholarly and pedagogical skills to excellent use within their disciplinary fields. We are pleased to see that there continues to be a direct correlation between academic publications and successful placement of our PhD graduates.

We are excited to promote both academic and non-academic placement among our students as evidenced by the cohort of the last two years. Two more students are on the verge of completing their dissertations in summer 2023 and are also considering academic and alt-ac positions nationally and internationally.

SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #4: By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to communicate discipline-specific knowledge to students and/or the public.

Methods of Assessment:

Students in the French PhD program are trained to earn and communicate discipline-specific knowledge throughout their coursework (1), by preparing for and successfully passing the PhD Qualifying Examination (2) PhD Oral Examinations (3), the dissertation proposal defense (5) and securing committee approval of their dissertation (6). Teaching evaluations (4) by course supervisors, mentors, faculty in applied linguistics, as well as students guarantee further competencies in communicating discipline-specific knowledge in the classroom.

Students are encouraged to tailor their communication skills to scholars in their own discipline within French Studies, those in adjacent fields, students in the French language and literature classroom, as well as the community at large.

Students learn to make public presentations, be it at our own Graduate Student Recruitment Colloquium (a), FERA and Emory-based workshops, national and international conferences (b) and organization of departmental and university-wide events (h). Teaching their own sections of French language and literature courses (f) provides further opportunities to perfect this competency with an undergraduate audience. Successful funding applications for research and teaching point to students' ability to translate their knowledge to more general audiences.

Presentation of conference and article-length papers (b) written in coursework and throughout the dissertation process, as well as those submitted for publication (e) and most importantly the dissertation itself (6), marks the student's mastery of communication skills specific to French Studies.

Finally, job market preparation (f) through extensive review of materials, participation in professionalization workshops, mock interviews in English and French, as well as practice job talks, help develop and hone communication skills tailored to the French language classroom, the academic job market, and bilingual scholarly communities of different scales.

Successful student placement (i) in academic and alt-ac positions confirms the achievement of this outcome.

Achievement Target:

The French PhD program aims to ensure that 100% of students who are admitted into the PhD fulfill this outcome through intensive training and active engagement in teaching, scholarship and service by the time of graduation.

Summary of Assessment Results:

Between September 2021 and May 2023, we had a cohort of 16 students enrolled at all levels of our program.

Among the 5 students who took their Qualifying Examination in 2022 and 2023, all passed the 5 questions they chose to answer out of 8. Results varied from high passes to passes. There were no low passes among these cohorts. High passes were obtained in Medieval literature, 17th, 18th, 19th century, contemporary literature and theory. Passes were obtained in 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th century, contemporary literature and theory. Students expressed some dissatisfaction with the reading lists for this exam despite changes to the list in 2019. We also noted that one of the students who took this exam last year steered clear of all courses, and consequently exam questions, related to 17th century literature, thus reducing her literacy and broader knowledge of the discipline.

5 others successfully passed their Oral Examinations in the following fields of doctoral expertise: 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and contemporary French literature and cinema, African literature and cinema, Caribbean literature, literary and critical theory and philosophy.

5 students successfully passed their Dissertation proposal defense between September 2021 and May 2023.

Among the 5 students in candidacy in 2021-23, 3 earned their doctoral degrees and secured a tenure track appointment, a postdoctoral fellowship or an alt-ac position in diplomacy. 2 of

the 3 graduates were published scholars at the time of graduation. Of the remaining 2 who intend to submit their doctoral dissertations in summer 2023, both have at least one peer reviewed publication, 1 has several published translations as well. Both are poised to secure academic employment in the Fall of 2023.

All of our students teach in the basic language program in their second and third year and move up to teach bridge courses in their 5th year with a potential advanced level teaching opportunity in their 6th year, depending on availability and funding. All of our students take coursework in pedagogy and receive further in class training with regular faculty evaluations. 15 (excluding those in their 1st year in 2022-23) of our students in the program made steady progress in language teaching, 8 observed a faculty member teaching an upper division course and 4 taught upper division literature courses at Emory, 1 taught an upper division literature course at another institution (Washington and Lee) as well.

All of our cohort of students were actively involved in some level of service (organizing visits by writers, graduate symposiums, reading workshops and FERA events). As of 2018-19, graduate faculty decided to award a special prize for citizenship and service, singling out exceptional contributions to departmental life by a graduate student. This year's recipient showed remarkable dedication to the PhD and undergraduate programs in French organizing two visits by invited writers in April 2022 and again in October 2023.

Our 5th year students over the last 2 academic years have successfully earned 3 Dean's Tech-Enhanced Teaching Fellowship and one Emory Writing Center Fellowship to support them during their 6th year in the program. These applications showcase our students' teaching and research skills and bring them further opportunities to reach upper-level undergraduate audiences as well as communicate their expertise and knowledge in language, literature, digital humanities, environmental humanities, psychoanalytic studies, gender studies and photography.

Students in their 6th year were thoroughly professionalized through opportunities to workshop their application materials and to participate in mock interviews. Our students continue to excel on the academic and non-academic job market, obtaining some of the best positions available for PhDs in French Studies.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

This continues to be a strength of the program as our students repeatedly showcase their ability to communicate discipline specific knowledge to various academic and non-academic audiences at all levels.

Though some students express a desire to see our Qualifying Examination list tailored to their individual interests, we continue to see success in our PhD graduate placement in part due to their extensive preparation and general knowledge of the discipline in conjunction with their specific areas of specialization.

We continue to keep conversations open, however, as we consider various ways to attend to student wishes to specialize from an earlier point in their doctoral training. We have thus decreased the required number of courses in the program to 10 from 12. We are also discussing the possibility of a new required team-taught course called "Colloquium" that would be organized around a theme or set of questions and taught by all the graduate faculty in French. This would enable to students to be exposed to all faculty research and expertise over the course of a semester, while allowing students to pursue their individual research

interests at the same time. The new Colloquium course could also count for student's required JPE credit along with their Pedagogy Seminar.

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR OUTCOME #5: By the completion of the program, graduates will be able to critically evaluate scholarly work and/or research in the field of French Studies.

Method of Assessment:

Students learn to critically evaluate scholarly work and research in French Studies from their coursework (1) onwards, through the preparation and successful passing of their PhD Oral Examination (3), as well as their dissertation proposal defense (5) and in the process of researching and crafting the dissertation for approval by committee (6).

Conference presentations (a/b), teaching (f), organization of events (h) such as invited writers and scholarly guests, colloquia, reading workshops, etc. develop and hone students' ability to critically evaluate scholarly work and research in French Studies. Student recipients of the dissertation fellowships and awards (c) usually show exemplary competency in this area.

Publications (c) in peer-review journals in French Studies serves as confirmation that students have reached this goal. A new peer mentorship program (j) instituted in our program since 2020 to aid in combatting intellectual isolation during Covid has also put in place a mechanism to ensure students can critically evaluate each other's work and research.

Achievement Target:

The French PhD program aims to ensure that 85% of students who are admitted into the PhD realize this outcome by the completion of the degree with at least two peer-reviewed publications in the field of French Studies. We want to leave room for students who are pursuing postdoctoral fellowships and alt-ac careers after graduation to take a different approach to publication as well.

Summary of Assessment Results:

Student ability to critically evaluate scholarly work and research in French Studies was verified through a number of direct assessment methods. Between 2021-2023, 5 students passed the PhD Qualifying Exam, 5 students passed their PhD Oral Examinations, 5 students successfully defended their dissertation proposals and 3 students obtained approval of their dissertations which they submitted to the graduate school.

This cohort of students was especially active at national and international conferences, presenting their research and mentoring one another.

Among our 3 graduates, 2 found academic placement and 1 non-academic placement. 2 students graduated with at least 1 peer-reviewed publication, while 3 others have articles in the pipeline to publication. 2 of the 3 also taught upper division courses, as did 1 of the 2 others poised to graduate in summer 2023. 4 of the 5 earned summer Perry research awards, 3 of the 5 secured 6th year funding through competitive internal fellowships (declining others as well). Finally, 2 of the 5 applied for prestigious external fellowships.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

The correlation between student placement success and publication is evident in our results to learning outcome #3 and will remain a constant focus of our program. The student who secured a tenure track appointment this AY, had 1 peer reviewed chapter and several online publications in her research in digital humanities.

As our cohort slowly bounces back to the placement levels of our 2019 pre-pandemic success, we will continue to emphasize the critical role of teaching experience, mentorship, scholarly activity and publications. Since the ability to critically evaluate scholarly work is something that is confirmed through student output, be it in the form of publications, teaching or job market preparation and materials, we remain committed to improving learning outcomes #3 and #4. We will also continue to deploy efforts to increase the professionalization of our students from the early stages of the PhD.

V. FACULTY INVOLVEMENT: Describe how your faculty members were involved in this year's assessment procedures.

All graduate faculty and lecture-track faculty are thoroughly involved in every part of our direct assessment methods. All graduate faculty contribute to composing and grading the PhD Qualifying examination. Groups of three or four graduate faculty are selected by students to train and prepare them for the PhD Oral Examinations.

All faculty participate in evaluating student teaching, with special responsibility for pedagogical preparation falling on our faculty member in applied linguistics (Mendes 2019-22, Descourtis 2022-23).

The same group or slightly amended group of graduate faculty who oversee the Oral Examinations form the dissertation committee with a student selected faculty director at its head. This committee ensures that the student crafts and defends the dissertation proposal in such a way as to meet all our program learning outcomes.

Graduate faculty guide students through indirect assessment methods on a one-on-one basis. Most of this responsibility falls upon the dissertation director and mentors that form the dissertation committee. The Director of Graduate Studies (Xavier 19-20 and 21-23/ Bruyère 20-21) serves as a resource throughout the tenure of the PhD, as do the Job Placement Officers (Cordova and Mendes 2019-22, Cordova and Castaldo 2022-23) when it comes time for job market preparation and placement.

As of AY2019-20, we have begun collecting faculty evaluations of our graduate students to better assess our program's strengths and weaknesses based on student performance through each method of assessment. All faculty participate in annual oral evaluations of our PhD students and the DGS then compiles these comments to give students' written feedback on their performance in the program.

VI. What is your assessment plan for the next cycle?

We do not anticipate adding or changing any learning outcomes next year. We continue to strive to meet both the requirement of our academic discipline and the needs of our students. As our student cohort grows (we are now able to admit 3 students a year), we hope to acknowledge and meet their increasing diversity in our teaching, service, and scholarly conversations.

VII. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

If you have supporting documentation, you may include it in the same file as the report, but please be sure that all relevant data are contained within the text of the report. If you have questions about what should or should not be included with the report, please contact Andrea Barra (andrea.barra@emory.edu) in the Office of Planning and Budgeting.

VIII. REVIEW PROCESS

Please forward your 2021-2023 assessment report to the chair of your department for review and signature. This review will ensure that the information included in this report is accurate and that your program is engaged in a systematic process of continuous improvement.



May 31, 2023

Department Chair

Date

IX. SUBMISSION OF REPORTS

Please submit reports to Andrea Barra, Associate Director of Assessment via Microsoft Form link <https://forms.office.com/r/8u47ydjy06> by June 1, 2023.