

Second year - French Studies

Modules taught in the French Department in the first year (20 credits each):

- French language (Compulsory)
- French cinema, visual culture and national identity (Option)
- La France moderne 2 (Option)
- Politics, culture and society in the 19th and 20th centuries (Option)
- Renaissance to Realism (Option)
- Text and interpretation (Option)

Single Honours, Joint Honours, Modern Languages and some European Studies students are required to take the compulsory module, and then choose other modules depending upon the course taken. In addition, Single Honours students follow a Module Outside the Main Discipline (MOMD) worth 20 credits in another Department.

Conflict, Identity and Absurdity in Twentieth-Century French Theatre

[Open all sections](#)

This module will build on introductory work completed on *Le Tartuffe* and *Antigone* in the IFLFS course. Three short theoretical texts, as well as appropriate historical background, will provide a framework for understanding how French plays reflect and comment on the events, currents of thought, and debates of their time. In particular, the twentieth-century preoccupations with conflict, identity and absurdity will be examined for the ways in which they have inspired a handful of important works by French playwrights who have also challenged the 'rules' or expectations for the stage.

Students will be expected to familiarise themselves with six core plays, to be analysed, discussed and presented by groups in turn during fortnightly seminars. The lecture programme is designed to address the themes and primary works in chronological order, thus demonstrating the radical development of French theatre over the course of the twentieth century, whilst offering essential background in advance of student-led seminar work.

Value: 20 credits

Core French Language 2

The Core Language module is organised around a number of separate components: the weekly *expression orale* class with an ALT will be structured around a variety of oral and aural tasks such as: oral presentation, debate and role-play. Part of this hour will be devoted to preparing students to gain full benefit from their period of residency abroad (where applicable). The weekly language class will focus primarily upon written skills: it will be divided into several teaching blocks where different writing styles and types of exercise will be introduced then reinforced and practiced. A series of lectures/workshops will be the focus for students working on vocabulary and grammar skills. There will be some language laboratory sessions designed to enhance awareness and accuracy of sounds and intonation patterns and increase aural skills.

Value: 20 credits

French Cinema, Media and Visual Culture

This module builds on knowledge about French cinema and skills in reading film introduced at Level 1 by offering, in semester 1, an introduction to some of the main genres of French cinema (taken from the *fantastique*/horror, comedy, heritage cinema, the *polar*/thriller and documentary). This is followed in Semester 2 by an introduction to at least two of four other forms of visual culture: visual art, photography, advertising, and television. Films are prescribed in Semester 1, while in Semester 2 students are guided in the selection of paintings, photographs, advertisements or TV programmes as a corpus for their individual project.

Value: 20 credits

French Text and Interpretation



This module will introduce students to a range of 17th century to 20th century French narrative texts (literary and visual), and will familiarise them with a range of interpretative practices that may be applied to them. It will build on the students' knowledge of narrative acquired in Year 1, through the examination of a number of individual works.

Value: 20 credits

La France Moderne 2

This module examines modern French identity through a range of historical, political and cultural approaches, exploring an underlying, but constantly challenged, republican tradition which underpins contemporary France.

The aim of the module is for students to gain a solid understanding of the origins of – and challenges to – French republicanism. We consider key events in France and the former French colonies (such as the French Revolution; the Haitian Revolution and the abolition of slavery; the Dreyfus Affair; Vichy; Feminism; the Algerian War). Students on this module develop an enhanced understanding of how French republicanism informs French identity, considering major events of both national and international significance, which, as we will see, are still hotly debated in France today.

All seminars and lectures take place in French, and the module dossier and WebCT FM2 pages provide guidance on using French at seminars and for assessed written work. Seminars typically involve close reading (focusing on content and style) of passages of French from newspapers or other sources.

Value: 20 credits

Politics, Culture & Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries

This module will build on the student's knowledge of French history and politics gained in Year 1, through the examination of documents, visual images and literary texts from the revolutionary period to the mid-twentieth century. Topics covered will include: the significance of 1789, Napoleon and the battle of Waterloo, Dada and Surrealism, the Occupation, the Golden Age of French Cinema, the "Nouveau Roman". A course booklet containing extracts for study in class will be provided. There will be a weekly lecture and fortnightly seminar. The course is taught in English.

Value: 20 credits

Renaissance to Realism

This multi-genre module introduces students to a range of the most significant writers and texts in French literature.

Drawing on texts from the Renaissance period through to the development of Realism in the nineteenth century, this course will provide an insight into the major intellectual movements and personalities that have shaped French literature and culture through the ages. Texts studied will include drama, poetry and prose, notably Montaigne's essays, a play by Moliere and a novel by Flaubert. A wide range of themes, genres and styles will be covered.

The aim of the course will be to explore the evolution of French literature, and to discover how writers from different historical periods interacted with and reacted to the political and social circumstances of their time.

Value: 20 credits



Translation in Practice

This module is a practical translation module, which will teach you how to translate a variety of non-fiction texts from French into English. In semester one, we will focus on improving your decoding skills, since you can only be a successful translator if you are a skilled reader of French texts. We will cover complex sentence structures, discourse analysis, and lexical development (including a focus upon faux amis). You will also be introduced to the professional computer-assisted translation software TRADOS (a 'CAT tool'). The University owns licences for this software, which we will be able to use in class. In semester two, we will focus on encoding skills (translation technique, English language skills) and revision/post-editing processes. You will work on texts in groups and as individuals, translating from FRENCH into ENGLISH, and edit each other's translations too. You will also develop your skills in using TRADOS.

Value: 20 credits

Single honours students are also required to select an MOMD (Module Outside the Main Discipline worth 20 credits from another Department).

- **MOMD catalogue** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/momd/index.aspx>)

	100 credits	80 credits	60 credits	40 credits	20 credits
	Single Honours	BA Modern Languages doing 80 credits of French	All Joint Honours BA Modern Languages doing 60 credits of French	BA Modern Languages doing 40 credits of French	Law with French International Business with Language International relations with French
French Language (20credits)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
French Cinema, Media and Visual Culture (20 credits)	Students choose 4 of these 5 modules	Students choose 3 of these 5 modules	Students choose 2 of these 5 modules	Students choose 1 of these 5 modules	
La France Moderne 2 (20 credits)					
Politics, Culture and Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries (20 credits)					
Renaissance to Realism (20 credits)					
Text and Interpretation (20 credits)					