

ROMANCE STUDIES MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The Major in Romance Studies (RMST) enables students to develop a broad knowledge of two or more languages and cultures — those of Italy, France and the Francophone world, and the Hispanophone world — through a flexible, interdisciplinary program that combines coursework in several fields. Students explore literature, film and other art forms of various periods and regions to compare and gain insight into unique cultural modes of thought, expression, and creative achievement. Students improve their linguistic abilities in French and/or Italian, and/or Spanish, become familiar with the cultural traditions, histories and politics of diverse civilizations and societies, and develop strong communications and critical skills, as well as the intercultural competencies to function effectively across cultures and work with people from different backgrounds. All RMST majors are strongly encouraged to spend at least one semester studying abroad in a Romance-language-speaking country.

The Romance Studies program prepares students to pursue careers in such diverse fields as education, media, politics, international relations, publishing, law, diplomacy, travel and hospitality, academia and the arts, including work in cultural institutions and heritage organizations.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Students qualify for this major with a grade of B or better in the following courses in their primary language or the equivalent: FREN215, ITAL111, or SPAN221; and a grade of B or better in the following courses in their secondary language or the equivalent: FREN112, ITAL111, or SPAN112.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

- Determination of a major (five courses in your primary language) and minor (four courses in your secondary language) focus.
- A minimum of two comparative projects. The idea is to suspend, for a moment, the nationalist assumption that languages and cultures exist in isolation from each other. Writers, artists, scientists, and businesspersons routinely cross borders and languages. We ask you to do the same in two short or long papers, to be completed at Wesleyan or during study abroad. A comparative project means simply that, in consultation with a course instructor, you will draw substantially on both your Romance Studies languages and cultures to explore a problem that interests you. We ask for two papers to encourage you to think comparatively from the primary viewpoint of each of your Romance Studies languages. We suggest you pursue this within courses you are taking anyway (including a senior thesis) because it need not require extra work—just a different way of thinking about work you must do regardless. The length is less important than the substance of your thinking. The project could be about border-crossing movements, reception, influence or adaptation, intertextuality, or dialogue between languages, literatures, and/or cultures. Or it could be an exploration of an issue that interests you (the environment, health care, urban planning, food, science, queer identities, fashion, etc.) in cross-cultural perspective, drawing on both languages and cultures. The projects may also be more informal or essayistic reflections (the equivalent of two short papers in length) on something significant you have learned or a perspective gained through study of two languages and cultures that you are unlikely

to have learned through English only, a single foreign language, or another major. These essays may draw on work or study abroad or on the multiple courses you have taken at Wesleyan in your Romance Studies languages. They may be written in English or in one of your two languages. If you write in English you are expected to draw on sources in both languages.

- Nine courses at or above determined levels (FREN220, ITAL111, SPAN221) in two Romance languages.
- At least one course taken in both the student's primary and secondary languages in the student's senior year.
- Students are expected to earn a B or better in courses that count for the major. Students wishing to count a course with a lower grade toward the major are expected to consult with the chair of Romance Languages and Literatures (who will consult with the department) about it as soon as the grade is recorded.
- Courses must be taken for a letter grade, unless the student is also majoring in COL.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Study abroad is expected to take place on a Wesleyan-sponsored study-abroad program. Alternatively, students may, with the advisor's prior statement of support, study on another approved program. This practice is intended to promote the intellectual coherence of a major in which students acquire one language more recently than another.
- Students may petition their advisor for special permission to count take one course in English centered on the culture of their primary language towards the major.
- With the advisor's approval, students may satisfy the comparative requirement by way of coursework and/or written work conducted on a study-abroad program.
- Students whose primary language placement is higher than FREN215, ITAL112, SPAN221 are required to complete nine courses, two of which may be in English in the primary language's culture only.
- You may count up to three courses taken during one study abroad toward the major, and up to four courses if going abroad twice (once in each of your language of study). These courses may be taken in one or both of the major languages.
- Except in rare circumstances, students may not double major in any of the majors sponsored by the Romance Languages and Literatures Department: RMST, SPAN, FRST, ITST.
- Senior essays or theses must be comparative and involve the literatures and/or cultures of the student's major languages.
- Essay, thesis, and other (e.g., CA/TA) tutorials and language courses do not count toward the major, although they are encouraged.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The Romance studies major provides students with the proficiency in two Romance languages (among French, Italian, and Spanish) to live, study, and work successfully in the corresponding French-, Italian-, and/or Spanish-speaking environments. They learn about their literatures and other cultural forms such as film and, through them, about their modes of thought, expression, and creative achievement. As a result, they improve their ability to communicate in French, Italian, and/or Spanish as well as their native language; become more adept at understanding other points of view; and learn to draw on a wide range of sources to stimulate their own creative and critical capacities. Students are encouraged to bring the resources of their two Romance cultures to bear together on problems that interest them, providing a depth of perspective

unavailable in English only or a single foreign language. Finally, students explore the enormous cultural diversity of the French-, Italian-, and/or Spanish-speaking worlds through a flexible interdisciplinary program (often including study abroad) that can serve as the basis for future work or further academic or professional studies.

STUDY ABROAD

All majors are strongly encouraged to spend at least one semester studying abroad in a Romance-language-speaking country. In addition to Wesleyan's own programs in Bologna, Madrid, and Paris, there are currently Wesleyan-approved study-abroad programs in Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Italy (Florence, Rome), Madagascar, Mexico, and Senegal. Wesleyan also sends one exchange student each year to the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. Students who have strong academic reasons for wishing to participate in other programs may also petition the Fries Center for Global Studies for permission to do so. For information on the approved programs and the petition process, contact the Fries Center for Global Studies (<http://www.wesleyan.edu/cgs/osa/>).

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

See wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/aptransferofcredit (<http://wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/aptransferofcredit.html>) for more information.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Yes.

TRANSFER CREDIT

See wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/aptransferofcredit (<http://wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/aptransferofcredit.html>) for more information.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Students are responsible for ensuring that major communications with the primary language advisor about the essay or thesis work also go to the secondary language advisor at the same time (and vice-versa: communications with the secondary language advisor should go to the primary language advisor).

HONORS

See wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/honors (<http://wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/honors.html>) for more information about honors.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

See wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/honors (<http://wesleyan.edu/romance/romancestudies/honors.html>) for more information about capstone experience options.