Romance Studies Major

Major Description

The Romance studies (RMST) major provides students the opportunity to develop a broad knowledge of two or more of the Romance cultures taught at Wesleyan (French, Italian, Spanish) through a flexible, interdisciplinary program combining course work in a number of fields that may serve as the basis for future work or further academic or professional studies. Students who are interested in this major should contact the chair of the department.

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.

• 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.

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 programs in Bologna, Madrid, and Paris.
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.