Learning Objectives

The study of French and Italian involves the mastery of 1) the languages and 2) their literary and cultural expression in fiction and non-fiction, as well as in dramatic, cinematic, and poetic texts. These two forms of expertise should not be conceived of separately, but are rather linked at all levels of the program, from the basic language courses, where texts (broadly understood, and including literature and film among other forms of representation) serve as a site for learning how meaning is made, to the most advanced literature courses, where the ability to work with confidence and fluency in the target language remains a focus of instruction and evaluation. The following student learning goals reflect our commitment to the study of literature as crucial to the process of language acquisition, and to work in the target language as essential to a productive engagement with literature and culture.

1) To achieve advanced proficiency in the target language: i.e. to attain fluency in written and oral forms of expression; to be able to communicate, in a nuanced and appropriate way, in a variety of settings; to be able to comprehend and to develop complex ideas, in written and spoken contexts; to engage in critical thinking in the target language, and to be able to express an informed critical perspective on literary and cultural questions,

2) To attain broad-based knowledge of French- and Italian-speaking cultures and their histories, from a variety of critical points of view, with special attention to the
place of literature and the arts in socio-cultural contexts; this knowledge should include a general understanding of literary history, an appreciation of the diversity of Francophone and Italophone societies, and a familiarity with the economic and political structures of the social groups in question, alongside some comprehension of the systems of thought that have shaped these structures,

3) To arrive at an understanding of the relationship between language and the production of identity (across cultures), and to be able to articulate the specific work done by literary texts—among other cultural objects—within this framework,

4) To develop advanced skills in critical thinking, as demonstrated in particular through written textual analysis in the target language, as well as through other forms of critical production (including multimedia forms),

5) To be able to write a longer research paper in the target language, displaying clear knowledge of research protocols (including conventions of attribution and citation), on a topic of literary and/or cultural relevance; this paper should show some awareness of current conversations in the discipline of French or Italian literary study, as well as of the possible contribution of the paper to these conversations,

6) To develop comprehension of the significance of French and Italian texts in global contexts, including the key roles played by these texts in cross-cultural debates.