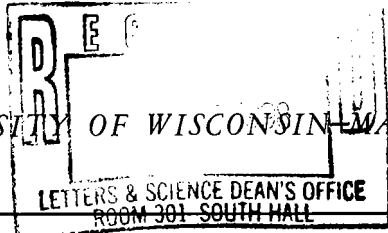




UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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Yvonne Ozzello
Associate Dean
Letters and Science
301 South Hall
The University of Wisconsin-Madison

May 4, 1998

Dear Yvonne:

Enclosed you will find the Assessment Report for The Department of French and Italian. In 1997-1998, we evaluated our French undergraduate and graduate programs and our Italian undergraduate program. I include: Ia) the formal assessment report, as sketched out by Alex Nagel, with the narrative comprised of individual reports from b) Prof. William Berg and Dr. Laurey Martin on the French Undergraduate Program c) Prof. Steven Winspur on the graduate program in French, and d) Prof. Christopher Kleinhenz on the Italian undergraduate program.

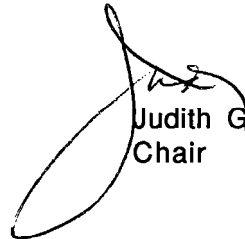
I add II) a copy of our original assessment plan as submitted last year. We have followed the procedures outlined in the Italian undergraduate assessment and modified somewhat the assessment process in French (undergrads.) We have added a graduate student survey to our process of assessment for French graduates.

I also include III a) a sample of the questionnaire sent out in French to undergraduates, b) a summary sheet of the writing evaluation form sent out in French and c) a sample of the questionnaire sent out in Italian

Finally, IV a), I append the writing evaluation forms we have collected about our French majors and b) student questionnaires concerning their experience as undergraduate French majors.

I should be happy to answer any questions you may have about our assessment process.

Cordially,


Judith G. Miller
Chair

**College of Letters and Science
Assessment Report May 1998**

Department of French and Italian

Abstract: The Department of French and Italian undertook a three-pronged assessment this year. We reviewed our undergraduate programs in French and Italian and our graduate program in French. While the results in all three instances showed largely positive responses to the education students have received with us, we have learned a number of things which have already been useful in rethinking our programs. It is clear that undergraduate students in French feel least confident in their writing skills, despite colleague's acknowledgement of their very real progress over four years of work with us. We understand from this that we need to include more writing and more correcting in our undergraduate courses. It is also clear that students would like to have a better overall sense of the discipline and the kind of intellectual activity French scholars engage in. We will thus propose a new capstone senior course for one credit which will invite colleagues to share with students once a week their research projects and their thoughts about their area of expertise. In assessments of the graduate program (exit interviews and a survey by the graduate student organization), it became apparent that we need to prepare students better for writing conference papers and that we need to establish more adequate advising throughout the graduate years. We will then set up a workshop to deal with the first need; and we have already determined a new system of advising which will go into effect in September. The Italian undergraduate program is not entirely satisfied with the results from its questionnaire (too few responses) and will reinvestigate next year to see if changes need to be made. All respondents noted their great satisfaction with the Italian undergraduate major.

Assessment tools Used:

Direct Indicators:

Undergraduate major (French): national exam (unworkable this year, will be used in 1998-1999); performance evaluations (examined essays written by seniors)
Undergraduate major (Italian): performance evaluations (examined essays written by seniors)
Graduate major (French): local exams (M.A., Ph.D. prelims); thesis and thesis defense

Indirect Indicators:

Undergraduate major (French): student surveys
Undergraduate major (Italian): student surveys
Graduate major (French): students surveys, exit surveys

Narrative:

Please see the attached reports by Professors William Berg and Dr. Laurey Martin-Berg (French undergraduate), Prof. Steven Winspur (French graduate) and Prof. Christopher Kleinhenz (Italian undergraduate)

French Undergraduate Program Assessment
Spring 1998

This spring (1998) the French Undergraduate Studies Committee undertook an assessment of the French Undergraduate program by focusing on graduating French Majors, according to the guidelines developed by the committee and submitted to the College in December 1996. Although our assessment was only partially successful, we submit it to the College in the hopes that our experiences may prove beneficial to other departments and that the collective experiences of departments may provide solutions to some of the problems we encountered.

Our original plan called for assessing our undergraduate majors by three means: 1) oral examination by having them take the MLA oral exam currently required of French Education majors but not of French majors; 2) written evaluation of undergraduate papers; and 3) a questionnaire asking students to reflect on several areas of their experiences as French majors. Coincidentally, our degree of success matches the order of the three means.

1) The oral examination was a complete failure, since, of the 28 graduating majors contacted through courses they are currently taking, not a single one volunteered to take the test. This lack of participation was partially a matter of timing, since it was already mid-March when we obtained funding to administer the exam and thus had little lead time to give students and since the request for volunteers came at the same time as another request involving a national language assessment program organized by Professor Rifkin: faced with two choices, both with short deadlines, most students opted to do neither. We are, however, convinced of the importance of such an evaluation, and thus the Undergraduate Studies Committee voted unanimously to ask the Department at its May 1998 meeting to require such an exam of future majors.

2) The written evaluation of papers was undertaken by Instructors of courses currently being taken by graduating majors. The results of this evaluation (enclosed on the form used for the evaluation) were very encouraging, but only partial; that is, only 28 of 50 graduating majors are currently taking courses in the French major (or ones in which the Instructor was experienced with our prerequisite courses, which served as the basis for measuring progress). Since many of these students are not currently taking courses because they had studied abroad or are currently studying abroad, some of our better students were not evaluated. In the future, we will contact Instructors of the last course taken by these students in order to evaluate them along with other graduating majors.

3) Perhaps the most successful means of evaluation was through student questionnaires, the results of which are enclosed. Of the 28 students contacted through the courses they are currently taking (we elected to do this rather than to try e-mail in order to assure anonymity), 13 responded (a good rate of response). We hope that in the future, as students become used to the evaluation process and as we also contact students not currently taking courses, that the number of responses will be significantly higher.

Despite the stumbling blocks we encountered, the Undergraduate Studies Committee finds that the assessment program itself is solid and eminently worthwhile.

William Burg

Undergraduate French Major Assessment Surveys:

Thirteen surveys were returned (ten were returned anonymously; three were signed). Overall they provide evidence that graduating seniors have been satisfied with their work in the French major: they feel confident of their language skills, they have learned about the development of French and Francophone literature and culture, and they are confident of their ability to analyze literature and to write about it.

A synopsis of the surveys question by question follows:

1. Reasons for selecting French as a major focused on a) having studied French in high school and wanting to continue based on high placement and/or love of the language; b) being encouraged by positive experiences in courses and professor recommendation; c) professional goals. Several double majors in the sciences mentioned that it was a nice "change" from their other major.
2. All students indicated that they felt confident of their ability to communicate in French and understand others. Two felt that writing was their weakest skill; four felt that their speaking skills could use improvement. All felt that their skills had improved over the course of their studies. Several credited study abroad or living at the French House with a significant role in the improvement of their skills.
3. Students credited 321 and 322 with providing them with a solid sense of the development of French literature. Several indicated that taking a course on Francophone literature was very important.
4. Only 11 of the 13 respondents answered this question. Most felt capable of interpreting literature, but many indicated that they had learned to do this elsewhere or on their own--that they had not been challenged or taught to articulate different approaches to reading and interpreting a literary text in their courses. Several students commented on the reading process (note taking, reading a text several times) rather than on approaches to interpretation.
5. All students said they felt at least "fairly" competent as a writer of essays on literary or cultural topics. Three said "fairly" competent, one said "rather competent," four said "competent," two said "very competent," one said "above average," one rated him/herself as 7 on a scale of 10, and one rated him/herself as 8 on a scale of 10. Two mentioned grammatical errors/proof-reading problems.
6. The courses most frequently mentioned as being useful in developing knowledge and understanding of French and Francophone culture and civilizations were: French 288/311/312 (8); French 321/322 (7); French 347/348 (6).
7. Seven students had studied abroad: four for one semester (3 in

Paris, 1 in Madagascar), two for a year (1 while in high school), two for the summer. Those who had studied abroad felt it had contributed greatly to their education by increasing their language skills and by broadening their cultural horizons. Three had lived at the French House and eight indicated that they participated in activities such as meals at the French House and the French plays.

8. Twelve students responded to this question. Of those who responded all but one indicated that their French and Francophone studies have led them to reflect on their first language and culture. Several commented that they know more about French grammar than English; several commented on how being exposed to a different cultural perspective had renewed their interest and pride in their own cultural identity, while others indicated that this new perspective had made them more critical of their own cultural assumptions.

9. Two students plan to use their French directly to satisfy career goals: one is going to graduate school in French and the other plans to become a simultaneous interpreter. Others see real but less direct links to their career plans: one hopes to do a post-doc in chemistry in France; one credits the French major with making him/her attractive to the government agency where s/he will be employed after graduation; two hope to live and work abroad; and another hopes to have a career where s/he can use French. Two felt their French major would help them in their careers by making them more well-rounded, and by providing a wider range of possibilities. Four said their French would primarily help them in travel. One (pre-med) said the French major had not helped to formulate his/her life and career goals.

10. Only six people answered this question. The answers were all quite different: two said they had really liked the courses and professors in the department; one indicated that there should be more flexibility in the number of literature/civilization credits; one would like to see special honors sections for courses above 288; one would like to see the department offer courses on linguistics, translation and interpretation; and one would like to see more student-to-student interaction in classes.

Laurey Martin-Berg

Assessment Report for the Graduate Program in French in the Department of French and Italian

1. Goals of the program:

Students undertaking graduate studies in French are expected to acquire a critical understanding of the major works in literature and the history of ideas that have been written in French from the Middle Ages up to the present. This includes works written in francophone countries outside France. The students are also required to demonstrate, in the writing of their Ph.D. dissertation, an originality of thinking and understanding (for literary interpretation), or a complete comprehension of the historical and social contexts that have influenced the works which their dissertation examines. As part of earning a Ph.D. in our program, students must also achieve an excellent level of proficiency in spoken and written French, and must have learned the fundamentals needed to become effective teachers of French at the college level.

2. How these goals are currently assessed:

Within the requirements for both the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees are a set of exams and courses of training that each student must satisfy in order to demonstrate proficiency in the French language, a knowledge of French culture, and his or her skills as a teacher of the French language. Part of the teacher training that a graduate student undergoes involves visits to the classes taught by the student, made by both faculty and fellow teaching assistants. Such visits, along with close cooperation with faculty members in the design and implementation of the curricula that the student teaches, continue throughout his or her contract as a teaching assistant. The two main assessments of our students' achievement -- the M.A. exam, and the Ph.D. dissertation defence -- test the students' capacity to meet the other goals set forth in the preceding paragraph.

In order to pass the M.A. exam, which is made up of a five-hour written exam and a one-hour oral exam, every student must show an ability to discuss the major works of French and francophone literature from the twelfth century to the present. They must be able to analyze some of these works in detail, and discuss their literary and historical importance. The written exam is done in French (with the exception of one question which may be written in English), and the oral exam is conducted completely in French, which means that successful candidates have mastered the language sufficiently to conduct a technical discussion of French literature and culture.

The Ph.D. dissertation defence is an in-depth oral exam (usually lasting for two hours) in which the student supports or clarifies arguments that s/he has written in the dissertation. Since the dissertation addresses a specific problem of literary representation or literary history, and since all dissertators have already had to pass at least two rigorous five-hour written exams related to the dissertation's area of research, the assessment that takes place at the Ph.D. defence is of a detailed nature. It evaluates both the originality and scholarly contribution of the students' dissertation (which is usually around 200 pages in length).

The combination of testing the student's breadth of knowledge at the M.A. level and the breadth and depth of their understanding at the Ph.D. level means that students graduating with a

Ph.D. in French are specialist researchers who can apply their investigative skills to a variety of fields within French-speaking literature and cultures.

3. *Additional assessment tools used during 1997-98:*

In addition to the direct indicators of a student's performance in our program, listed above, the department also added two indirect indicators to help assess our graduate program in French during the 1997-98 year.

The first of these is an exit survey which we ask graduating Ph.D.s, and also graduating M.A.s who are not continuing in our program, to complete. The department has so far sent 45 copies of this survey to Ph.D. and M.A. recipients from our program who received their degrees from January 1990 to the present. The questionnaire asks the alumni/ae to respond to six questions:

1. How did your graduate training in French prepare you overall for your academic career? -- respondents are asked to circle one of 5 options: a. extremely well; b. very well in parts; c. adequately; d. not very well in parts; e. not well.
2. How well did the breadth of your training in literature prepare you for your current work?
3. Has your instruction in research techniques and scholarly writing helped you sufficiently in your scholarly writing or conference papers?
4. To what extent has your training as a T.A. helped you in your current teaching?
5. Are there particular areas of your training in Madison that you believe helped you gain an academic position?
6. In which areas would you have liked to have more training, in preparation for your career?

In the October 27, 1998, meeting of the Graduate Studies committee the results of the first responses to this questionnaire were read out (12 responses in all). This prompted the committee to put on its agenda for upcoming meetings a discussion of how to better prepare students currently in our program for delivering scholarly papers. Overall the 12 responses were very positive (to the first question, for instance, 5 responded "extremely well," and 7 responded "very well in parts").

The second indicator of assessment that was used this year was a survey of the graduate students currently enrolled in our M.A. and Ph.D. programs. This survey was composed and administered by the Graduate Association of French and Italian Students, who reported the results of the survey to the Graduate Studies committee meeting on February 10, 1998. The 9-page survey yielded an 89% response from the students who received it. It asked students to evaluate aspects of their coursework, their teaching, faculty advising, student finances, and other concerns that the students wanted addressed. After reading the results of the survey, the Graduate Studies committee put on its agenda for forthcoming meetings this spring, a discussion of how to improve the faculty advising system, and a discussion of whether students should be allowed to audit one course for credit.

Both these assessment indicators have already helped our Graduate Studies committee adapt and improve aspects of our program in the light of students' feedback.

Steven Kinsper



May 4, 1998

Judith Miller, Chair
Department of French and Italian
Campus

Dear Judy,

The Italian Instructional Committee began its assessment of the undergraduate major in Italian by distributing a special questionnaire to all of our graduating majors and by evaluating papers that our graduating majors wrote for upper-level courses. We enclose for your information a copy of the questionnaire. The responses we received were very positive and spoke of how the program has given them a good general overview of Italian literature and civilization and has enabled them to maintain and improve their linguistic skills. They appreciated the cultural activities sponsored by the Department and the opportunities for study in Italy. They suggested no improvements for the major.

We plan to begin our assessment of the graduate program next fall by asking our current graduate students to complete a survey concerning their training in our Department. The questionnaire is current in development and will encourage responses in the following areas: the breadth of preparation at both the pre-M.A. and pre-Ph.D. levels; the training received in detailed research techniques; the assistance they received in developing their teaching ability; and suggestions for further improvement in training for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. An expanded survey will be sent to those students who have received their Ph.D. since 1990 and will include questions directed toward determining the effectiveness of our program (as measured through their own research productivity since receiving their degree, the value of their experience in our program in obtaining a position, and the level of their professional activity).

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Kleinhenz
Associate Chair for Italian

attached: copy of undergraduate questionnaire

Department of French & Italian

1. Undergraduate Major in French

The Department intends to assess the undergraduate major in French in three ways: 1) by an oral and a written examination; 2) by an ongoing evaluation by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of papers written for courses; 3) by a questionnaire that will be sent to about half of our majors each year. The anticipated cost of the assessment is \$2500 (start-up expense, to be renewed periodically) and approximately \$400 per year (details given below). It is our hope that we will receive funding for this additional expense, which cannot be absorbed by our budget.

A) Oral and Written Examination

ORAL EXAMINATION

Students with a French Education major--a degree that leads to teaching certification in the state of Wisconsin, as distinct from the more general French major--presently take an oral proficiency test, the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Proficiency Test (Listening Comprehension and Speaking sections). We intend to use this exam to assess the comprehension and speaking skills of a representative number of general French majors every year.

The Listening Comprehension section has three parts: a) students hear a series of remarks or questions, then choose an appropriate response; b) students hear a dialogue and a news broadcast, followed by spoken questions to which they choose the correct answer based on what they have heard; c) students hear a conversation among several speakers followed by a series of statements which they must evaluate as true or false. The Speaking section has two parts: a) students read from a text and b) students use pictures to describe a scene, narrate a series of actions, and begin a conversation. Each student's test is recorded and sent to Princeton, New Jersey, to be graded at a cost of \$12.50 per student.

Since we aim to test approximately thirty students per year for the purposes of assessment--the number usually considered to be the minimum for a reliable sample in quantitative studies--this would amount to a cost of between \$350 and \$400 annually. In addition, we would need to obtain ACTFL certification for at least two additional faculty members to help carry out this testing (we presently have only one): the test will need to be given to far more students than presently take it, and those who cannot come to the regularly-scheduled sessions will have to be tested individually by certified faculty. The cost of the four-day certification workshop is \$790 per faculty member, in addition to travel and, in most cases, registration for the ACTFL meeting; this amounts to approximately \$2500 required at this time, and about half that amount required periodically (perhaps every five years or so) to certify new faculty as the need arises. Since the Assessment Plan is not intended to place onerous financial or administrative burdens on Departments, we assume that funds will be available to cover these unavoidable

costs.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

We also intend to have representative majors produce writing samples under controlled conditions. The samples will then be evaluated by the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

B) Evaluation of Undergraduate Papers

The Undergraduate Studies Committee will ask instructors in approximately 5 courses, chosen to be representative of the different aspects of the major (language, literature, civilization), to ask permission of the French majors in their classes to submit one of their papers anonymously to the Undergraduate Studies Committee for the purposes of assessment. (We will check whether this constitutes a case of "human subjects" used for research purposes, and if so, will obtain the necessary authorizations.) The Undergraduate Studies Committee will assess these papers in three categories: language skills (correctness of French), literary or cultural analysis, and composition skills (effectiveness of presentation of ideas). This will give us a range of scores indicating the strengths and weaknesses of our training of French majors. Using the same process, we also intend to examine papers in at least one course that is a prerequisite for the major, probably French 271, Introduction to Literary Analysis. This will allow us to evaluate not only the level of the majors, but also the improvement between the level of prerequisite courses and the level of courses in the major.

C) Undergraduate Questionnaire

We plan to use email to administer a questionnaire that will aim to assess students' experience as French majors, as well as their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization of the program. Once again using the number of thirty for minimum reliability of the sample, we will contact a randomly selected list of majors and ask them to fill out the following questionnaire. Since anonymity might be a concern, we will have students reply by email to our departmental secretary, who will print the responses up without the names of the students. The Undergraduate Studies Committee will then read and assess the results and use them to propose necessary modifications in the major as they may arise.

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR EXPERIENCE AS AN UNDERGRADUATE FRENCH MAJOR

The Department of French and Italian is assessing the quality and effectiveness of its programs and courses. We ask you to help us by completing the following questionnaire. These questions are intended to help us evaluate the major as a whole and are not specifically directed at individual courses. Please feel free to suggest changes for improving the major as well as evaluations of your own experience.

1. Why did you select French as an undergraduate major?
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to communicate in French and to understand

others? Please comment on your speaking, oral comprehension, and reading and writing skills.

3. Do you have a general sense of the development of French and Francophone literature, including important texts and authors? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.

4. Do you feel capable of articulating different approaches to reading and interpreting a literary text? Have you developed your own critical approach? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.

5. How competent would you judge yourself to be as a writer of essays on literary topics?

6. Which courses have been most useful to you in developing your knowledge and understanding of French and Francophone culture and civilization?

7. Have you participated in the cultural activities sponsored by the Department and by the French House? Have you studied abroad in a French-speaking country? Please comment as precisely as possible on what you consider to be the value of these experiences.

8. Has your experience in French and Francophone studies led you to reflect upon your own first language and culture? What have you learned?

9. How do you expect your French major to help you achieve your life and career goals after graduation? Have your studies helped you to formulate these goals, or changed them in any way?

10. Is there any comment you would like to make that is not included in your answers to other sections of this questionnaire?

2. Graduate Program in French

A) How current assessment is conducted:

Two assessments are currently in place at the M.A. exam and also at the Ph.D. dissertation defence. In order to pass the M.A. exam, which is made up of a five-hour written exam and a one-hour oral exam, every student must demonstrate a familiarity with the major works of French and francophone literature from the Middle Ages to the present. They must be able to analyze some of these works in detail, and discuss their literary and historical importance. The written exam is done in French (with the exception of one optional question that may be written in English), and the oral exam is conducted completely in French, which allows successful candidates to also demonstrate that they have mastered the French language sufficiently to lead a technical discussion of literature and culture.

The Ph.D. dissertation defence is an in-depth oral exam in which the student must support or clarify arguments that are advanced in his or her dissertation. Since the dissertation is on a specific problem of literary interpretation or literary history, and since all dissertators have already had to pass rigorous exams in the areas of specialization covered by their dissertation, the assessment that takes place at the Ph.D. defence is of a detailed nature. The student is required to demonstrate either an originality of thinking and understanding (for literary interpretation) or else a complete comprehension of the historical and social contexts that influence the literary works under scrutiny. The combination of testing the students' breadth of knowledge at the M.A. level and the depth and originality of understanding at the Ph.D. level means that students graduating with a Ph.D. in French are specialist researchers who can apply their investigative skills to a variety of fields within French-speaking literature and cultures.

B) Plan for future assessment of student outcomes.

The main goal of our graduate program in French is to give our students as rigorous a training as possible so that they can secure teaching and research positions in universities throughout the country. Two proposed ways to broaden the assessment of our program's success in achieving this goal are: 1) The keeping of detailed records of student placement in university positions after their graduation (and updating these records when a student changes his or her employer) and 2) asking our new graduates as of May 1997 to fill out a questionnaire asking which parts of our program have best prepared them for the teaching and research jobs they found.

Since a significant number of our M.A. graduates and some of our Ph.D. graduates are now finding jobs outside universities, we also propose a second questionnaire that will be given to such students after May 1997, asking them to give details of the types of work they have secured and how their training in French helped them obtain such employment

.3. Undergraduate Major in Italian

The Department intends to assess the undergraduate major in Italian in two ways: 1) by evaluation by the Italian Instructional Committee of papers written for upper-level courses or of papers written as special projects (e.g., Senior Thesis, Independent Study) and 2) by a special questionnaire that will be sent to all of our graduating majors each year.

A) Evaluation of Papers and Special Projects

The Italian Instructional Committee will ask permission of the Italian majors in upper-level courses to submit one of their papers anonymously to the Committee for purposes of assessment. [We will check whether this constitutes a case of "human subjects" used for research purposes, and if so, will obtain the necessary authorization.] The Italian Instructional Committee will assess these papers/projects in three categories: language skills (correctness of Italian), literary or cultural analysis, and composition skills (effectiveness of presentation of ideas). This will give us a range of scores indicating the strengths and weaknesses of our

training of Italian majors. Using the same process, we also intend to examine written work in at least one of the lower-level courses that are required for the major (e.g., 321-322 "Introduction to Italian Literature).

B) Undergraduate Questionnaire

We plan to administer a questionnaire that will aim to assess students' experience as Italian majors, as well as their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization of the program. We will contact all of the majors and ask them to fill out the following questionnaire. Anonymity will be preserved. The Italian Instructional Committee will read and assess the results and use them to propose necessary modifications in the major as they may arise.

Reflections on Your Experience as an Undergraduate Italian Major

The Department of French and Italian is assessing the quality and effectiveness of its programs and courses. We ask you to help us by completing the following questionnaire. These questions are intended to help us evaluate the major as a whole and are not specifically directed at individual courses. Please feel free to suggest changes for improving the major as well as evaluations of your own experience.

1. Why did you select Italian as an undergraduate major?
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to communicate in Italian and to understand others? Please comment on your speaking, oral comprehension, and reading and writing skills.
3. Do you have a general sense of the development of Italian literature, including important texts and authors? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.
4. Do you feel capable of articulating different approaches to reading and interpreting a literary text? Have you developed your own critical approach? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.
5. How competent would you judge yourself to be as a writer of essays on literary topics?
6. Which courses have been most useful to you in developing your knowledge and understanding of Italian culture and civilization?
7. Have you participated in the cultural activities sponsored by the Department?
8. Have you studied abroad in Italy? Please comment as precisely as possible on what you consider to be the value of this experience.
9. Has your experience in Italian studies led you to reflect upon your own first language and culture? What have you learned?

10. How do you expect your Italian major to help you achieve your life and career goals after graduation? Have your studies helped you to formulate these goals, or changed them in any way?

Additional comments: please make any comments that are not included in your responses to other sections of this questionnaire.

4. Graduate Program in Italian

The Department intends to assess the graduate major in Italian in two ways: 1) by continuing the current modes of assessment and 2) by instituting two special surveys intended to gauge the effectiveness of the program. One questionnaire will be given to those students who are currently completing their graduate work, and the other, more extended survey will be distributed to those graduates (M.A. and Ph.D.) of the program since 1990.

A) Current Modes of Assessment

Two assessments are currently in place, at the M.A. exam and at the Ph.D. dissertation defense. In order to pass the M.A. exam, which is made up of a four-hour written exam and a one-hour oral exam, every student must demonstrate a familiarity with the major works of Italian literature from the Middle Ages to the present. They must be able to analyze some of these works in detail, and discuss their literary and historical importance. Parts of the written and oral exams are done in Italian, and this allows the successful candidates to demonstrate that they have mastered the Italian language sufficiently well enough to engage in a technical discussion of literature and culture.

The Ph.D. dissertation defense is an in-depth oral exam in which the student must support or clarify arguments that are advanced in his or her dissertation. Since the dissertation is on a specific problem of literary interpretation or literary history, and since all dissertators have to pass rigorous exams in the areas of specialization covered by their dissertation, the assessment that takes place at the Ph.D. defense is of a detailed nature. The student is required to demonstrate either an originality of thinking and understanding (for literary interpretation) or else a complete comprehension of the historical and social contexts that influence the literary works under scrutiny. The combination of testing the students' breadth of knowledge at the M.A. level, and the depth and originality of understanding at the Ph.D. level means that students graduating with a Ph.D. in Italian are specialist researchers who can apply their investigative skills to a variety of fields within Italian literature and culture.

B) Related Assessment Issues

Starting with the current group of M.A. candidates who will complete the degree during the course of the academic year and who are not continuing in the program and with the current group of dissertators who will defend their dissertations before the end of this academic year, the Department will ask these students to complete a survey asking them to evaluate their

training. The areas that we will ask the students to evaluate in this survey include: the breadth of training at both the pre-M.A. and pre-Ph.D. levels, the amount of training received in detailed research techniques, the help that they have received in developing their teaching ability, and suggestions for further improvement in training for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. We are currently developing this questionnaire.

We also plan to develop and distribute an expanded survey to those students who have received their Ph.D. degree since 1990. The additional questions will be directed toward determining the effectiveness of our program insofar as this can be measured: e.g., their own research productivity since receiving their degree (books, articles, book reviews, conference papers, etc.), the value that their experience in our program (as teachers and researchers) had toward their obtaining a position, their level of professional activity (organization of panels, leadership roles in organizations, etc.), and related points.

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR EXPERIENCE AS AN UNDERGRADUATE FRENCH MAJOR *III a*

The Department of French and Italian is assessing the quality and effectiveness of its programs and courses. We ask you to help us by completing the following questionnaire. These questions are intended to help us evaluate the major as a whole and are not specifically directed at individual courses. Please feel free to suggest changes for improving the major as well as evaluations of your own experience. You need not sign by may if you wish.

1. Why did you select French as an undergraduate major?
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to communicate in French and to understand others? Please comment on your speaking, oral comprehension, and reading and writing skills.
3. Do you have a general sense of the development of French and Francophone literature, including important texts and authors? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.
4. Do you feel capable of articulating different approaches to reading and interpreting a literary text? Have you developed your own critical approach? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.
5. How competent would you judge yourself to be as a writer of essays on literary or cultural topics?
6. Which courses have been most useful to you in developing your knowledge and understanding of French and Francophone culture and civilizations?
7. Have you participated in the cultural activities sponsored by the Department and by the French House? Have you studied abroad in a French-speaking country? Please comment as precisely as possible on what you consider to be the value of these experiences.
8. Has your experience in French and Francophone studies led you to reflect upon your own first language and culture? What have you learned?
9. How do you expect your French major to help you achieve your life and career goals after graduation? Have your studies helped you to formulate these goals, or changed them in any way?
10. Is there any comment you would like to make that is not included in your answers to other sections of this questionnaire?

French Major Assessment
Writing Evaluation Form

Courses All Instructors All

Graduating French majors 28 (number 1, etc.) has studied abroad ___
has not studied abroad ___

1. In comparison with other undergraduates in the course, this student is

- 4 clearly superior
3 superior
2 average
1 below average

mean eval. scores given below

in language skills (grammatical correctness of French) 2.786

literary or cultural analysis 2.714

composition skills (organization and presentation of ideas) 2.714

2. In comparison with students taking pre-major courses, French 228 or 271 (3 short sample papers available upon request), this student is

- 4 clearly superior
3 superior
2 average
1 below average

mean eval. scores given below
(13/28 4's ; 2/28 2's)

in language skills (grammatical correctness of French) 3.357

literary or cultural analysis 3.25

composition skills (organization and presentation of ideas) 3.321

3. Optional: Additional comments about this student's training or performance as a French major (Honors, extracurriculars, future plans, etc.)

Selected comments: "good thinker; participates actively in class; very good command of language"; "impressive student whose language/cultural skills are clearly advanced; studied abroad in an 'intensive' setting. Very well at ease with things 'French.' One whose base in French is deep. Long-term interest in language/culture." "I had her as a student in 271 about a year ago. She has improved considerably, especially in organization of ideas." "A motivated student all-around. Thorough in his/her study of language. Has obviously benefitted from courses at the University." "Honors student, very strong."

Questionnaire on the Undergraduate Italian Major

III c.

The Department of French and Italian is assessing the quality and effectiveness of its programs and courses. We ask you to help us by completing the following questionnaire. These questions are intended to help us evaluate the major as a whole and are not specifically directed at individual courses. Please feel free to suggest changes for improving the major as well as evaluations of your own experience.

- 1. Why did you select Italian as an undergraduate major?**
- 2. How confident do you feel in your ability to communicate in Italian and to understand others? Please comment on your speaking, oral comprehension, and reading and writing skills.**
- 3. Do you have a general sense of the development of Italian literature from the Middle Ages to the present, including important texts and authors? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.**
- 4. Which courses have been most useful to you in developing your knowledge and understanding of Italian culture (cinema, language, etc.)? Please be as precise as you can in your answer.**
- 5. Have you participated in the cultural activities sponsored by the Department? Which have been of most value and of greatest interest?**
- 6. Have you studied in Italy? Please identify the program and comment as precisely as possible on what you consider to be the value of this experience.**
- 7. Has your experience in Italian studies led you to reflect upon your own first language and culture? What have you learned?**
- 8. How do you expect your Italian major to help you achieve your life and career goals after graduation? Have your studies helped you to formulate these goals, or changed them in any way?**

Additional comments: please make any comments that are not included in your responses to other sections of this questionnaire.