Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Anti-Racism Statement

The Department of French and Italian Studies recognizes that structural racism has long been central to the operations of US institutions and power structures, and we stand in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives and all who work to expose and change the legacy of white supremacy in this country and beyond. We recognize the particular burdens and fears experienced by racialized communities, and, as a majority-white department, we commit to unlearning and undoing harmful attitudes as we also commit to creating and sustaining a more diverse community. Essential to this is an understanding of how some of our fields of study have historically contributed to these harms. As scholars of languages associated with Western European nation-states and cultures, we have the obligation to show how these languages and cultures have been and are still used in the service of expansionist and exclusionary thinking. We also have the obligation to create a community of scholars and students which better reflects the diversity of French and Italian speakers worldwide.

The Department understands the stress and uncertainty experienced by our students who have F1 status, and we are monitoring the US Government's policy shifts regarding students' right to reside in the USA when taking an all-online course load. The Government has rescinded its original policy change, which is certainly a hopeful development, but many questions remain. ISS is closely monitoring developments and will post the latest updates on their web page.

French & Italian Studies Statement of Departmental Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity and equity are essential to both the community and the intellectual mission of French and Italian Studies (FIS). Instructors and staff are committed to learning best practices, and unlearning harmful preconceptions, in order to create and sustain an accessible academic community and equitable learning and work environments.

Our understanding of diversity is expansive and dynamic, and we understand it as ongoing work rather than a static set of goals. We work to create spaces where individuals (students, staff, and instructors) are valued and included, regardless of ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, national or indigenous origins, documented status, ability, service history, or political views.

While our action items are specific to our unit, curriculum, and students, we align our goals with those articulated at multiple levels: university-wide (the Race and Equity Initiative, the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity, the 2017 Diversity Blueprint); the College of Arts and Sciences (the Diversity Requirement and Minor); and the Graduate School (GO-MAP). A number of our instructors are Safe Zone certified and UndocuAllies. We further acknowledge that we work, live, and learn on the traditional territory of Coast Salish.
We believe that our academic and diversity missions are aligned, in that we encourage students to become critical thinkers and effective communicators across difference, in languages used widely around the world. Our curriculum is constantly evolving to reflect the relations between texts, histories, identities, and cultures. We equip students to work and live in diverse cultures with an appreciation of their specificities, and to be thoughtful informed global citizens. We aspire to provide spaces and tools with which students can engage in productive dialogue even as they may disagree.

Our specific goals are:

1. To recruit and retain a community of learners and instructors that reflects the demographics of our state and aligns with the UW’s diversity goals.
2. To find creative ways to make studying and working with FIS accessible for as many individuals as possible.
3. To continue to develop our pedagogical practices to serve, support, include and retain students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs.
4. To continue to develop our curriculum to highlight and explore the multiplicity of contexts in which French and Italian languages and cultures are lived and understood globally, their diverse meanings to diverse populations, and how they intersect and/or diverge, historically and in the present, with structures of power and privilege.
5. To create a specific accountability process for complaints of discrimination or abuse based on an individual’s identification with any of the categories presented in the University of Washington’s definition of diversity.

UW Resources:

The Diversity Minor (undergraduate)

Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) (Graduate Students)

The UW Diversity Blueprint 2017-2021

Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMA&D): Rickey Hall, Vice President

President’s Race and Equity Initiative (R&EI)

Office of Faculty Advancement (OFA) : Chawick Allen, Vice-Provost

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