English Language and Literature

Degree conferred
Philosophiae Doctor in Lingua et Litteris britannicis / Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature (PhD)

Commencement of studies
An application for admission may be submitted at any time.

Regulation
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/dGLfK *(French and German only)*

Application procedure
Candidates with Swiss qualifications
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/Ui3b4
Candidates with foreign qualifications
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/2KPbe

Fribourg profile

The Department of English at the University of Fribourg welcomes doctoral research (PhD) in the following fields of study: English Philology, English Linguistics, English Literature, and American Literature.

English Philology
Philology, the study of medieval texts, is a distinct field of study at undergraduate and graduate levels within the Department of English. The Professor of English Philology is Elisabeth Dutton, who specialises in early English drama and medieval English religious texts, especially by and for women: she currently heads a major research project comparing religious drama in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. Graduate students in English philology can benefit from the resources of Fribourg's Medieval Institute as well as close collaboration with medievalists at other Swiss and English universities.

English Linguistics
English linguistics at Fribourg focuses on the analysis of the processes involved in the construction and interpretation of meaning in context. Another specificity of English linguistics in our Department lies in the emphasis set on combining theoretical with empirical approaches to research. PhD students are invited to use different methodologies in their project, and in particular to evaluate the robustness of theoretical claims against empirical evidence. They will also be expected to participate in national and international doctoral workshops and summer schools to acquire the necessary skills and to be exposed to state-of-the-art research in the field.
Prof. Didier Maillat's research focuses on pragmatics, within the wider scope of cognitive approaches to language. His current research interests include (but are not limited to) persuasion, figurative language, advertising language, humour, deceptive communication and misinformation, and deictic uses of language. Prof.tit. Steve Oswald's area of expertise lies at the interface of pragmatics, argumentation theory and cognitive science. They welcome PhD applications related to these fields.

English Literature
Early modern literature at Fribourg is taught and researched with a keen awareness of its historical contexts, ranging from the religious conflicts of post-Reformation Europe over the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century to the aesthetic debates of the eighteenth century. Prof. Kilian Schindler specialises in early modern drama and the intersections of literature and the history of ideas more generally. He is particularly interested in early modern religious dissent and toleration, political thought, and practices of translation. He welcomes proposals from doctoral students in any of these fields or related areas of study.
Literature never exists in «splendid isolation». It is an integral part of the social and cultural fabric underlying our communities and is closely tied to other forms and media of artistic expression. As Professor of Modern English Literature (c. 1780-21st century), Julia Straub investigates the intersections between literary and media history in her research and explores the interactions between literature and digital technologies as well as other media such as photography or the visual arts. She welcomes research proposals from prospective PhD students who would like to work in these or other areas, such as Victorian Literature, contemporary anglophone fiction, transatlantic literary relations, canon theory, melodrama or cultural memory studies.

American Literature
The study of American literature (including Anglophone Canadian literature) is an integral part of the English curriculum at all levels. The American literature group is chaired by Prof.Michael Boyden, whose main interest lies with ecocritical approaches and topics in the American tradition. Currently, Prof. Boyden is developing a research project on platform-based pandemic storytelling in the new millennium. Graduate students can benefit from collaboration with the medical humanities group at Fribourg as well as the doctoral school of the Conférence Universitaire de Suisse Occidentale (CUSO).

Professors who are eligible to supervise theses

English Philology

- **Prof. Elisabeth Dutton**

Areas of specialisation:
– Early English drama
– Medieval English devotional compilations
– Medieval Women's writing

English Linguistics

- **Prof. Didier Maillat**

Areas of specialisation:
– Pragmatics
– Cognitive approaches to meaning
– Experimental pragmatics
– Studies on meaning in use and meaning in context

Possible topics:
– Inferential interpretative processes involved in meaning construction
– Analysis of playful and creative uses of language (e.g. humour, figurative language, literary texts, advertising)
– Misleading and deceptive uses of language (e.g. manipulation, disinformation, propaganda)
– L2 interference on pragmatic processes (e.g. reference assignment, implicature derivation)
– Context-dependent expressions (e.g. deixis, reference frames)

Theses can be supervised in English or French.

- **Prof.tit. Steve Oswald**

Areas of specialisation:
– Pragmatics
– Argumentation theory
– Discourse analysis

Topics:
– Manipulation, deception and covert speech acts more broadly
– (Implicit and explicit) Meaning in argumentative processes
– Rhetorical effectiveness of fallacious and non-fallacious argumentation
– Classical pragmatic phenomena: metaphor, humour, implicature, etc.

Theses can be supervised in English or French.

English Literature

- **Prof.ass. Kilian Schindler**

Areas of specialisation:
– Early modern drama
– Early modern religion, religious dissent, and toleration
– Early modern politics and political theory
– Early modern translation
– Early modern literature and the history of ideas more generally

- **Prof. Julia Straub**

Areas of specialisation:
– Contemporary English literature and digital technologies
– Intermedial configurations from 1800 to the present day
– Transatlantic literary relationships
– Victorian literature, especially the reception of Dante Alighieri's works
– Melodrama: its history, forms and functions
– Theories of literary canon formation and cultural memory

American Literature

- **Prof.Michael Boyden**

Areas of specialisation:
– Multilingual and translingual American literature
– Transatlantic dimensions of American literature
– Migration and minority literatures
– The Environmental Humanities
– The Medical Humanities

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

No ECTS credits can be earned.

Doctoral school

https://english.cuso.ch
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/phd-language-and-cognition

Admission

In order to be admitted to a doctorate the candidate must have been awarded an academic **bachelor's and master's degree** or an equivalent qualification from a university recognised by the University of Fribourg.

Before applying for a doctorate the candidate must contact **a professor** who would be willing to supervise the thesis work.

There is **no general right** to be admitted to a doctorate.

The respective conditions of admission for each doctoral study programme are reserved.

Contact

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Doc- Postdoc-portal

http://www.unifr.ch/phd