



*Mary Franklin-Brown, 2015–16 Distinguished Teacher
Morse-Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Award*

When students of medieval French scholar Mary Franklin-Brown listen to songs or read poems in Old French, their learning goes beyond the words to the rhythms that once lent vibrancy to this venerable tongue.

In translating verses of Occitan to French and the French to English, she fostered “an amazing environment for discussions,” says a former student. “We could hear what the verses were meant to sound like.... There are rarely such tangible experiences of history in the classroom.”

As director of undergraduate studies in French, Franklin-Brown has made a profound impact that ranges from website redesign and initiating a gateway course in French studies to creating an immensely helpful guide to writing senior theses in French. She also reorganized advising to ensure

appropriate placement decisions and clear communication of requirements and helped restructure University programs in Montpellier, France, and Dakar, Senegal.

Franklin-Brown makes the effort to see the learning steps in each course from the student viewpoint. Case in point: She has students comment on material in a Moodle forum before class discussions, giving shy students a chance to express themselves and allowing her to build an engaging class based on the students’ forum contributions.

One grammar-averse student found her approach to correcting errors *fantastique*, noting that “she brought a lot of fun to the room by having sentence structure exercises with the Lord of the Rings.” ✨

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“My research field, medieval French literature, can offer much. These readings have the potential to open a new world for students, at once familiar and unfamiliar, a vantage point on their own historical situation.”

