PROJECT OBJECTIVES

*Modeling Change: The Paths of French*
France Martineau: Director

The main objective of our project *Modelling Change: The Paths of French* is to re-examine the evolution of French from the time it began to take root in Canada (17th-18th centuries) to its origins in the Middles Ages (9th century). More specifically, our objectives are:

- to establish a corpus representative of French society, from the Middle Ages to the 17th century for European French; from the beginning of French colonization until the conquest of New France;
- to develop enriched corpora that can be used in a multidisciplinary fashion in accessible text formats and that incorporate historic descriptors;
- to develop a computerized theoretical model of change that can help identify the linguistic and social trends in the evolution of the different states of French between the 9th and the 18th century, and to thereby highlight the principles and parameters that play a role in the evolution of a language;
- to understand the origins and the process through which the French language was established in Canada, which served as a trigger for its evolution, so that we can then precisely determine the specificity of Canadian French;
- to define the architecture of speakers’ grammars and to thereby highlight the shared fundamental properties of all languages and those variables which characterize the history of each language;
- to compare, by devising a model for change, the evolution of French with other Romance languages, as well as with English for the whole period of our study;
- to evaluate, on the socio-political level, the configurations that lead to the development of diverging norms and that bring about the diversification of linguistic and cultural identities;
- to precisely determine the influence of language, dialect or register contact, on a bilingual or multilingual society in constant change.

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