

Comparative Literature

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Degree Requirements

PhD in Comparative Literature

The PhD in Comparative Literature program requires 60 units of course credit plus a dissertation. Course distribution normally entails the following: at least 12 core credits in comparative literature seminars, including Comp Lit 502 Introduction to Comparative Literature; 12 credits in one nationally, ethnically, or geographically defined literature; and 6 credits in a second such literature. The program also requires the study of a third discipline relevant to the student's intellectual and critical concerns, such as a third literature, music, the plastic arts, philosophy, history, or film. At a minimum, students need to demonstrate — in addition to superior skills in English — superior ability in at least a second language and reading skills in a third language. Beyond the minimum, the choice and number of languages required correspond to each student's three areas of concentration. In addition to taking courses, students will take three comprehensive examinations that have both written and oral components. The first two will help guide the student toward the dissertation; the third examination is the dissertation proposal.

Students interested in pursuing one of the combined degrees should apply to the appropriate language and literature program (Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese or Spanish), indicating their interest in the dual degree. The application will be vetted by the respective program and by Comparative Literature. The dual degree requires students to complete all requirements in the home discipline plus four courses in core categories in Comparative Literature, including Comp Lit 502. Students in the dual-degree programs are expected to include a comparatist component in their dissertations.

AM in Comparative Literature

The AM in Comparative Literature may be earned along the way to the PhD; Comparative Literature normally does not admit students who intend to pursue the AM only. It requires 36 units of course credit, including Comp Lit 502 and three additional courses in Comparative Literature on the graduate level. The remaining 24 units may be pursued in Comparative Literature or in affiliated departments or programs. All students earning an AM in Comparative Literature must demonstrate superior skills in English and, at a minimum, reading ability in one additional language pertinent to their areas of interest. These 36 units count toward the PhD requirements. Students participating in a Mentored Teaching Experience (MTE) may teach in Comparative Literature and/or in one of our allied programs, including language instruction. To be qualified to serve as an assistant

in instruction in a language department, students may be required to take the relevant course in language pedagogy. The program strives to give students a variety of teaching experiences that prepare them for the academic market in their areas of concentration.

Graduate Certificate in Translation Studies

With its interest in crossing the borders between languages, cultures, and national literatures, the discipline of comparative literature implicitly performs and assesses theoretically the function and value of "translation" in the widest sense of the term. The Graduate Certificate in Translation Studies offered by Comparative Literature explicitly supports both the practical turn to translation and the critical and theoretical assessment of translation in the context of globalization, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity, postcolonial theory, and interdisciplinarity. The certificate requires 15 course credits overall, 6 of which may count toward both the certificate and the PhD degree and 9 of which may be allocated only to the certificate. Applicants must already be enrolled in a PhD program at Washington University.

Graduate Certificate in Early Modern Studies

The Graduate Certificate in Early Modern Studies enables students to develop interdisciplinary and transnational expertise outside of their home departments; such expertise can generate innovative work at the dissertation level and beyond. Through courses, reading groups, summer seminars, conferences, and teaching opportunities, certificate students will come into a wider intellectual community of early modern faculty and graduate students from several departments. Students who satisfy certificate requirements will earn the Graduate Certificate in Early Modern Studies along with a PhD in their home department. The certificate takes advantage of two long-standing strengths in Early Modern Studies at Washington University: a long tradition of interdisciplinary work and a commitment to cross national and geolinguistic boundaries. In particular, Comparative Literature — where the certificate is housed — has created strong cross-departmental links between Eastern and Western departments and programs.