East Asian Languages and Cultures

The Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALC) offers advanced degrees in the traditional and modern literatures and cultures of East Asia, based on substantial knowledge of at least one East Asian language. EALC offers the AM in Chinese and Japanese, and the PhD in Chinese Language and Literature, Japanese Language and Literature, Chinese and Comparative Literature, and Japanese and Comparative Literature.

The goal of these programs is to produce scholars well-trained in their chosen languages, firmly grounded in the relevant linguistic and literary traditions, and thoroughly conversant with critical discourses (indigenous and Western) relevant to their fields. With research strengths that cover premodern poetry and poetics, gender and sexuality, religious texts and traditions, narrative, memoir, dramatic literature, postmodernity and more, our internationally recognized faculty is poised to offer graduate students careful and consistent mentoring. Admitting only a select number of graduate students a year, our programs allow individualized guidance. In the completion of these programs at the PhD level, candidates have extended firsthand exposure to the modern societies whose languages, literatures, and cultures they study as well as significant teaching experience in both language and literature classes.

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Japanese language

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts in Chinese or Japanese

The Master of Arts in Chinese or Japanese requires 36 units of graduate study in Chinese or Japanese, which may include courses from related fields such as East Asian Studies and Comparative Literature, including the following:

1. Language proficiency through the fourth level, and two semesters of classical Chinese or Japanese. No more than 12 units in language preparation may be applied.
2. At least two semesters of literary history courses.
3. A research proseminar, preferably in the first year of study.
4. Either a master's thesis or a master's essay, or successful completion of a comprehensive written exam.

The degree is completed in four semesters.

PhD in Chinese Language and Literature or PhD in Japanese Language and Literature

The PhD in Chinese Language and Literature or PhD in Japanese Language and Literature combines the study of Chinese or Japanese literature with literary theory and critical methodology; some of these may focus on other literatures. Doctoral students must demonstrate native or near-native competence both in English and in either Chinese or Japanese. If needed for research in the chosen area of specialization, sufficient proficiency in one or more additional languages may be required.

Students must pass a qualifying examination at the end of their first year and three comprehensive examinations at the end of their third year. In addition, before the beginning of the fourth year, students must submit a dissertation prospectus for committee approval. Unless the student has taken graduate-level course work in the relevant research language(s) or demonstrated sufficient competence in other ways, language competence examinations will be required by the end of course work. All students gain teaching experience in both language and literature with extensive hands-on instruction in pedagogical methodologies.

PhD in Chinese and Comparative Literature or PhD in Japanese and Comparative Literature

The PhD in Chinese and Comparative Literature and the PhD in Japanese and Comparative Literature are offered jointly with the Committee on Comparative Literature. The focus of these programs is comparison of the contents, theoretical basis, and methodologies of Chinese or Japanese literature and a second literature (Western or non-Western), within the contexts of a familiarity with the cultural and historical backgrounds of the literary works and of the critical and historical methodology of modern literary study. Whether or not applicants enter the program with a relevant master's degree, the requirements for our AM in Chinese or Japanese must be met as part of the requirements for the joint PhD degree. Required course work, qualifying examination, comprehensive examinations, dissertation prospectus, demonstration of language proficiency, and teaching opportunities are analogous to those in the PhD programs solely in Chinese or Japanese.