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 Master of Arts (AM) in Chinese and Japanese as well as the Doctor of Philosophy (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 who are well trained in their chosen languages, firmly grounded in the relevant linguistic and literary traditions, and thoroughly conversant with the 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. By admitting only a select number of graduate students each year, our programs allow individualized guidance. After 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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MA, Washington University

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. The degree is completed in four semesters, and requirements include the following:

• Language proficiency through the fourth level and two semesters of classical Chinese or Japanese (No more than 12 units of language preparation may be applied to the degree.)
• At least two semesters of literary history courses
• At least one course in critical theory, methodology or research methods
• Either a master's thesis, a master's essay, or the successful completion of a comprehensive written exam

PhD in Chinese or Japanese Language and Literature

The PhD in Chinese or Japanese Language and Literature combines the study of Chinese or Japanese literature with literary theory and critical methodology. Students are required to take courses in Chinese or Japanese literature, in another East Asian literature or culture, and in literary and cultural theory and critical methodology; some of these courses 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. Mastery of the relevant research language(s) must be demonstrated before students undertake their comprehensive examinations. All students gain teaching experience in both language and literature with extensive hands-on instruction in pedagogical methodologies.

PhD in Chinese or Japanese and Comparative Literature

The PhD in Chinese or Japanese and Comparative Literature is offered jointly with the Comparative Literature program. The focus of these programs is comparison of the contents, theoretical bases, 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 courses, the qualifying examination, comprehensive examinations, the dissertation prospectus, the demonstration of language proficiency, and teaching opportunities are analogous to those of the PhD programs solely in Chinese or Japanese.