East Asian Languages and Cultures

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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

Master of Arts in East Asian Studies

The Master of Arts in East Asian Studies, which requires 30 units of graduate study, offers advanced interdisciplinary courses in Chinese, Japanese and Korean studies in areas that include literature, history, anthropology and art history. Students are required to take the core seminar, normally during their first semester, and at least two substantial writing seminars. Students must achieve at least third-year proficiency in one Asian language, with no more than 12 units of language applying to the degree. For the exit requirement, a student may choose to write a master’s thesis or master’s essay, or they may take the exit exam. The degree can be completed in three or four semesters; with the thesis option, the degree requires four semesters.

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.

Joint AM Programs

The Joint Law and East Asian Studies program, which leads to the Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Arts degrees, combines the regular curriculum of the School of Law and special strengths in international legal studies with the broad offerings of the interdisciplinary East Asian Studies program. The joint program offers an integrated curriculum with courses that may be applied toward both degrees. In this joint program, 9 units are cross-counted between the degrees; the program can be completed in seven semesters. Applicants must apply to and be accepted by both programs.

The Joint Business and East Asian Studies program, which leads to an MBA from the Olin Business School and an AM in East Asian Studies, offers the opportunity to develop an expertise in business practice within
an East Asian context. In this joint program, 6 units are cross-counted between the degrees; the program can be completed in six semesters. Applicants must apply to and be accepted by both programs.