

University of Massachusetts-Amherst  
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures  
Comparative Literature Program

## **Graduate Program Statement of Procedure** (Spring 2003 and later)

The Graduate Program in Comparative Literature is designed for students who are committed to the study of languages and literature in a context broader than that of a single national literature program and who wish to prepare themselves for professional work in comparative, interdisciplinary, and cultural studies. Our program encourages the study of literature in its historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts as an international phenomenon; stimulates the development and refinement of new theoretical and curricular paradigms; and promotes imaginative approaches to the analysis of literary and visual texts in several languages.

### **ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS<sup>1</sup>**

#### **I. Language Preparation**

Applicants for admission must demonstrate proficiency in English and in one language other than English, and a working knowledge of a third language.

#### **II. Critical Essay**

Applicants are required to submit, with the application, a substantial critical essay (15-25 pages) in literature or theory that demonstrates the candidate's ability to analyze texts. Essays written in a language other than English should be accompanied by an English translation done by the candidate. The critical essay required of applicants to the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Comparative Literature should be sent directly to:

Program in Comparative Literature  
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures  
University of Massachusetts  
430 Herter Hall  
161 Presidents Dr  
Amherst MA 01003-9312, USA.

All other application materials must be sent to the Graduate School.

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<sup>1</sup> University Entrance Requirements and other Graduate School regulations marked in the text with an asterisk (\*) can be found in the Graduate School Bulletin.

### **III. Graduate Record Examination and TOEFL; TA Examination**

In accordance with Graduate School regulations, applicants are required to have taken the Graduate Record Examination within five years of the date of application. The Test of English as a Foreign Language is required of all non-native speakers of English who are not U.S. citizens. University regulations require that all non-native speakers of English who are not U.S. citizens pass, at level 1 or higher, the University of Massachusetts English Language Screening Program for Teaching Assistants before they assume teaching responsibilities.

### **IV. Transfer Credits**

Subject to the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee, M.A. candidates may transfer from other institutions up to six hours of graduate credit graded "B" or higher, and taken within three years before admission.\* Students are strongly encouraged to request transfer of credits within the first semester after admission.

## **ACADEMIC STANDING**

### **I. Advising and Review of Progress**

A. The Graduate Program Director serves as adviser to newly admitted students. During the first year, in consultation with the Director, students select an adviser according to their academic interests.

B. At the end of each academic year, members of the Graduate Studies Committee review the progress of all students. Students are expected to maintain standing in accordance with sections 5 and 6 of the General Regulations of the Graduate School.\*

C. The Graduate Studies Committee places a student on probation for one year when:

(1). the student's record shows more than two grades of incomplete (excluding thesis or dissertation credits); or

(2). the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0.

In either case, the Graduate Program Director writes the student a memorandum describing the steps to be taken to remove probationary status. Probationary status jeopardizes a student's eligibility for financial support, whether by funding through the Department, the University

(fellowship programs) or Continuing Education. Failure to meet stipulated obligations in the ensuing one-year period may result in termination of graduate studies. Any student placed on probation may appeal in writing to the Graduate Studies Committee no later than thirty days after the beginning of the semester following the notice of probation. This appeal will be granted only in cases of unusual hardship.

## **II. Waivers, Exemptions, Modifications**

A student may petition the Graduate Studies Committee for a waiver or modification of any requirement in this Statement of Procedure, except for those mandated by the Graduate School.\* The Graduate Studies Committee will provide written notice of its decision in a timely fashion.

## **THE M.A. DEGREE**

*(Requirements for the Translation Studies Track for the M.A. in Comparative Literature are covered in VI)*

### **I. General Requirements**

A. Completion of thirty-three graduate credits.

(1). Completion of required courses in Comparative Literature.

(2). Fulfillment of course distribution requirements.

B. Passing of M.A. Examination.

C. Demonstration of foreign language facility.

D. Demonstration of bibliographic skills in Comparative Literature and the appropriate related disciplines.

E. For teaching assistants, in addition, the Department's 1 credit Teaching Workshop.

### **II. Distribution Requirements**

	M.A. with Thesis	M.A. without Thesis
Comparative Literature	12	15
Literature/Primary Concentration	6	6
Literature/Secondary Concentration	3	6
Elective	3	6
Thesis	9	-
	<hr/> 33	<hr/> 33

A. Counting Courses in Translation and in Comparative Literature

(1). Literature in translation courses may not be counted towards the literature components of the Distribution Requirements unless special arrangements are made to complete required readings in the original.

(2). For the M.A. without thesis, up to three credits of graduate coursework in Comparative Literature may be counted towards fulfillment of the requirement of the literature of secondary concentration, provided that the student has obtained formal written permission from the Graduate Program Director prior to the end of the add-drop period for the course in question.

#### B. Special Problems/Independent Study Courses

(1). For the M.A. with thesis, up to three credits of Special Problems Courses may be counted towards fulfillment of requirements for the degree.

(2). For the M.A. without thesis, up to six credits of Special Problems Courses may be counted towards the fulfillment of the requirements for the literatures of primary and secondary concentration and the Comparative Literature requirements (maximum of 3 credits towards any one distribution requirement) provided that the student has obtained formal written permission from the Graduate Program Director prior to the end of the add-drop period for the course in question.

### III. M.A. Course Requirements

A. Comparative Literature 752 ("Theory and Practice of Comparative Literature").

B. A second graduate Comparative Literature course that combines theoretical perspectives with practical criticism.

C. In addition, for students planning to write a translation thesis: Comparative Literature 751 (Theory and Practice of Translation).

D. For new teaching assistants, a one-credit semester of Teaching Workshop or equivalent (one hour weekly).

### IV. M.A. Examination

#### A. Aims of the M.A. Examination

At the M.A. Examination, the student is expected to demonstrate a knowledge of the literature of primary concentration that approximates that of M.A. candidates in that field. In the literature of secondary concentration, the student is expected to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the texts chosen, a sense of their place in the history of that literature, and an awareness of their historical and literary-critical relationship to works in the literature of major concentration.

## B. Selection of M.A. Examination Committee

An M.A. Examination Committee of three or more members of the Graduate Faculty is appointed for each student preparing for the M.A. Examination. The student and the Graduate Program Director choose the Chairperson of the Committee. The Chairperson and the candidate, in consultation with the Graduate Program Director, then select the other members of the committee, which must include a representative from the department of the literature of primary concentration and may include a representative from the department of the literature of secondary concentration. Two of the members must be in the Department of Comparative Literature.

## C. Duties of the M.A. Examination Committee

The M.A. Examination Committee will help the student compose a list of readings on which he or she will be examined. The Committee is responsible for the preparation and administration of the M.A. Examination and, where applicable, for the direction and evaluation of the M.A. thesis.

## D. Composition of M.A. Examination Reading List

The list for the M.A. examination is to be composed of twenty items: fourteen items from the student's literature of primary concentration, and six from the literature of secondary concentration.

The concept of "item" is flexible. It usually does not mean a single text, unless that text is sizable and of unique historical and literary-critical importance (for example, Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*). An item is likely to be a cluster of three or more texts that make sense as a group; for example, several collections of Symbolist poetry; a group of novels from a particular period or movement; a number of Elizabethan plays or (concentrating on Shakespeare) a representative selection of Shakespearean plays; a group of German Expressionist films. Students are expected to have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the text and to be able to discuss items as meaningful groups. It is obviously impossible to prescribe any rigid format for an item, and committee members work with the student to develop a meaningful list that takes into account the length and difficulty of individual texts and more than one genre. Normally, a single author does not constitute the focus of more than one item.

Work in the literature of primary concentration should cover the historical range of that literature insofar as possible. Work in the literature of secondary concentration may reinforce a selected aspect of the literature of major concentration.

## E. Examination Timing and Procedures

### (1). Date of M.A. Examination

Candidates for the M.A. are required to take the M.A. examination, normally upon completion of thirty-three credit hours of graduate level course work, or no later than the third year of study.

### (2). Duration and Format of M.A. Examination

#### a. Candidates for the M.A. with Thesis

Candidates for the M.A. with thesis are examined for no more than four hours (two hours of written examination, two hours of oral) on their knowledge of the texts cited on the M.A. Examination Reading List. Upon completion of the M.A. Thesis, the candidate presents a thesis defense of no more than two hours.

#### b. Candidates for the M.A. without Thesis

Candidates for the M.A. without thesis are examined on their knowledge of the texts cited on the M.A. Examination Reading List. The examination consists of three essay questions, one each on the literatures of primary and secondary concentration, and one question affording the opportunity to compare items from both. The student is allowed approximately two hours for each essay. After the written exam, an oral examination of not more than two hours is administered by the Committee, at which the student may be asked 1) to elaborate on his or her responses to the essay questions; 2) to discuss any items on the reading list not covered on the written examination and 3) to interpret a passage (in the original language) from one of the readings on the student's M.A. Examination Reading List.

### (3). Outcomes of M.A. Examination

The Examination Committee bases its decision on the candidate's performance over the entire exam, both written and oral portions. The examiners may choose from among three possible outcomes: "pass with distinction," "pass," and "fail." The recommendation of all but one member of the Examination Committee is needed for the student to pass the examination; the decision of the examiners is made known immediately after the examiners have conferred.

In the event of a negative decision by the examiners, the Examination Committee consults with the Graduate Program Director during the week

following the examination. The Graduate Program Director thereupon informs the student either that permission to take the examination a second and final time has been granted, or that termination of graduate studies will be recommended.

#### **V. Demonstration of Language Skills for M.A. Degree**

After admission, language competence may be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways:

- in one language, successful completion of two graduate literature courses in which works are read in the original;
- in a second language, successful completion of one graduate literature course in which works are read in the original;
- in a third language, successful completion of one graduate literature course in which works are read in the original, or of two undergraduate courses at the 300 level or above in which works are read in the original.

We expect our students to be able to read and address complex ideas in their primary languages. We encourage them to acquire facility in writing and speaking those languages as well.

## VI. The Translation Track

*The Master of Arts in Translation Studies* is a separate track of the M.A. in Comparative Literature. Thirty-three credits are required. The degree can be completed in one year, including the summer, with two semesters of four courses each (12 credits each) and a summer spent writing the thesis (9 credits). Two languages are required (one may be English). Students will explore practical techniques and strategies of translation in addition to theoretical and cultural studies implications of their field.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Application form and fee  
Minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75  
A bachelor's degree or equivalent  
Two official transcripts  
Two letters of recommendation  
Proficiency in English  
Excellent knowledge of one foreign language  
Sample of translation or critical essay  
The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) test  
Foreign students need to have taken the TOEFL test or have attended a North American college or university on a full-time basis for one year.

### APPLICATIONS & INFORMATION

Catherine Portuges, Graduate Program Director Program in Comparative Literature Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures University of Massachusetts Herter Annex, Rm 129A 161 Presidents Dr Amherst MA 01003-9312 Tel: 413-545-0929 Fax: 413-545-0908	Edwin Gentzler Director Translation Center 19 Herter Hall 161 Presidents Drive University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA 01003-9312 Tel: 413-545-2203; Fax: 413-577-3400 Toll Free: 877-77U-MASS
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### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Completion of thirty-three graduate credits.  
Completion of twelve required credits in Comparative Literature  
Fulfillment of course distribution requirements (see below)  
Passing of a MA exam in translation studies  
Demonstration of bibliographic skills in comparative literature and translation  
Thesis

THE M.A. EXAM

Students will be required to demonstrate both their foreign language facility and their expertise in translation and/or interpretation. Texts will be chosen based upon the students' specialization (literature, business, or technical). The exam serves both to give the student a practical certification and to allow the student to demonstrate skills acquired through the first 24 credits of study.

THE M.A. THESIS

The student may (1) write on an aspect of translation theory; (2) prepare a descriptive studies project (a comparison of several translations of one original text); (3) translate a collection of poems or short stories, a novel, a play; or (4) translate a selection of scientific, legal, medical, technical, and/or business texts. The translation is to be accompanied by a substantial introduction explaining the decision-making process. The essay and/or translation must be of publishable quality.

Distribution Requirements

Comparative Literature	12
Primary language	6
Secondary language	3
Elective	3
Thesis	9
Total	33

(Up to 3 credits of special problems may be counted toward the degree.)

Translation Center 19 Herter Hall University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA 01003	Tel: (413) 545-2203 Fax: (413) 577-3400 Toll free: (877) 77U-MASS e-mail: <a href="mailto:transcen@hfa.umass.edu">transcen@hfa.umass.edu</a>
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## **THE PH.D. DEGREE**

### **I. Summary of Requirements and Expectations**

A. Students in the Ph.D. Program must complete, beyond the M.A. course requirements specified above, 12 graduate course credits at the 600-800 level (excluding dissertation credits), of which 6 must be in Comparative Literature. That is:

- 21 credits in Comparative Literature, 6 of which must be at the 600 level or above
- 6 credits in the literature of primary concentration
- 6 credits in the literature of secondary concentration
- 3 credits in the literature of tertiary concentration [third language requirement]
- 9 credits of electives, 6 of which must be at the 600 level or above
- 1 credit of Teaching Workshop (for teaching assistants; not part of academic course requirements)

In addition to coursework, all students must register for a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 18 dissertation credits.\* In individual cases, the Graduate Studies Committee may require particular courses.

B. Students in the Ph.D. Program with M.A. degrees from other programs or institutions may petition the Graduate Studies Committee for exemption from particular M.A. course requirements.

C. Up to six credits of independent study courses may be counted toward the fulfillment of the requirements of the literatures of primary and secondary concentration and the Comparative Literature requirements (maximum of 3 credits toward any one distribution requirement) provided that the student has obtained formal written permission from the Graduate Program Director prior to the end of the add-drop period for the course in question.

D. Literature in translation courses may not be counted towards the literature components of the Distribution Requirements unless special arrangements are made to complete required readings in the original language. Up to three credits of graduate coursework in Comparative Literature may be counted toward fulfillment of the requirement of the literature of secondary concentration, provided that the student has obtained formal written permission from the Graduate Program Director prior to the end of the add-drop period for the course in question.

E. Candidates for the Ph.D. must

- fulfill language requirements;
- pass the Ph.D. Examination;
- complete a Ph.D. dissertation;
- pass the dissertation defense.

F. Candidates for the Ph.D. are expected to take the Ph.D. Examination no later than the fourth year of graduate study at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

## **II. Language Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree**

A. In each of two languages, successful completion of two graduate literature courses in which works are read in the original.

B. In the third language, successful completion of one graduate literature course in which works are read in the original.

We expect our students to be able to read and address complex ideas in their three primary languages. We encourage them to acquire facility in writing and speaking those languages as well.

## **III. The Ph.D. Examination**

### **A. Selection of the Ph.D. Examination Committee**

During the second year of study, the student selects, in consultation with the Graduate Program Director, the chairperson of his or her Ph.D. Examination Committee, who then becomes the student's primary adviser. With the approval of the Graduate Program Director, a co-chair may occasionally be appointed from among the Associated Faculty of the Department. The committee chairperson and candidate then select the rest of the committee, which consists of at least four members of the graduate faculty: at least two from the Department of Comparative Literature and at least one from another department.\* The fourth member may come from either inside or outside the Department.

### **B. Purpose of the Ph.D. Examination**

The examination, based on six topics (see C below), serves to determine the candidate's competence in a literature of primary concentration and one or more literatures of secondary concentration; as well as in critical, theoretical, or philosophical methods relevant to, and bibliographic skills in, Comparative Literature and the candidate's areas of specialization.

After consultation with individual committee members, the entire committee meets with the candidate to review and approve the topics list. It is the

responsibility of the committee to ensure that the six topics are formulated so as to cover the above areas. The committee's approval is communicated in writing to the Graduate Program Director.

### C. Formulation of Six Topics

A topic is a conceptual issue of considerable breadth that touches on, or has implications for study in, more than one linguistic or cultural tradition. The student develops topics in close consultation with the chair and members of the Ph.D. Examination Committee. The purpose of the individual topic is to permit the exploration of a critical problem with a literary-historical, interdisciplinary, or theoretical focus, using appropriate primary and secondary sources from more than one linguistic or cultural tradition. Candidates are encouraged to relate theoretical issues to close textual analysis, but the overall examination should not be devoted to developing a single critical approach. Candidates are also encouraged to formulate topics with a concern for their potential as conference papers, a dissertation area, and course syllabi. The six topics as a whole should reflect a knowledge of the historical range of the primary literature and should draw upon primary texts in three language areas. Texts read as primary material for a topic must be read in the original language. For each topic, the student submits an abstract of 1-2 pages indicating its purpose and coherence and a selected bibliography not to exceed 3 pages. The topics list, once agreed upon by student and committee, is submitted to the Graduate Program Director no less than 30 days before the Ph.D. Examination, and may not be altered without the consent of candidate, committee, and Graduate Program Director.

### D. Forms of the Ph.D. Examination

The candidate presents each topic for examination in one of three modes, whether by written examination, paper or papers, or oral exam. The examination must incorporate each of these modes as specified below. A final review of all components of the examination will be scheduled as part of the oral examination.

#### (1). The Written Examination

The candidate presents at least two topics in a written examination of about 2-1/2 hours' duration per topic. The Examination Committee provides relevant texts, as necessary. It is expected that students will take the examination in the Department, and they may request use of Department computers for the purpose of the exam.

(2). Papers

One or two topics are presented in the form of a paper or papers.

The extended paper option: in one 50-80 page paper directed toward the dissertation the candidate may address the critical problems suggested by the combination of two related topics.

The shorter paper option: in either one or two 25-30 page papers, the candidate addresses the critical problems suggested by either one or two topics, respectively. One of these papers may be a comprehensive annotated bibliography with critical introduction, or a bibliographic essay.

The candidate must submit paper(s) to the Examination Committee at least 30 days before the date scheduled for the written examination (or the relevant portion of this exam), which cannot be administered unless this requirement has been met.

(3). Oral Examination of Individual Topics and Final Review

There will be an oral examination of approximately three hours. Part I of the examination covers any of the topics not tested by written examination or by paper. Part II constitutes the final review. This examination takes place not more than one week after the written exam.

The final review, included in the oral examination, has the following components:

- a. A review of the candidate's written work, including any topics presented in the form of a paper or critical bibliography.
- b. A review of the candidate's achievement in critical, theoretical, or philosophical methods as well as bibliographic skills in Comparative Literature and related disciplines in the candidate's area of specialization.
- c. A review of the candidate's ability to do textual analysis, based on his or her analysis of a passage in the candidate's first foreign language.

E. Examination procedures

The Examination Committee bases its decision on the candidate's performance over the entire exam, both written and oral portions. The recommendation of all but one member of the committee is necessary for the student to pass or fail the exam. The Committee Chair makes known to the candidate the decision immediately after the examiners have conferred at the conclusion of the oral exam.

The committee chairperson, at that time, provides an explanation for the decision of the Committee.

In the event of a negative decision by the examiners, the student's committee consults with the Graduate Program Director during the week following the examination. The Graduate Program Director thereupon informs the student either that permission to take the examination a second and final time has been granted, or that termination of graduate studies is advised.

F. Upon passing the Ph.D. examination, Ph.D. candidates who did not enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. degree are granted an M.A. on request.

#### **IV. THE PH.D. DISSERTATION**

##### **A. Dissertation Committee**

By the end of the semester in which the student successfully completes the Ph.D. examination, the student:

1. selects, in consultation with the Graduate Program Director and the prospective chair, a chair of the dissertation committee from graduate faculty in the Department;
2. selects, with the chair of the dissertation committee, a Ph.D. dissertation committee of at least four members of the graduate faculty (of whom at least two are from the department of Comparative Literature and at least one is from another department);\*
3. arranges for and holds, in consultation with the chair of the dissertation committee, a preliminary meeting of the entire committee.

##### **B. Dissertation Prospectus**

By the end of the semester following the successful completion of the Ph.D. examination, the student presents and defends a Ph.D. prospectus with bibliography. The prospectus should describe, in about 15 pages, the aims, method, and scope of the proposed dissertation; the accompanying selective and briefly annotated bibliography should not exceed 10 pages. The oral defense of the prospectus, no less than one hour in duration, takes place in the presence of the student's full dissertation committee. After a successful defense, and within the same semester, the student files the approved final version of the prospectus, signed by the Graduate Program Director and the Department Chair, with the Graduate School, and provides a copy to the Graduate Program Director. Graduate School regulations stipulate that a dissertation prospectus be formally filed at least seven months before the dissertation defense.

### C. Kinds and Subjects of Dissertations

The dissertation offers sustained inquiry into topics of literary-theoretical, literary-historical, or interdisciplinary importance, including cross-cultural literary and film analysis; it should deal in a substantial way with texts in at least two languages, and, when appropriate, take into consideration diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. A translation thesis with substantial critical introduction and apparatus may also be presented.

### D. Schedule for Completion: Preliminary Approval

In preparing the dissertation, the candidate submits units of written work to the members of his or her committee as agreed upon in prior consultations with them. The final oral examination, which constitutes the dissertation defense, is scheduled "when all of the Dissertation Committee members and the Department Head/Chair agree that the dissertation is sufficiently complete to stand defense."\*

### E. The Dissertation Defense

In accordance with Graduate School regulations, "attendance at the final oral examination is open to all members of the candidate's major department and any member of the Graduate Faculty. However, only members of the Dissertation Committee may cast votes." The Graduate School directs that the oral be "primarily upon, but not limited to, the contents of the candidate's dissertation." In order to pass the examination, the candidate must receive unanimous approval from the Dissertation Committee. If there is one negative vote, the degree will be held up pending action of the Graduate Council\*.

The outcome of the examination is to be made known to the candidate immediately after the members of the Dissertation Committee have conferred at the conclusion of the Defense.

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For further information, call (413) 545-0929 or write to the  
Graduate Program Director  
Program in Comparative Literature  
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures  
University of Massachusetts  
Amherst MA 01003-9312, USA.

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\* Graduate Bulletin