Department Handbook

Department of Comparative Literature Graduate Program

(updated 3/11)
New York University

- New York University Web Site: www.nyu.edu

- Department of Comparative Literature Web Site: www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/complit/

- Graduate School of Arts and Science to Download or request an Application on the web: www.nyu.edu/gsas/application/

- To request an application by email: gsas.admissions@nyu.edu

- To pick up an application and graduate bulletin at New York University, go to GSAS Enrollment Services at 1/2 Fifth Avenue or call 212-998-8050

- The Department of Comparative Literature requires the GRE General Test, NOT the Subject Tests. Writing samples (approximately 20 pages) are required. The TOEFL is required for foreign applicants.
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Comparative Literature at New York University is a doctoral program which requires Ph.D. candidates to earn an M.A. degree in the process of working towards the Ph.D. We are committed to providing an innovative and rigorous approach to comparative literature as an inquiry into the nature of literary language, an investigation of literary representation in relation to other forms of cultural expression, and an exploration of the social, political, and aesthetic contexts of literary practice. Comparative Literature is also the home for interdisciplinary and cross-cultural work engaged with philosophical and theoretical problems of language and interpretation. For these intellectual reasons, the department’s graduate students are required to work in several linguistic traditions, to acquire an expertise in literary criticism, theory, and history, and to develop an awareness of the larger disciplinary and cultural implications of literary analysis.

While such a course of study is rewarding in itself, the graduate program at NYU also presumes that most of its students will ultimately seek academic jobs. Consequently, the program is designed to prepare students for success on the academic job market. The requirements and guidelines which follow are meant to enhance the intellectual goals with which all students enter, and simultaneously to provide the best and most pragmatic training for future job placement.

Courses are chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and, by the third year of coursework, with a faculty adviser who shares the student’s intellectual and/or linguistic interests. It is crucial to remember that the purpose of coursework is to provide a foundation for structuring the student’s doctoral exams, formulating and carrying out the dissertation project, and preparing for an academic career. It is also intended to help students develop interests beyond those with which they entered the program. Students should aim for both depth and breadth in their studies, making sure not to take courses in one period, genre or theory to the exclusion of others. In other words, keep a literary, historical, and theoretical balance in mind--students who focus on twentieth-century modernism, for example, should be sure to do work in earlier periods and in other modes.

Because the majority of Ph.D. candidates intend to become professors, students are required in their doctoral exams to demonstrate an expertise in a particular field, called the teaching field, as well as more specialized knowledge of theory and of a field encompassing a specific comparative focus and, in some cases, broadened by genuine knowledge of a non-literary discipline (see below). It is this combination which seems to give comparative literature students an edge over job candidates trained in a single national literature. The competition for jobs and fellowships, and the special challenges and benefits a comparative literature degree provides, make a six-year plan to the degree ideal. Financial aid possibilities, teaching opportunities, and professional advancement are all strongly affected by the timely pacing of graduate studies. For example, students are often ineligible for NYU awards and summer fellowships unless they have completed their coursework and exams; faculty recommendations often hinge on adherence to the six-year plan outlines. Faculty Advisers, the Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies, as well as the Graduate Administrative Aide and the Departmental Administrator are all dedicated to making this progress a reality for students.
Not everyone will want to use their doctorate to enter the academy. Our department acknowledges the range of other job possibilities and makes such opportunities known to students whenever possible. Graduates will find that career opportunities in academic administration, positions in international foundation and associations, jobs in publishing and translating, and openings in business, political, and entertainment fields are enhanced by the Ph.D. degree in Comparative Literature.

MacCracken Funding

The Department believes that teaching is an important part of graduate training, and considers it fundamental that students teach for one year as they progress toward their degree. Graduate student teachers at NYU are generally considered Adjuncts. All Adjunct assignments will be arranged in consultation with the Departmental Administrator and DGS, and availability of assignments may vary per semester. Students holding a MacCracken fellowship may choose to teach an Adjunct load while still holding the MacCracken, or they may interrupt their MacCracken awards in order to teach (effectively postponing by a year the MacCracken stipend). In the first case, an Adjunct salary will be paid in addition to and simultaneous with the MacCracken fellowship. This may permit the student to "bank" his or her salary for use at the end of the program. In the second case, a student may opt to teach up to four recitations per term, if undergraduate student enrollment permits, preferably during his or her 6th and 7th semesters, effectively postponing one year of MacCracken fellowship. These options are described as the "Six-year plan."

Alternatively, a student may choose to teach a smaller Adjunct load while still holding the MacCracken, and complete the dissertation within five years. This option is described as the "Five-year plan."

II. TIME-PLAN TO 6-YEAR Ph.D.

YEAR ONE (MacCracken Funded)

Semester 1: Complete 16 points of coursework (4 courses at 4 points each) including G29.1400 “Research Methods and Techniques.”

Semester 2: Complete 16 points of coursework, including one 4-point reading course (G29.3998 “Directed Research I”).

• By the end of Year One, students should satisfy or prove proficiency in one language and take one pre-1800 literature course (criticism or theory).
YEAR TWO (MacCracken Funded)

**Semester 3:** Complete 16 points of coursework.
- By the end of Semester 3, students should have completed an MA thesis and satisfied two language requirements.

**Semester 4:** Complete 16 points of coursework, including one 4-point reading course (G29.3999 “Directed Research II”).
- By the end of Year Two, students **must** have completed an MA thesis, two language requirements, a second pre-1800 lit course and a 20th-century theory course.
- In the Spring of Year Two, students are subject to a Second Year Review by the Chair and DGS.

YEAR THREE (First Semester MacCracken Funded)

**Semester 5:** Complete coursework requirements—including the required 4-point Exam Prep course (G29.3991)—totaling 72 points (fulfilling MA and PhD requirements).
- At the end of Semester 5, students complete the Take Home Written Comprehensive Examination, administered by a three-faculty exam committee. The written exam should be taken as soon as possible after completion of the exam preparation course, if not by the end of the 5th semester, then at the beginning of the following semester¹: it does not require the examiners’ physical presence, since examiners’ questions and candidates’ responses may be distributed by e-mail through the Graduate Administrative Aide.

*The final language requirement and/or completion of the non-literary disciplinary field must be completed before the doctoral preliminary exam can be taken.

**Semester 6:** Defend Dissertation Prospectus and teach as an Adjunct Instructor.
- At this time, the student must convene a dissertation committee comprised of a director, second, and third reader. In many cases, members of the dissertation committee will have been members of the student’s doctoral exam committee. Nevertheless, students are free to constitute the dissertation committee differently after passing the written doctoral exams if that is their preference. In either case, students should arrange to meet with their intended dissertation director in order to get that faculty member’s explicit consent to serve in that position, and should communicate with the remaining two members of the proposed dissertation committee to secure their agreement to serve as either second or third reader on the committee.
- Students should schedule the Dissertation Prospectus Conference within four months following the written exam. The prospectus must be submitted beforehand to the student’s dissertation director for approval before the conference can be scheduled.
- Once the conference has been convened and final approval of the prospectus given, a copy of the prospectus is turned in to the Graduate Administrative Aide to be kept in the student’s file and made available to other students.

¹ This deadline is absolute. Any exceptions to this deadline can only be granted by the DGS.
YEAR FOUR (Second Semester MacCracken Funded)

Semester 7: Start (or continue) dissertation research and writing; teach as an Adjunct Instructor.
Semester 8: Continue dissertation research and writing.

YEAR FIVE (MacCracken Funded)

Semester 9: Continue dissertation research and writing.
Semester 10: Continue dissertation research and writing.

YEAR SIX (MacCracken Funded)

Semester 11: Complete draft of thesis; submit to core committee members for feedback/suggested revisions. Confirm (and submit outside reader paperwork if necessary) all five committee members.
Semester 12: Revise thesis and complete final draft. Register for graduation and schedule a dissertation defense date. By May, students should have defended in time to graduate.

TIME-PLAN TO 5-YEAR Ph.D.
(An additional semester funded by four recitations of teaching is possible.)

Semester 1: 16 points (4 courses) including Research Methods & Critiques
Semester 2: 16 points including Directed Research I
Semester 3: 16 points; submit MA
Semester 4: 16 points including Directed Research II; absolute MA deadline
Semester 5: 8 points, including Exam Prep; take written exams at close of semester
Semester 6: dissertation prospectus defense; teach two recitations as Adjunct
Semester 7: teach two recitations as Adjunct; research & write
Semester 8: research & write
Semester 9: submit prelim thesis to committee; revise
Semester 10: complete revisions; defend; graduate
(Semesters 1-10 are funded by the MacCracken Fellowship.)

A note about non-lecture courses:

Non-lecture courses are arranged with advance permission from the DGS, and require registration access codes from the Graduate Administrative Aide. There are several types of non-lecture courses:
• **Directed Research I & II (G29.3998 and 3999):** As described on pages 4-5, students are expected to register for Directed Research I in Semester 2 and Directed Research II in Semester 4. These independent research courses are designed to allow students the opportunity to work with a Comparative Literature professor while framing a dissertation topic and preparing an initial bibliography. Each section of Directed Research carries 4 points.

• **Thesis Research/Exam Prep (G29.3991):** As described on page 5, students must register for Thesis Research in Semester 5. This course is designed to allow students the opportunity to work with the professors who comprise the Written Exam Committee while finalizing the three reading lists required for Comprehensive Written Exams. This course carries 4 points.

With all non-lecture courses, please note that it is the student’s responsibility to make sure that the advising professor emails a final grade to the Graduate Administrative Aide at the close of the semester. Individual professors will NOT receive a separate grade form for non-lecture courses.

**There are a few ABSOLUTE DEADLINES within this schema:**

1. The M.A. degree **should be** received by the end of the 3rd semester. In the event that it is not, it **must be** received **before** the end of the 4th semester.

2. All IPs **must** be completed before scheduling your written examination. IPs cannot be carried more than a semester after the term.

3. All language requirements and/or completion of the “third field” **must be** satisfied by the end of the 5th semester. These **must be completed before you can schedule your examinations.**

4. Terminal M.A. degrees **must be** granted by the end of the student’s third year.

5. Your Dissertation Prospectus Conference **must take place no later than four months** after your Written Examination. This means that a dissertation committee must be formed in the interim between Written Exams and Dissertation Prospectus Conference.

6. Ph.D. Degrees **should be** received by the end of the sixth year of matriculation. In any event, they **must be** completed by the end of the tenth year (or seventh if the student began the program with an M.A. degree).

**THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE DEADLINES IN MOST CIRCUMSTANCES. IF YOU FEEL YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES MERIT SPECIAL CONSIDERATION, SEE EITHER THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES OR THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FAILURE TO MEET THESE DEADLINES WILL RESULT IN ACADEMIC PROBATION.**
III THE M.A. DEGREE

A. COURSE WORK

- 8 courses (32 points) TOTAL, of which:
  - 5 courses (20 points) are in the department.
  - 3 courses (12 points) are outside the department (and relevant to the student’s teaching and research goals).

The student must include the four following requirements within the first 32 points:

1. “Seminar in Literature: Research Methods and Techniques - Practice and Theory” to be taken in the FIRST semester at NYU.

2. Literary Criticism/Theory before 1800.*

3. Contemporary (20th Century) Literary Criticism/Theory.*

4. One pre-1800 literature course in addition to #2.

* Both theory courses may be satisfied in or out of the department. If you take a course outside the department to satisfy one of the above requirements, you have the option of having it count for one of the three required “outside” courses. When in doubt, consult your adviser.

The student may transfer up to 2 graduate courses (8 points of credit) for classes taken at another institution and not already credited towards a B.A. or M.A. with the approval of the DGS.

B. LANGUAGES

For the M.A. degree, the students must demonstrate proficiency in two non-English languages. You may do this in one of the following ways:

1. Native proficiency demonstrated by a degree from a non-Anglophone foreign university. **

2. A graduate level literature course, taught in the language (grade of ‘B’ or better), in any of the language departments at NYU. **

3. An upper level, undergraduate LITERATURE class, taught in the language, taken at NYU for which you received a ‘B’ or better. **

4. Translation exams are administered (for a fee) three times a year by Graduate Enrollment Services. Register at ½ Fifth Avenue. Note that registration dates are usually at least a month in advance of the exam.
**Note: if you choose to satisfy your language requirements using any of the first three methods, you must apply for “language equivalency.”** This means that even if you take 3 courses, for example, in the Spanish department, or you are from Austria, or you had an undergraduate major in French, and so forth, you will not have proven proficiency until you have applied for such with the departmental Graduate Administrative Aide. You are strongly encouraged to apply for language equivalency as soon as you are able -- in the cases of undergraduate equivalency and native speakers, for example, you should apply in your first semester. Similarly, after you have finished a graduate course in a national language, apply immediately. Failure to do so may result in extremely tedious complications which can interfere with obtaining your degree in a timely manner.

C. QUALIFYING PAPER (Master’s Thesis)

The qualifying paper must be written and approved WITHIN THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF COURSEWORK (and preferably by the end of the third semester). The paper is meant to be one which you have already submitted for a seminar and to which you would like to return in order to polish the argument to a “publishable” standard. In this instance, “publishable” means that the paper should be grammatically and stylistically beyond reproach; that the issues and arguments of the essay are presented in a comprehensive and knowledgeable way; and that the essay makes a genuine contribution to scholarship and enters into current debates and issues in the field. Ultimately, the paper should be one which could or will be presented at a conference or published in a journal. This includes review essays, which often provide excellent opportunity for your first publication.

Guidelines for the Qualifying Paper:

- It must be typed and legible.
- Length is variable. Since it is to be rated “publishable,” it must fall between 20-35 pages inclusive of footnotes.

The final version must be preceded by a title sheet.

- The Qualifying Paper is read and approved by TWO readers, each of whom MUST SIGN BOTH THE TITLE PAGE AND A “MASTER THESIS READER SHEET” (available from the Graduate Administrative Aide).
  - The readers are to be chosen by the student in consultation with the department. The first reader is generally the faculty member for whom the paper was originally written. Students should meet with the DGS to initiate this process. At least one of the two readers must be a member of the Comparative Literature Faculty or associated faculty.
• **Approved** qualifying papers should be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Aide **at least two weeks before graduation deadlines** (in January, May, and September). This means that qualifying papers must be submitted to both readers well in advance so that they have the time to read your work and you have time to make all required changes and submit the paper again for their approval. Consult the Graduate Administrative Aide each semester to find out about these deadlines.

**D. SECOND YEAR REVIEW**

During your 4\textsuperscript{th} semester, you will participate in a Second Year Review, typically conducted by the DGS and the Department Chair. The review provides an opportunity for ensuring that you have completed your requirements to date, and discussing the plans you are beginning to formulate for your upcoming Doctoral Preliminary Examinations.

**E. PROCEEDING TO THE Ph.D. PROGRAM**

Full-time students who have not received their M.A. by May of their second year will be placed on “probational” standing, meaning that their status will be under serious review.

Should the student fall behind, the university will still demand that the student register to maintain matriculation while completing outstanding requirements, an unnecessary and unwelcome financial burden. In addition, this may jeopardize the student’s financial aid status.

Though you are continuing on to the Ph.D. portion of your coursework, you will still need to register for graduation to receive your M.A. You cannot register for the MA or MPHIL degrees on Torchtone because it will activate you for the Ph.D. graduation. You must call Graduation Services instead at 212-998-4845.

**IV. Ph.D. PROGRAM**

**A. CONTINUATION FROM M.A. PROGRAM**

The continuation from the M.A. to the Ph.D. is not automatic; successful and timely completion of the M.A. is required for admission to the Ph.D. program.

**B. INCOMING M.A. STUDENTS**

Those entering the program with a transferable M.A. (or equivalent) from another university must apply **WITHIN THE FIRST YEAR OF COURSEWORK** for a transfer of up to thirty-two points towards the Ph.D. Application during this time is absolutely imperative. First see the Director of Graduate Studies for approval and then see the Graduate Administrative Aide for procedure. Students in this situation may be exempt from the departmental M.A. requirements (see III A & B), but must demonstrate proficiency in three languages (or two plus a third field).
Any requirement exemptions granted by the DGS must be entered in the student’s file. The student should confirm with the Graduate Administrative Aide that they have been entered. Note: if you are the recipient of a MacCracken Fellowship, and you transfer your M.A., this reduces your 5-year fellowship to 4 years.

C. COURSEWORK

- 10 courses (40 points) TOTAL past the M.A., of which:
  - 5 courses (20 points) are in Comparative Literature, including the 4-point course G29.3991 “Exam Preparation”.
  - 5 courses (20 points) are taken outside the department.

Students entering the doctoral program with the M.A. in comparative literature from another institution divide their 40 points between courses in comparative literature and courses in a national literature or literatures. After consultation with the DGS, they can also include appropriate non-literature courses.

Students entering the doctoral program with a master’s degree in a national literature must discuss their course requirements carefully with the DGS.

Doctoral students must take a full year of study in criticism and theory, one course of which must be of criticism before 1800. Other required courses are the “Research Methods and Techniques” and another pre-1800 literature course. The DGS may make an exception if a student can show that these requirements have been satisfied during their M.A. program. Any such exemptions must be entered in the student’s file.

The student’s program of study should be designed around the formation of a primary field, your intended teaching field, as well as a secondary field of specialized interest and a theory field. By teaching field we mean the area of expertise the student will claim as a scholar and an academic on the job market—e.g., Renaissance drama, comparative modernism, the history of the novel, Caribbean poetry, etc. The secondary field will be formulated with specific reference to the proposed dissertation research.

Courses should be chosen in consultation with an adviser.

D. THIRD LANGUAGE/NON-LITERARY DISCIPLINARY FIELD

Doctoral candidates who have completed all the M.A. requirements may replace the third of their three (non-English) languages with genuine advanced knowledge of a non-literary discipline: past examples include History, Anthropology, Performance Studies, Cinema Studies, and Political Science. The department in question must offer the doctoral degree. This option is available only in cases where the non-literary discipline is certain to become an integral part of a student’s doctoral research and dissertation. It can be taken only after discussion with the student’s departmental adviser and must be approved by the other department. It requires a minimum of three doctoral level courses in that department, where the student must also have an adviser (usually chosen, or at least envisaged, by the student after having taken a first course in
the field). That adviser must participate as a member of the doctoral exam committee, and eventually serve as one of the first three (of five) readers of the dissertation. Initial formal contacts with the Chair or Director of Graduate Studies of the other department and the prospective adviser are made by the student’s Comparative Literature adviser or appropriate Comparative Literature faculty member. Due to time constraints and other requirements, a student choosing this option will often need to start preparing for it (and probably take a first course in the field) during their M.A. coursework.

Remember that before the non-literary disciplinary field adviser can be officially appointed, a formal request must first be made to that effect by the DGS or Chair.

E. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

1. Take Home Written Comprehensive Examination

- There is one comprehensive written examination to which you will have devoted a research course (G29.3991) the previous semester. Your comprehensive exam is administered by the faculty committee of three who will normally, though not in all cases, serve on your dissertation committee as well and thus participate in your Dissertation Prospectus Conference (see page 5 above for constitution of the dissertation committee). You must solicit their participation well in advance of the comprehensive exam, since one or more of them will be needed to administer the required independent exam study course for credit.

- The examiners forward their questions to the Graduate Administrative Aide at least two weeks before the exam is scheduled. The Graduate Administrative Aide sends the questions to the DGS to make sure there is no overlap. The committee chair also approves the questions, to make sure they constitute a fair and comprehensive exam. The graduate Administrative Aide formats the exam and prepares it for the student.

  - Please note, you must also submit your reading lists to the DGS to be reviewed in conjunction with the exam questions.

The take-home exam is a rigorous one, consisting of three sections, each of which is made up of one primary question which may be divided into parts.

1. The first exam section is tailored to the literary critical or theoretical area most germane to the student’s interests and prospective dissertation topic.

2. The second exam section is based on the student’s major or teaching field. This will entail a comprehensive approach to a field roughly corresponding to the broad designations found in the MLA job list, e.g., “Renaissance Drama” or “20th Century Latin American Fiction.”
3. The third exam section entails preparation for the dissertation work itself and may be the most useful in writing your dissertation prospectus in preparation for the Dissertation Prospectus Conference. This may involve some particular critical perspective, historical or thematic aspect, theoretical issue, or further explorations in your non-literary discipline. If the student has chosen this last option, the third section may be the appropriate place for its examination: remember that this non-literary discipline has to be an element of the dissertation.

The student is allotted one calendar week (Monday to Monday or Friday to Friday) for the comprehensive exam. The first (critical-theoretical) and the third (dissertation preparation) sections each have one question on the exam, and the answers to these questions may be correspondingly shorter than to the second (teaching field) section, which may have two questions. The maximum page length of the entire exam is roughly 30 typed, double space pages, so one might offer a 15 page teaching field answer, and a 7-8 page response to the other two sections. When preparing the lists for the exam itself, the same proportions should roughly obtain. In other words, the teaching field will have the largest number of primary and secondary texts, around 40-50 depending on the field, while the criticism-theory and dissertation preparation field will be shorter -- perhaps 20-30 texts each. Recall that the lists can include chapters, excerpts, and essays as well as entire works. Sample lists will be made available in the department office.

A great deal is expected in this exam: demonstration of solid coverage of an extensive reading list, substantive grasp of key issues in comparative literary analysis and theory, and firm grounding in the field of your primary interest. Remember that you will have had a semester-long course allowing you to prepare your lists and embark on the reading itself.

The take home comprehensive written exam can be repeated once if the student does not pass all or part of it. All three faculty read the entire exam, but evaluate only the section they have written. Faculty provide a one page written evaluation of their section, along with a grade: Pass, No Pass, or Pass with Distinction. If all three faculty grant “distinction” on their sections, the student is awarded “distinction” on the examination.

After successful completion of the written exam(s), students proceed to the Dissertation Prospectus Conference. The time between the two parts of the exam may be no more than four months without the explicit consent of the DGS.

2. Dissertation Prospectus Conference

The Dissertation Prospectus Conference is to be scheduled after your dissertation director approves an initial dissertation prospectus. The prospectus conference committee is comprised of your dissertation committee members (director, second, and third readers). In most cases, they will be the same three faculty members who administered the written exam. After the written exam has been passed, however, students may consider changes as they are
putting their dissertation committees together in advance of the Dissertation Prospectus Conference. For all committees, at least one of the three members must be a Comparative Literature Faculty Member or an Associated member of the department’s faculty.

- This prospectus is 15-25 typed pages, including the dissertation bibliography. Its basic organization is as follows:

  1) Your thesis: the argument you plan to make and explanation of the materials that are the focus of your critical and scholarly interests (usually 7-8 pages).
  2) Annotated preliminary table of contents (also around 7-8 pages).
  3) Preliminary bibliography (around 5 or so pages). The whole constitutes a “road map” of your dissertation.

- It must be circulated to the entire three person committee no later than three weeks before the Dissertation Prospectus Conference and approved by your director in order for the Conference to be scheduled. The director’s approval signals his or her confidence in the viability of the prospectus and your readiness for the Conference.

- The purpose of the Dissertation Prospectus Conference is to give your dissertation committee the opportunity to discuss and perhaps recommend changes to your prospectus so that you are in the best possible position to initiate dissertation research and writing immediately. Official approval of the prospectus will be granted at this meeting, unless the committee feels at the Conference that major adjustments must be made in advance of their approving your prospectus. In that case the committee will set a deadline by which changes should be made; in no case will this be more than one month after the Dissertation Prospectus Conference was held. Once the prospectus is approved, the student is required to submit a copy to the graduate Administrative Aide to be kept on file in the department as a resource for review by other students in the department.

F. DISSERTATION

For rules and regulations regarding the length, form, and procedures regarding the Dissertation, please pick up a Formatting Guide from the Office of Student Affairs at 6 Washington Square North. (University guidelines allow the candidate to use MLA or Chicago style. Additionally, you may use endnotes or footnotes. You may choose which best suits your work, but you must be consistent throughout.)

1. Financial Support While Completing the Dissertation

- If you run beyond your MacCracken, consult the Director of Graduate Studies early each semester to discuss applying for university fellowships as well as to discuss external fellowships for which you may be eligible. Attend the grant-writing and fellowship workshops offered by the university. The department will also post announcements of scholarships, grants, and adjunct teaching positions.
2. Defense

- Before graduating, you must defend your dissertation. The dissertation defense committee is normally comprised of the three members of the dissertation committee as well as two additional readers. Although the candidate normally chooses these two additional readers, the DGS in consultation with you may appoint them. Please note: the GSAS requires that you have a total of 5 people on your defense committee. The defense must be officially scheduled, well in advance, through the department office.

- At least one member of your committee must be a Comparative Literature faculty member or an Associated member of the Comparative Literature faculty.

- You are allowed a maximum of 2 non-NYU readers, subject to approval of the DGS.

- One person may be absent and submit a written report.

- Arrangements may be made for telephone conferencing for one absent committee member if he/she is part of the core (three-member) committee.

- Dissertation defenses are closed unless the candidate arranges for an open defense in consultation with the DGS and the Dissertation Director.

3. Dissertation Department Copy

- You are required to turn in a bound copy of your final/approved dissertation to the department for our official records. Please put your dissertation in a Spring/Thesis Binder, available at the NYU bookstore.

V. GRADUATING / RECEIVING YOUR DEGREE

In order to graduate with a Ph.D., each student must register to graduate via ALBERT. Once registered, this “activates” the university-wide paperwork for the graduation process. To register for the MA degree, call Graduation Services at 212-998-8485.

Preliminary Dissertations must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs so that they may verify that the correct format has been used throughout. Final Dissertations are due in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the Department of Comparative Literature by the deadline set by OSA in order for the student to graduate.
VI. GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICIES

Advising

- The DGS serves as an adviser to all new students. Students may also decide to work with a faculty adviser of shared academic interests. The student should consult his or her adviser and/or DGS regarding class load and progress toward degree. In addition, the Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies are always available for consultation.

Maintaining Matriculation

- All students must maintain matriculation every semester they are taking courses, unless they are on a leave of absence. All M.A. candidates who are not proceeding to the Ph.D. may maintain matriculation (in order to complete outstanding requirements) for one year after having completed their 32 points of course work. Fees will not be waived for M.A. candidates under any circumstances.

- All Ph.D. candidates who have finished their coursework are expected to register to maintain matriculation. Students can register for MM on ALBERT as they would to register for a class. You will need the Maintaining call number, available each semester from the Graduate Administrative Aide as well as on the Registrar’s website (www.nyu.edu/registrar). To remain a graduate student, you must pay the matriculation fee in a timely fashion. If you let it lapse for more than one calendar year, you will be considered inactive and will have to reapply for admission to be able to continue with your studies. Maintaining involves paying fees of several hundred dollars each semester for library and other privileges. You must register every semester unless you are granted a leave of absence. Generally, if your fees are waived, you will be automatically registered for maintenance and matriculation as well as health insurance. The Graduate School grants hardship waivers only to those experiencing extreme financial difficulty. The Graduate School’s guidelines are very stringent and these waivers are not easily obtained.

- Note: Under no circumstance does maintaining matriculation permit an extension in the time-to-degree allowance (ten years to the Ph.D. from the B.A., seven years from the M.A.). Please also be aware that taking a Leave of Absence does not stop the clock ticking toward time-to-degree.

Full Time Equivalency

- Students who have finished coursework and are writing their dissertations or preparing for exams can still be considered “full-time” students. In order to receive full-time equivalency you must request it every semester from the Graduate Administrative Aide. **Students who are past time to degree constraints are ineligible for FTE.**
Good Standing

- The University requires that all students registered in either coursework or maintaining matriculation be in “good standing.” “Good standing” is defined as having a GPA of at least 3.3 and complying with departmental standards and time-to-degree trajectory. Please keep in mind that as a MacCracken Fellow you must meet the minimum standards\(^2\) for “good standing” set by both the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and this department. Failure to be in “good standing” may result in academic probation. If you are not in good standing, it is your responsibility to make an appointment with either the DGS or the Chair to discuss your situation.

Incompletes

- Students who receive a grade of “Incomplete” have \textbf{one semester to complete the work} necessary for a letter grade. This means that if an ‘IP’ or ‘IF’ is received in the spring semester, the grade must be submitted by the beginning of the following Spring semester; similarly, if an ‘I’ is received in the Fall, the grade must be submitted by the beginning of the following Fall semester. It is the student’s responsibility to submit completed work to the professor in question, along with a change of grade form (available from the Graduate Administrative Aide) at least two weeks before grades are due. Incompletes produce penalties\(^3\) from the graduate school in terms of registration, financial aid and eligibility for jobs, teaching, and degree. \textbf{Two or more at any one time constitutes “poor standing” and leads to academic probation.} Grades of ‘IP’ and ‘IF’ not completed within a semester will automatically revert to an ‘F’. To prevent this from happening, you must get an official extension from the DGS. These will be given only in exceptional circumstances.

Repeated Courses

- Students will not be granted credit for a course that is repeated. The one exception to this rule is with the “topics” courses. Provided that the syllabus is substantially different each time, the student may repeat this course for credit. Be careful to register for a different section each time. (If, when checking over your transcript, you notice you have not received full credit for such repeated courses or for a year-long course, see the Graduate Administrative Aide.)

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\(^2\) Please visit \url{http://gsas.nyu.edu/page/grad.pp.manual} and download the GSAS polices and procedures manual for more detailed information on GSAS academic standards.

\(^3\) Students must have completed a minimum of 66 percent of credits attempted in order to remain in “good standing.” Courses with grades of I, W, N, or F are not considered successfully completed and if your ratio of attempted credit hours falls below 66% your registration will be blocked by GSAS.
Time to Degree

- A student must satisfy the M.A. requirements within 4 years of their initial registration. Ph.D. candidates have 10 years, 7 if they came to NYU with an M.A. degree. Exemptions to this rule must be approved by the Department Chair as well as the Dean. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS A STUDENT WHO IS PAST TIME TO DEGREE ALLOWED FULL TIME EQUIVALENCY.** (See above.)

Leave of Absence

- In order to be granted a leave of absence, you must demonstrate serious cause to the Director of Graduate Studies. A leave of absence will count towards your time to degree. A leave will waive your matriculation fees but will also preclude you from using NYU facilities, including the library. It is expected that students will fulfill the terms of their MacCracken. Time off, except for emergencies, is not normally permitted.

Consortium Classes

- Students who have satisfied one year of coursework, and are in good academic standing, are eligible to register for courses at Columbia University, CUNY Graduate Center, New School University, SUNY Stony Brook, Princeton University and Rutgers University, provided a similar course is not available anywhere at NYU or if there are special reasons for taking a course with a particular non-NYU professor. You must have your adviser’s approval to register for these courses. **It is your responsibility to coordinate your registration and grade transfer with the host institution.** You may pick up an *Inter-University Registration Form* from the Dean’s office to begin the registration process. In addition, please remember that many schools (including NYU’s own Tisch) offer courses for three points, whereas GSAS offers them for four points. **In order to receive four credits for consortium courses, make sure to request registration codes from the Graduate Administrative Aide for one point of an independent study.** (See “Consortium Course Handout” at the end of this booklet.) Also note that NYU has an agreement with the Jewish Theological Seminary. Please contact the JTS for the required procedure.

VII. FINANCIAL AID

MacCracken

- Five years of support including stipend and tuition are awarded to M.A./Ph.D students. In the case of MacCrackens awarded to candidates who come in with an M.A., four years of support are granted. Students who accept a 5-year award and later take full credit for a previous M.A. degree have their MacCracken automatically reduced to a 4-year award (this condition is noted in the GSAS documents sent out when the award is first offered). MacCracken awards are contingent on maintaining **superior** academic performance and may be revoked by the
department if that requirement is not met. MacCracken students are strongly discouraged from taking incompletes even for one semester, from taking extended leaves of absence, and from any delay in satisfying degree requirements and deadlines as outlined in the ideal five-year plan to Ph.D. If a student’s GPA drops below 3.0 or if s/he carries more than the permissible number of IPs from one semester to the next, the University will revoke the award.

Teaching

- The Department considers teaching to be an important part of graduate training, and students should plan to do so during their sixth and seventh semesters. During these terms, students will be paid an adjunct teaching salary in addition to their MacCracken stipend.

- The Department is responsible for placing MacCrackens in appropriate teaching positions (recitations) in each of these terms. In addition to the occasional departmental teaching opportunity, placements available to us are in the Morse Academic Plan (MAP), the Expository Writing Program (EWP), and national language/literature departments (as language instructors).

- It is important to note that placements available to us (e.g., in MAP) cover a broad comparative context and may not deal directly with the MacCracken’s specific period or area of research. Since other departments must first offer Adjunct teaching positions to their own graduate students, it is extremely difficult for Comp Lit MacCrackens to find teaching positions in areas other than those noted above. If a MacCracken feels strongly about exploring teaching positions elsewhere, the student is encouraged to do so; however, this must first be discussed with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Post-MacCracken Adjunct Opportunities

Post-MacCracken Adjunct positions may exist in the areas indicated above. These positions must be negotiated directly between the student and the hiring program.

Departmental Grants

- The department offers several travel awards to students throughout the year, as well as the Anais Nin and Penfield Awards for outstanding ABD students. See details here: http://www.nyu.edu/fas/dept/complit/graduate/travelprog.html

Summer Funding

- The department allocates summer funds in addition to the MacCracken fellowship to students who are in good academic standing and present a research-based need (i.e. travel, archival research). These funds are awarded in the spring semester prior to the summer of use and award amount varies in accordance with the department’s annual resources. Typically, students will receive a summer stipend of $1000 for the summer between their first and
second year, as well as summer support later in their studies, intended to make it possible for them to finish writing their dissertation.

Conference Travel Grants
• Conference Grants are available in sums up to $300 from the University. These grants are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis, so you are encouraged to apply at the beginning of each semester or as soon as you are able. Applications may be obtained from the GSAS Office of Student Affairs, located at 6 Washington Square North.

Dissertation Grants
• The Office of Student Affairs has information on numerous fellowships and other funding sources. OSA is located at 6 Washington Square North. The Department maintains a funding bulletin board where we post current announcements.

Summer Research
• FLAS Grants (also available for the academic year) and “Pre-dissertation research grants” are available from GSAS based on university-wide applications. See the Director of Graduate Studies for information and deadlines. Through the GSAS Dean, one position is available each summer in the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University across the literature departments. You should inform the DGS if you are seriously interested in this opportunity.

GSAS Fellowships
• Each Fall and Spring semester, the Graduate School accepts applications for a variety of NYU fellowships. Information about these awards is available online: http://gsas.nyu.edu/page/grad.life.fellowships.html. Consult with the DGS/Graduate Administrative Aide regarding internal application deadlines.

Applying For Jobs
• Please attend the Job Market Workshop held each year at the end of the first semester. Current academic openings are posted in the MLA Joblist and elsewhere. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with job opportunities, including those at NYU, as they arise.

International Students
• International students should contact the NYU Office for International Students & Scholars (OISS) for all questions concerning international status and procedure. Time to degree for international students may vary due to individual visa requirements. OISS is located at 561 LaGuardia Place, telephone (212) 998-4720.
The Inter-University Doctoral Consortium

The Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (IUDC) offers eligible GSAS students the opportunity to take graduate courses at distinguished universities throughout the greater New York area. The IUDC has been in existence for over 25 years and offers students an enormous array of courses and opportunities for contact with faculty and students in their fields.

The IUDC is open to doctoral students from participating schools who have completed at least one year of full time study toward the Ph.D. Terminal Masters students and non-Arts and Sciences students are not eligible.

Participating schools are:
Columbia University, GSAS
CUNY Graduate Center
Fordham University, GSAS
Teachers College, Columbia University
Graduate Faculty, New School University
Princeton University - The Graduate School
Rutgers University, New Brunswick
Stony Brook University
New York University, GSAS, Steinhardt

Registration Instructions:

- Complete the [Inter-University Doctoral Consortium Registration Form](http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/Programs/IUDC.html) found at:

- Fill out all areas of the form clearly and legibly for accurate registration and grade reporting.

- Obtain signatures in the following order only: (signatures will not be given out of order)
  - Home School Chair or Program Director
  - Home School Dean
  - Instructor
  - Host School Dean

- Register at both schools:
  - **Home School** -- Obtain the consortium course number for your home school from your home schools consortium office and register for that course. Follow the specific registration instructions for your home institution.
  - **Host School** -- Give one copy of the form to the consortium administrator at the host school. It is your responsibility to find out about registration procedures specific to the host institution.

- The original registration form should be returned to your home school, keep a copy for your records.

- Tuition is calculated by and paid to the home institution only. Additional charges may be assessed by host institutions for lab fees if applicable.

- You may obtain information about an ID card for the host institution from the host school consortium office.

For further questions, please contact the consortium office of either the home or host school.
Contact Information

Columbia University, GSAS
Beatrice Terrien, Associate Dean
Craig Knobles, Administrative Assistant
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www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas

CUNY Graduate Center
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Stony Brook University
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Phone: (631) 632-7170
http://www.grad.sunysb.edu
Step one in preparing for the exam: in your final semester of coursework you will take a **required independent study** for the purpose of exam preparation. This gives you course credit for the efforts involved in setting up your reading lists and undertaking your reading for exam, which is normally taken at the end of your 5th semester. Register for this independent study course, and then proceed to sign up your **three-member faculty committee** for the exam. You approach each faculty member individually with a request to be the examiner for ONE of the three sections of your exam. This same faculty panel for many, but by no means all, students will continue to serve as the dissertation committee who will attend your Dissertation Prospectus Conference.

The three sections are:

1. **a literary criticism/literary theory** section, tailored to your own specific interests and knowledge, and your one year of required coursework in the subject. The reading list for this should be between **20-30 texts**; the written answer to the examiner’s question should be between **7-8 pages** long. (ONE question)

2. **the major field**, or the teaching field, represents the area of study you have declared to be your specialization, and the field for which you intend to seek academic jobs. It is therefore the broadest field of the three. This field may certainly be a comparative one, but it may also focus on one national literature if appropriate. In other words, if you see yourself as a Caribbeanist, that’s your major field, although it must be narrowed down, preferably to a period and/or particular linguistic focus; you could have a major field in the 19th century novel, in Renaissance drama, or in Anglo-American modernism, for example. Choose your language(s) of concentration and your genre or period with rigor and care and an eye to your likely job market niche. The reading list is the longest for this field at **30-50 items**; the answer to the examiner’s question is also the longest, at approximately **15 pages**. (ONE or TWO questions at examiner’s discretion.)

3. **the dissertation preparation field** represents an area essential to your dissertation research around which you need to read widely. This may include some necessary critical perspective, some historical or thematic aspect, a theoretical issue, or further explorations in your non-literary discipline (if you’ve chosen that option): *in fine*, any matter essential to the grounding of your dissertation, whether or not it actually becomes part of it. The reading list contains **20-30 texts**; the written answer to the examiner’s question is **7-8 pages** in length. (ONE question)

The faculty member involved with each section approves the reading list through discussion with you. You should also show your lists to the DGS early in the procedure. Remember that for this exam a **text** may be a complete book, an essay, a long poem or a group of shorter poems, or an excerpt from a book. When you have all three lists finalized with approval of their respective examiner, you MUST
submit the resulting plan to the DGS and you principal advisor for their joint final approval at the end of the semester of independent study and no less than a month before your proposed exam date. This is to ensure that the overall exam is the best expression of your intellectual training, goals, and professional direction; that its sections do not overlap; and that each student’s exam provides analogous coverage. Note: the exam sections are not given titles, as if they were essays or articles; these are topics/fields with corresponding reading lists that demonstrate your mastery of a field, area, critical perspective or ancillary discipline, topics that can and will be listed on your C.V. as your areas of interest and teaching expertise.

Also, it is important to make sure each of your examiners receives a copy of ALL three of your lists. This is to prevent overlapping questions.

Schedule your exam with the Graduate Administrative Aide. You have one calendar week period allotted to complete the exam (Monday to Monday OR Friday to Friday only). IMPORTANT: Each examiner is to forward her or his question(s) to the Graduate Administrative Aide at least two weeks before the exam is scheduled. The Aide will then format and send the exam questions to the DGS for approval, who will confirm they compose a fair and comprehensive exam. Once this is approved, the Graduate Administrative Aide will release the questions to you on the day your exam begins.

You will need to turn in your completed exam to the Graduate Administrative Aide. A few weeks after the exam, the Administrative Aide will pass on to you the written comments and overall evaluation of the three examiners.

Note: if you had not done so previously, be sure to turn in your final reading list to the Graduate Administrative Aide as this goes in your file and will become available for reference in the department’s “Sample Reading Lists for the Written Exam” notebook.

###
You have been asked by a graduate student to be on their three-member faculty committee for the take-home written comprehensive exam given in the department of Comparative Literature. Should you agree to be on the committee, you also must be willing to provide your evaluation of the exam within two weeks after its completion. Many (though not all) students ask members of the written doctoral exam committee to serve as members of their dissertation committees, in which case you would also participate in the student’s Dissertation Prospectus Conference which takes place no later than four months following the written exams. (Students in Comparative Literature may include non-departmental faculty on their dissertation committees, even in the position of dissertation director, as long as one Comparative Literature faculty or associated faculty member serves on the committee.)

Our departmental procedure governing this exam is as follows: Each examiner is to forward her or his question(s) to the Graduate Administrative Aide at least two weeks before the exam is scheduled (all examiners will, of course, be consulted about the scheduling). Our DGS will then approve the questions, making sure they constitute a fair and comprehensive exam. Once this is approved, the questions will be forwarded to the Graduate Administrative Aide who formats the exam and prepares it for the student.

As an examiner, you will help the student formulate a thorough and comprehensive reading list* for the section you have agreed to exam them. Your final approval of the resulting reading list will permit the student to begin reading in preparation for the exam. At some point in the following semester, you will then be asked to write one question, which in your estimation is ample and incisive enough to elicit evidence of a substantive knowledge of the field from the student based entirely on the agreed-upon reading list. The entire exam has a maximum length of 30 typed, double-spaced pages.

Reading lists include both primary and secondary texts as a matter or course, and must be genuinely rigorous and comprehensive.

The three sections (only ONE of which you may be asked to cover) are as follows:

1. a literary criticism/literary theory section tailored to the individual student’s interest, expertise, and general focus. In some cases, a survey of a period or topic in literary criticism might be most germane—e.g., reader-response theory, or Russian formalism. In other cases, an area of theory may be most appropriate—e.g. feminist theory, postcolonial theory, classical rhetoric, or theories of the sublime. The number of texts (books, essays, or chapters) for this section should be around 20-30; the student will write between 7-8 pages for this section in answer to the one exam question.

*You should ultimately see all three reading lists, to help avoid overlapping questions from the three examiners.
2. **the major field, or teaching field** is the area of specialization the student intends to offer on the job market and is the most comprehensive of the three exam fields. It is based on a specific period, genre, and/or national literature or literatures. Typical major fields might include Renaissance lyric poetry; Caribbean fiction since 1900; Latin American modernisms; the history of the novel; 17th century French literature; North African Francophonie; British modernism, etc. This field **has a reading list of 30-50 texts**, and since it is the most comprehensive, an examiner may choose to ask one or two questions. The student’s response will be around 15 pages total.

3. **the dissertation preparation field** represents a particular area crucial to the student’s proposed dissertation topic. It may include an additional genre, a critical perspective, a distinct literary tradition or linguistic area, another discipline, or an issue or problematic germane to the dissertation focus. Past examples have included Dante studies; Caribbean history; the role of vision in modernism; Chinese folk tales; queer theory; ethnography and narrative; American cinema 1900-1950; aesthetic philosophy of the Romantic period; post WWII fictions of ethnicity; autobiography, and others. The student will read from 20 to 30 texts in preparation, and offer a 7-8 page answer to the one exam question.

The student has one calendar week to write the exam, whereupon it will be delivered to each faculty member for evaluation. Within two weeks of the exam, examiners must provide a brief report/evaluation of the student’s response to their question on the exam, and state whether the student’s response to their individual question passes, passes with distinction, or fails. (Letter grades are not given.) Comments on the exam as a whole are welcome as part of your report. In order for the student to receive an award of distinction for the entire exam, all three questions must pass with distinction.

###


Students who opt for a third discipline (instead of a third Language) must submit a statement to the DGS which includes the following:

1. A brief explanation of your reasons for wanting to acquire competence in a third discipline. This should address how the third discipline will be integrated into your field of specialization, and eventually your dissertation project.

2. An account of what course(s) in the third discipline you have already taken (if that is the case), and what courses you plan to take.

3. Identification of an appropriate adviser in that discipline (bearing in mind that he or she must serve as an examiner on your written doctoral exam and participate in your Dissertation Prospectus Conference as a member of your dissertation committee). Describe what your contact has been with this potential adviser. (Remember that before the adviser can be officially appointed, the DGS must first make a formal request to him or her and in so doing will use the information you provide here.)

Students on the M.A./Ph.D. track should submit this statement to the DGS no later than the end of their third term. Students entering with an M.A. should submit the statement no later than the end of their first term.