COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

451 College Street, Rm. 202, 203.432.2760
http://complit.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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Lecturers Peter Cole, Jan Hagens

Emeritus Peter Brooks, Peter Demetz, Carol Jacobs, Rainer Nägele

Affiliated Faculty Rolena Adorno (Spanish & Portuguese), R. Howard Bloch (French), Francesco Casetti (Film & Media Studies), Kang-I Sun Chang (East Asian Languages & Literatures), Michael Denning (American Studies), Wai Chee Dimock (English), Paul Fry (English), Alice Kaplan (French), Tina Lu (East Asian Languages & Literatures), John MacKay (Slavic Languages & Literatures), Giuseppe Mazzotta (Italian), Christopher Miller (French), Joseph Roach (English), Maurice Samuels (French), Henry Sussman (Visiting; German), Ruth Bernard Yeazell (English)

FIELDS OF STUDY
The Department of Comparative Literature introduces students to the study and understanding of literature beyond linguistic or national boundaries; the theory, interpretation, and criticism of literature; and its interactions with adjacent fields like visual and material culture, linguistics, film, psychology, law, and philosophy. The comparative perspective invites the exploration of such transnational phenomena as literary or cultural periods and trends (Renaissance, Romanticism, Modernism, postcolonialism) or genres and modes of discourse. Students may specialize in any cultures or languages, to the extent that they are sufficiently covered at Yale. The Ph.D. degree qualifies candidates to teach comparative literature as well as the national literature(s) of their specialization.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS
Applicants must hold a B.A. or equivalent degree and should normally have majored in comparative literature, English, a classical or foreign literature, or in an interdepartmental major that includes literature. They must be ready to take advanced courses in two foreign literatures in addition to English upon admission. The GRE General Test is required. A ten- to twenty-page writing sample, written in English, should be submitted with the application.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
Students must successfully complete fourteen term courses, including the departmental proseminar (CPLT 515) and at least six further courses listed under the departmental heading. The student’s overall schedule must fulfill the following requirements: (1) at least one course in medieval or classical European literature, philology, or linguistics (or their equivalents in other cultures); one course in the Renaissance or Baroque (or equivalents); and one course in the modern period; (2) three courses in literary theory or methodology; (3) at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama; (4) course work that deals with texts from three literatures, one of which may be English or American; and (5) a substantive focus on one or two national or language-based literatures. Any course may be counted for several requirements simultaneously.

Languages Literary proficiency in four languages (including English, at least one other modern language, and one classical or ancient language, such as Latin, Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Arabic, Classical Chinese, Provençal). The fulfillment of this requirement will be demonstrated by a written exam consisting of a translation of a literary or critical text, to be held by the end of the sixth term; or by an equivalent level in the student’s course work.

Orals An oral examination to be taken in the third year of studies, demonstrating both the breadth and specialization as well as the comparative scope of the student’s acquired knowledge. The examination consists of six topics that include texts from at least three national literatures and several historical periods (at least one modern and one before the Renaissance). The texts discussed should also include representatives of the three traditional literary genres (poetry, drama, narrative fiction).

Ph.D. dissertation Supervised by a dissertation director (or directors) – at least one from the core or affiliate departmental faculty – and approved by the departmental faculty at large, the dissertation completes the degree. Its initial step is a dissertation prospectus, to be submitted and approved by the dissertation director and a standing faculty committee no later than halfway through the seventh term
of study. Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. is granted after six terms of residence and the completion of all requirements (courses, languages, orals, prospectus) except the dissertation.

Teaching Training in teaching, through teaching fellowships, is an important part of every student’s program. Normally students will teach in their third and fourth years.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAMS

Comparative Literature and Classics

Course work Students concentrating in Comparative Literature and Classics are required to complete fourteen graduate term courses (including the proseminar in Classics and in Comparative Literature). In Classics, at least seven courses, including the Classics proseminar, four courses (two yearlong sequences) in the history of Greek and Latin literature (usually taken in successive years, each to be followed by the respective oral in that field), and two 800-level Classics seminars. In Comparative Literature, the departmental proseminar and at least five further Comparative Literature courses, including at least four courses in postclassical European literature. The course work across the two programs should also include at least two courses in literary theory or methodology, and at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama. At least two courses, excluding directed readings, need to receive the grade of Honors. At least twelve of the fourteen required courses are to be taken in the first two years; the last two, which must be Classics 800-level seminars, are to be taken in the third year, normally one in each term, as necessary.

Languages To assess each student’s proficiency and progress in both key languages, two diagnostic sight translation examinations each in Greek and Latin are to be taken before the beginning of the first and third terms. Literary proficiency in German and one other modern language must be passed by the end of the second year. Literary proficiency in English, Greek, and Latin must be demonstrated by course work.

Orals Classics: oral examinations in Greek and Latin literature, based on the Classics Ph.D. reading list. These are to be taken closely following the surveys in the respective literatures, as follows: the first, at the end of the second term (May of the first year), the second at the end of the fourth term (May of the second year). By the end of the fifth term, translation examinations in Greek and Latin literature, based on the Classics Ph.D. reading list. Comparative Literature: oral examination (six topics appropriate to both disciplines, balancing a range of kinds of topics and including poetry, narrative fiction, and drama, and at least one significant cluster of postclassical texts), to be taken by the middle of the sixth term, usually in mid-January. Lists will be worked out with individual examiners, primarily under the guidance of the Comparative Literature DGS, but also with the approval of the Classics DGS, and must be submitted by the end of the fourth term. One of the topics studied will be relevant to the student’s planned dissertation topic.

Prospectus and dissertation The prospectus must be approved by the DGS in each department (and by the Comparative Literature prospectus committee) by the end of the sixth term in residence. At least one dissertation director must come from the Comparative Literature core faculty. At the end of each term, each dissertation student will presubmit, then discuss their work in progress in a Classics “chapter colloquium” discussion with interested faculty.

Comparative Literature and Film and Media Studies

Applicants to the combined program must indicate on their application that they are applying both to the program in Film and Media Studies and to Comparative Literature. All documentation within the application should include this information.

Course work Students in the combined program are required to complete fifteen graduate term courses. In Comparative Literature, the proseminar and at least five further courses, including at least one course in literary theory or methodology beyond the proseminar; at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama; two courses before 1900, including at least one before 1800; a wide range of courses with a focus on one or two national or language-based literatures; and at least two courses with the grade of Honors. In Film and Media Studies, two core seminars (FILM 601 and FILM 603) and four additional seminars.

Languages At least two languages (besides English) with excellent reading ability (normally one of these languages is French).

Orals Students must pass the Film and Media Studies oral examination. They must also pass the six-field Comparative Literature oral examination, with at least one examiner from the core Comparative Literature faculty; at least three fields involving literary topics, and readings including poetry, fiction, and drama; the other topics may be on film or film-related subjects; some lists may combine film and literature.

Prospectus and dissertation At least one dissertation director must be from Comparative Literature and at least one from Film and Media Studies (in some cases, a single adviser may fulfill both roles). The prospectus must be approved by the Comparative Literature subcommittee and ratified by the Film and Media Studies faculty. The dissertation must pass a presubmission Public Defense of Work (with at least one examiner from the graduate Film and Media Studies committee, and at least one member from Comparative Literature).

Comparative Literature and Renaissance Studies

Course work Students are required to complete sixteen graduate term courses, at least seven of these (including the Comparative Literature proseminar) in the Department of Comparative Literature. Students must take at least ten courses in the field of Renaissance
Comparative Literature

Studies (offered in several departments), including two terms of the Renaissance Studies core seminar and three courses in two disciplines other than literature (such as history, history of art, or religious studies). At least three of a student’s overall list of courses must be in literary theory, criticism, or methodology; at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama; and at least one course each in ancient or medieval literature and Enlightenment or modern literature. At least two courses must be completed with the grade of Honors. In general, students should take a wide range of courses with a focus on one or two national or language-based literatures.

Languages Latin and Italian, as set by Renaissance Studies—one hour of Renaissance Latin prose; one hour of sixteenth-century Italian prose, one of modern Italian scholarship—and two additional languages, at least one of them European.

Orals The joint oral examination will consist of seven twenty-minute questions (two topics in Renaissance literature from a comparative perspective; three on non-Renaissance literature, including at least one theoretical or critical question; and two questions on Renaissance topics in nonliterary disciplines). Orals should be completed no later than the end of the sixth term.

Prospectus and dissertation The prospectus should be completed in September of the fourth year. Procedures regarding the dissertation will follow departmental practice, although the final readers will normally include at least one member of the Renaissance Studies Executive Committee.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program may receive the M.A. upon completion of ten courses with at least two grades of Honors and a maximum of three grades of Pass, and the demonstration of proficiency in two of the languages, ancient or modern, through course work or departmental examinations. No student is admitted to a terminal M.A.

Program materials are available upon request to the Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Comparative Literature, Yale University, PO Box 208299, New Haven CT 06520-8299, or stacey.hampton@yale.edu.

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COURSES