

[Create an Account](#)  
[Forgot your login or password?](#)



Home Create an

☐ Remember Me

[English](#) • 
 [Español](#) • 
 [Deutsch](#) • 
 [Русский...](#)



sanparga ( [sanparga](#) ) wrote in [applyingtoograd](#),  
[2010-10-25](#) 23:10:00

## Comparative Literature Statement of Purpose HELP

Hi everyone. I'm applying to a Phd in Comp Lit and I need some help polishing my SOP and trimming a lot of the fat. I also feel it is somehow unconnected, like it doesn't flow. Here it is. Please help me however you can, I will really appreciate it.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

My undergraduate studies in Literature at the XXXXXXXX gave me a solid background in both Latin American and World Literatures, as well a strong theoretical framework, while allowing me to explore my personal interests in certain European literary traditions. This undergraduate work helped shape the specific research interests that now drive me to pursue graduate work in the field of Comparative Literature and gave me the opportunity to learn and work with the foreign languages I need to satisfy those interests.

Currently, my academic concerns lie in exploring early twentieth century narrative, especially in Europe, and how in this period narrative forms began to adapt to new narrative needs. The point of my research is to investigate how certain formal problems determine and shape problems of content and theme and how the relationship between form and content becomes crucial in the modernist period. I began working on this problem in my undergraduate thesis: "El nacimiento de una poética de la Indiferencia: la tensión entre lo teatral y lo narrativo en Los Indiferentes de Alberto Moravia", which received the highest grade, was awarded a **XXXXXX (Honorable mention, distinction?)** and is currently being edited for publication by the Department of Humanities and Literature at los MY SCHOOL. On this project I worked alongside professor xxxxx to explore how theatrical and narrative formal elements clashed with each other and ultimately came together to give shape to the novel's main theme: Indifference. In this case, content cannot exist without the novel's particular set of formal elements, which I called the "Poetics of Indifference".

Although I believe that this paper was a successful exploration of the problem in a single novel, my main goal now is to continue my study of the evolution of narrative forms in the twentieth century with a more expansive and comparative approach, by studying the same period in several different literary traditions and in several different languages. I am also interested in why this change came about, what were the possible historical or social elements that could have had an effect on the way prose is written and whether the problems of form, content and narration can be studied in other art forms, such

as photography or cinema. I realize that typically, a student with my background would most likely continue his or her studies in a Spanish or Latin American literature department. However, since I am interested in how a certain problem behaves throughout several distinct traditions, countries and languages, I believe that a doctoral degree in Comparative Literature from xxxxx would be the most advantageous way of pursuing my particular goals for several reasons.

On the first hand, xxxxxx's program would undoubtedly provide me with the solid academic and theoretical tools I would need in order to become a successful academic researcher and fulfill the curiosities which arose in me during my undergraduate study. Secondly, the fellowships offered to PhD students at xxxxxx involve teaching, either language or literature courses. This would be most beneficial for me since I believe that teaching is a key part of graduate training and this would not only make me a stronger researcher and academic but would also fulfill a personal and professional calling of mine.

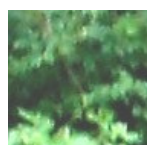
Finally, xxxxxx's faculty is composed of professors with a wide range of interests, theoretical backgrounds and experiences. Some of these professors, such as XXXXXXXX and XXXXX, have interests similar to mine and I would feel privileged to work with their advice and direction. Additionally, I believe that if I pursue my PhD at XXXXX I will also come in contact with people who have different views and theoretical frameworks from mine and who may perhaps shed a new light upon my research that could potentially alter or affect it in ways I hadn't considered before. This is one of the biggest advantages of working in a Comparative Literature department and one of the things I will look forward to the most if I am admitted to xxxxxx. I like to think that, although my interest are clear, they can evolve and be influenced by the discourses, texts, theories and ideas that circulate in the department where I work, something which would not debilitate my investigations but rather make them stronger through the exchange and discussion of different points of view as well as different ways to approach the study of literature. For these reasons I know that working at xxxxxx would be a fulfilling, challenging and exciting experience for me

**Tags:** [comparative literature](#), [sop](#), [statement of purpose](#)

---

[Post a new comment](#)

7 comments



 [augustquail](#)

October 26 2010, 05:03:36 UTC

[link](#)

[Collapse](#)

Just two things off the top of my head..."early 20th century narrative...especially in Europe" is probably too vague. Are you more interested in Spanish literature than German? German than French? You should probably mention that, and maybe the names of some authors?

Also, in the second to last paragraph, I don't think you need "on the first hand." The sentence reads better without it.

Hope this helps! Good luck!

[Reply](#)



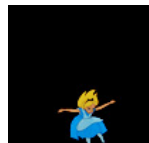
 [brittdreams](#)

October 26 2010, 06:20:16 UTC [link](#) [Collapse](#)

Actually, to expand on this, I think you could drop the entire second to last paragraph and replace it with something concrete about fit. As it stands, you've basically described almost every comp lit program in the states. (OP, regardless of where you go, if you're going to be funded, it will be to either teach intro language classes or intro lit classes. There's nothing about unique about this to University xxxxxxx.)

"the same period in several different literary traditions and in several different languages."  
Be specific about which literary traditions and which languages. Really, just be specific throughout. Right now it seems like you're on a fishing expedition.

[Reply](#)



 [cloudsinmycafe](#)

October 26 2010, 07:19:04 UTC [link](#) [Collapse](#)

You have a huge problem with run-on sentences. I do, too, so I'm very sensitive to other people's! :)

For instance your first sentence: *My undergraduate studies in Literature at the XXXXXXXX gave me a solid background in both Latin American and World Literatures, as well a strong theoretical framework, while allowing me to explore my personal interests in certain European literary traditions.* could be chopped down to two or three sentences.

For instance, you could change it to: My undergraduate studies in Literature at the XXXXXXXX gave me a solid background in both Latin American and World Literatures. In addition, my studies gave me strong theoretical framework while allowing me to explore my personal interests in [be specific] European literary traditions.

Take out "on the first hand". This typically is stated "On one hand" followed by a conflicting statement beginning with "On the other hand". While some academics may use this, I would take it out. It sounds a little too casual for a Statement of Purpose.

[Reply](#)



 [speakwrite](#)

October 26 2010, 08:26:03 UTC [link](#) [Collapse](#)

An additional note of caution: "one the one/other hand" may be considered a cliché figure of speech. An application to a literature program should be free of literary bromides.

*This undergraduate work helped shape the specific research interests that now drive me to pursue*

Research interests can't drive. Keep active verbs to agents that can plausibly carry them out (usually human beings). Also, "drive" is cliché.

*a solid background*

Solid is both cliché and a bit casual.

*Finally, xxxxxx's faculty is composed of professors with a wide range of interests, theoretical backgrounds and experiences.*

This is obvious.

*in my undergraduate thesis: "El..."*

That colon should be a comma.

*Additionally, I believe that if I pursue my PhD at XXXXX I will also come in contact with people who have different views and theoretical frameworks from mine and who may perhaps shed a new light upon my research that could potentially alter or affect it in ways I hadn't considered before.*

This is altogether too waffly. Don't say "I believe" — just make the statement. Belief suggests room for doubt. It should be come *into* contact with people; also, you'll probably come into contact with people who are different from you in every program to which you could possibly apply. "Shed new light" is cliché. "Potentially alter or affect" is bad. Instead of implying there are ways you haven't considered your thesis — also, avoid contractions — state the ways in which you already have. Right now this statement sounds like "I will encounter people who might give me some kind of an idea of what I want to do."

Evidently, my main concern here is that you're using a lot of cliché phrases.

[Reply](#)



[speakwrite](#)

October 26 2010, 08:27:07 UTC

[link](#)

[Collapse](#)

(Apologies for the grumpy-sounding post! The inevitable result of having pulled an all-nighter. Sigh.)

[Reply](#)



[sanparga](#)

October 26 2010, 16:29:50 UTC

[link](#)

[Collapse](#)

@speakwrite and everyone else.

No need to apologize. These are the kinds of things I needed to hear and they are going to be really helpful. Thanks a lot and keep them coming! I'll work on it this week and show you again.

Thanks again abd best of luck!

[Reply](#)



 [sanparga](#)

October 26 2010, 17:10:06 UTC

[link](#)

[Collapse](#)

### **The thesis distinction**

Hi everyone!

Thanks again for all your comments. I have a question I'm sure some of you can answer. I'm not sure how to translate the distinction I got for my thesis. In my country its called a T  sis Meritoria. That means that it got the highest grade and that they liked it so much that they are going to publish it. This is sort of a big deal since they only give this to a handful of papers every year and they even give you a little extra diploma when you graduate. I kind of want to brag about it but I'm not sure what its called in American Academia. Any thoughts? Please do let me know.

Thank you and good luck!

[Reply](#)

[Post a new comment](#)

7 comments