

Comparative Literature

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The Comparative Literature major allows students to address fundamental questions about the nature, function, and value of literature in a broadly comparative context. Students read and write about a wide variety of literary works across periods, genres, and national traditions. They investigate ancient and contemporary approaches to literary study, theories and methods of comparison, and the relationship of literature to film and other media. Majors have the freedom to construct a program of study that reflects their intellectual goals. All prospective majors should register with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), who will work with them to develop a coherent sequence of courses suited to their individual interests.

The Comparative Literature major offers four unique concentrations: Literature and Comparative Cultures; Intensive Language; Film; and Literary Translation. These concentrations share the same core courses. Other courses are normally chosen from different language and literature programs, many of which offer courses on literature and film in translation. Among these programs are African American Studies, Classics, East Asian Languages and Literatures, English Language and Literature, Film and Media Studies, French, German Studies, Italian Studies, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Portuguese, Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Spanish.

Prospective majors are strongly encouraged to begin the study of a language other than English as early as possible in their academic careers and to continue such study throughout their time at Yale. All concentrations of the Comparative Literature major require students to have advanced (L5) competence in at least one language other than English. Students interested in graduate study in comparative literature should be aware that many programs require reading knowledge of two or three languages other than English.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

See [Links](#) to the attributes indicating courses approved for Comparative Literature major requirements.

The Comparative Literature major requires twelve term courses, including the senior requirement and two required foundational seminars, one of which must be CPLT 1300 and the other may be CPLT 1400 or 1430 or 3048, depending on which concentration the student is pursuing. Beyond the two required courses and the senior essay, the major requires nine term courses, with specific requirements for each concentration. Students must choose one concentration and each concentration requires students to take two or three literature and/or film courses in a single language other than English; all have a period requirement and a theory requirement. Additionally, prospective majors must achieve an L5 in the language in which they plan to fulfill their literature requirement.

For the in-language literature requirement, students must take two or three courses (depending on the concentration) reading literature in a single language other than English. One L4 course can be counted, but the remaining courses must be taken at L5 or equivalent. Students may count non-instructional language courses (no L4 or L5

distributional designation number) in which reading knowledge of the language is a prerequisite and extensive in-language readings are assigned. With DUS permission, one of the in-language literature requirements may be fulfilled with a language course, not specifically marked as a literature or film course, that includes substantial literary readings and/or film screenings.

For the period requirement, students must take at least one course in three of five historical periods: (1) Antiquity (covering until approximately the 6th century AD); (2) Medieval (ca. 6th-15th centuries); (3) Early Modern (ca. 14th-18th centuries); (4) 19th century; and (5) 20th-21st centuries. In practice, many courses deal with texts covering several periods. A course may fulfill the requirement for any period if at least half the primary readings come from that period. For questions about which period requirements a course might fulfill consult the DUS.

For the theory requirement, students must take one course that involves a significant component of literary or cultural theory. Students who wish to know if a course, particularly those offered in other departments, may count toward this requirement should consult the DUS.

LITERATURE AND COMPARATIVE CULTURES CONCENTRATION

Literature and Comparative Cultures is the least constraining concentration, permitting students to plan a course of study tailored to their particular interests. Prospective majors electing the Literature and Comparative Cultures concentration must take two required foundational seminars; CPLT 1300 and one of CPLT 1400, 1430, or 3048. Beyond the two required courses and the senior essay, the concentration requires three in-language literature courses with readings in a language other than English (see under Requirements of the Major for more information), three courses that fulfill the period requirement, two elective courses, and one theory course. Period courses, elective courses, and the theory course may be taken in any literature department (including English) and may include two courses in a related discipline that has a direct bearing on the student's program of study in literature, such as history of art, philosophy, anthropology, music, or theater studies. One of the electives may be in creative writing or Directed Studies, but composition courses (ENGL 1014, 1015, or 1020) may not be counted.

INTENSIVE LANGUAGE CONCENTRATION

Prospective majors electing this concentration focus their plan of study on literature studied in two languages other than English. They must take two required foundational seminars: CPLT 1300 and CPLT 1400; three courses that fulfill the period requirement; three in-language literature courses in a single language other than English (see under Requirements of the Major for more information); two literature courses in a second language other than English; and one course that involves a significant element of literary or cultural theory.

FILM CONCENTRATION

Students in the Film concentration focus their plan of study on film and media. They must take two required foundational seminars: CPLT 1300 and CPLT 1430; three courses that fulfill the period requirement; two (rather than three) in-language literature courses with readings in the same language other than English (see under Requirements of the Major for more information); three electives (which must have a

FILM course number); and one course in film theory. At least one of the in-language literature courses must be at the L5 level.

LITERARY TRANSLATION CONCENTRATION

Students in the Literary Translation concentration focus on the theory and practice of literary translation. They must take two required foundational seminars: CPLT 1300 and CPLT 3048; three courses that fulfill the period requirement; three in-language literature courses in a single language other than English, two of which must be an L5 course (see under Requirements of the Major for more information); one course in literary or cultural theory; and two courses that engage with some aspect of translation studies. The DUS can provide a list of qualifying courses.

Credit/D/Fail No more than two courses taken Credit/D/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major, with permission of the DUS. None of the specific required courses may be taken Credit/D/Fail.

Outside credit Courses taken at another institution or during an approved summer or term-time study abroad program may count toward the major requirements with DUS approval.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

For the senior essay (CPLT 4910, or CPLT 4920, 4930), students develop a research topic of their choice and work closely with a faculty adviser, preferably from the department. Normally, the essay makes use of texts in the language of their original composition. Any exceptions must be approved by the DUS. Deadlines for the prospectus, the rough draft, and the completed essay are listed on the departmental website. The initial deadline for a topic proposal signed by the thesis adviser is before the end of the previous semester, so majors should begin their search for an adviser and topic early in the spring of their junior year.

The senior essay may be written over one term (CPLT 4910) or over two terms (CPLT 4920, 4930). Students with an especially well-developed project may petition to write a yearlong senior essay. Interested juniors must apply by the last day of classes in the spring term. Students may count the second term of the essay as one elective course toward the total number of courses required for the major. Students expecting to graduate in May enroll in CPLT 4920 during the fall term and complete their essays in CPLT 4930 in the spring term. December graduates enroll in CPLT 4920 in the spring term and complete their essays in CPLT 4930 during the following fall term.

COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS

A literature course taught in English translation is sometimes suitable as a non-English literature course. In such cases, majors are expected to request additional assignments from their instructors that demonstrate they have engaged with the texts in the original language. They should submit the appropriate form, signed by the instructor, attesting to their intent to do so. The department registrar or the DUS can provide this form; students should submit it to the DUS at the beginning of the semester along with their course schedule.

Non-native speakers of English who are granted permission by Yale College to complete the language distributional requirement by taking ENGL 1014, 1015, 1020, or 3450 may take a total of three English literature courses to fulfill the three in-language literature

course requirements, or they may fulfill the major requirements by taking three courses in a third language.

STUDY ABROAD

Comparative Literature majors are encouraged to consider spending a summer, a term, or a year abroad. One course taken through international programs and approved by Yale College may, with permission of the DUS, be applied to the in-language literature requirement.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites None

Number of courses 12 term courses (incl senior requirement and concentration requirements)

Specific courses required *All concentrations*—CPLT 1300; *Literature and Comparative Cultures*—1 of CPLT 1400, 1430, or 3048; *Intensive Language*—CPLT 1400; *Film*—CPLT 1430 or equivalent; *Literary Translation*—CPLT 3048 or equivalent

Distribution of courses *All concentrations*—3 period courses, as specified; *Literature and Comparative Cultures*—3 in-language literature courses, as specified, 1 course in literary or cultural theory, 2 elective courses; *Intensive Language*—3 literature courses in one language, 2 literature courses in a second language, 1 course in literary or cultural theory; *Film*—2 in-language lit courses, 1 course in film theory; 3 electives in Film and Media Studies; *Literary Translation*—3 in-language literature courses, as specified, 1 course in literary or cultural theory, 2 courses in translation studies

Senior requirement One-term senior essay (CPLT 4910); or two-term senior essay (CPLT 4920 and CPLT 4930)

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Professors Dudley Andrew (*Emeritus*), Peter Brooks (*Emeritus*), Rüdiger Campe, Roberto González Echevarría (*Emeritus*), Martin Häggglund, Hannan Hever, Carol Jacobs (*Emeritus*), Pericles Lewis, David Quint (*Emeritus*), Ayesha Ramachandran, Shawkat Toorawa, Katie Trumpener, Jing Tsu, Jane Tylus, Jesús Velasco

Associate Professors Robyn Creswell, Marta Figlerowicz, Moira Fradinger

Assistant Professor Samuel Hodgkin

Senior Lecturers Peter Cole, Jan Hagens

Lecturers Jane Mikkelsen, Candace Skorupa, George Syrimis

Affiliated Faculty R. Howard Bloch (*French*), Francesco Casetti (*Film & Media Studies*), Michael Denning (*American Studies*), Alice Kaplan (*French*), Tina Lu (*East Asian Languages & Literatures*), John MacKay (*Slavic Languages & Literatures*), Maurice Samuels (*French*), Ruth Yeazell (*English*)