

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES PROGRAM  
DOCTORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Fall 2006

The Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies degree requires passing a written comprehensive exam. The exam concentrates on 1) the candidate's areas of specialization, 2) three areas in world literatures and cultures, and 3) literary and cultural theory. The exam is based on the candidate's coursework and a list of readings approved by the advisor and the student's committee. If necessary, an oral exam addressing weak areas in the written exam will be scheduled. The exam should be taken the last semester of required coursework. Early in that semester, students should contact the advisor to discuss the reading lists and schedule the exam. The comprehensive exams are graded on a pass/fail basis. If failed, the exams may be repeated once.

### READING LISTS

All students in the doctoral program in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies must take courses in 1) two areas of specialization, 2) world literatures and cultures, and 3) literary and cultural theory. The reading lists for the comprehensive exams should reflect, complement, and strengthen the students' knowledge in these areas of study. For the comprehensive exams, students must prepare and propose to the advisor and the program committee two main reading lists: a specialty list and a world literatures and cultures list.

#### **Specialty List**

Each student will prepare a list of works divided in three sections: First area of specialization, second area of specialization, and critical and cultural theory. Each area of specialization should include approximately 15-20 texts or works. The critical and cultural theory section should include about 10-15 texts covering at least three different critical approaches (i.e. feminism, postcolonial theory, psychoanalysis, etc.). The list must be approved by the advisor and the program committee.

#### **World Literatures and Cultures List**

Each student will prepare three areas in world literatures and cultures, covering different historical periods, geographical areas, or genres. At least two of these areas should be based on the Program's Core List in World Literatures and Cultures. The last world literatures and cultures area is chosen by the student. The elective area may be defined by period, geographical region, or genre (i.e. Pre-Hispanic literatures of the Americas, Caribbean literatures, francophone literatures, U.S. ethnic literatures, travel narratives, third world cinema). Each of the three world literatures and cultures areas must cover approximately 15-20 works. It is recommended that students include pre-modern and/or non-Western literatures and cultures in these areas. The three world literatures and cultures areas should not overlap with the two main areas in the specialty list. However, minor overlaps may be acceptable. Candidates who completed the M.A. Program in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Arkansas must prepare two new areas in world literatures and cultures.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FORMAT

The comprehensive exam is taken over two days. The first day is for the areas of specialization. The second day is for the world literatures and cultures areas. If necessary, an oral exam will be scheduled to address weak areas in the written exams.

### **Specialty Areas Essays**

The students will have to answer two essay questions based on their specialty list. This section is an open-book exam. Each essay should be at least six pages long, typed and double-spaced. Students will have three hours to complete each essay.

#### **Essay 1: Transnational Literary and Cultural History**

Students will be asked to write an essay on their literary or cultural areas of specialization. The essay should discuss some representative works of the period and their historical and cultural background. The answer should include references to the texts in the respective reading lists as well as important critical scholarship and debates on the period. The goal is to evaluate the students' breadth and depth of knowledge in the fields of specialization, their ability to place literary and cultural artifacts in broader historical contexts, and their capacity to synthesize the defining and most relevant elements of the selected historical periods.

#### **Essay 2: Critical Approaches Essay**

Students will have to analyze a particular work from their reading lists, applying one or two different critical approaches. Students may be asked to compare and contrast the usefulness of these critical approaches or to concentrate on one approach. The goal is to demonstrate a competent use of critical theory and advanced skills in literary and cultural analysis.

### **World Literatures and Cultures Exam**

In this exam, students will have to answer one essay question on the world literatures and cultures areas selected. In addition, students will have to identify six works or authors. The format of the identification answers should be similar to a short encyclopedia entry, providing relevant factual information on the work, author, and period, as well as significant thematic, formal, and generic elements. Each identification should be about two pages long. The goal of the World Literatures and Cultures exam is to demonstrate familiarity with and competent reading of a variety of works from different historical periods and regions of the world. The time allowed for this exam is three hours for the essay and three hours for the identifications. No notes or texts are allowed in this part of the exam.

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES PROGRAM  
CORE WORLD LITERATURES AND CULTURES LIST

World Literatures and Cultures Core List  
FALL 2006

1. Ancient Near Eastern Literatures and Cultures
2. Literatures of Ancient and Classical China and Japan
3. Early and Classical Literatures and Cultures of India
4. Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Literatures and Cultures
5. Medieval Europe Literatures and Cultures
6. Pre-Islamic and Classical Islamic Literatures and Cultures
7. Early Modern and Colonial Literatures and Cultures of Europe and the Americas
8. Enlightenment and Romanticism in Europe and the Americas
9. Realism, Naturalism, and Symbolism in Europe and the Americas
10. Modernism and *Avant Garde* literatures and culture in Europe and the Americas
11. Post Colonial Literatures and Cultures (1950 to the present)
12. Indigenous Literatures and Cultures of the Americas
13. European Cinema
14. American Cinema
15. Post Colonial Cinema (Latin American, African, Middle Eastern, Asian)
16. Caribbean Literatures
17. U.S. Ethnic Literatures (African, Asian, Hispanic, Arabic)

**Elective world literatures and cultures areas**

These areas may be defined by period, geographical area, genre or theme. The elective area list should include 15-20 primary works and two to three reference works. The elective area and its corresponding reading list must be approved by the advisor and the program committee.

Sample elective areas

Travel narratives  
Epistolary literature  
Autobiography, diaries, memoirs, spiritual narratives  
War literature  
Francophone Literatures  
Global English literatures  
Opera  
*Testimonio*  
Prison narratives  
Oral narratives  
Literature and Human Rights  
Women's writing  
*Bildungsroman*  
The epic  
Queer literatures and film