

Graduate Student Handbook

LCL Ph.D. Program

M.A. Programs (section-specific)

Department of Literatures, Cultures and Languages

University of Connecticut

2016

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ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

Bringing to bear the combined expertise of its community of scholars from various linguistic, national, regional, and cultural fields, LCL's graduate programs foster sustained engagement and nuanced understanding of a primary field of study, while offering the flexibility to engage interdisciplinary perspectives and methodologies. Our intellectual community is conversant in many languages (Arabic, Catalan, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Irish, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish, among others). Our students and faculty are devoted to teaching and researching classical and modern languages, cultures, and literatures, as well as to developing novel methodologies and perspectives for the study of discursive, pictorial, cinematographic, and digital practices, religious beliefs, and experiences, as well as language cognition. While our graduate programs enhance a variety of professional endeavors, most of graduates find jobs as teachers, college professors, and published scholars. Our goal is, however, to prepare enlightened intellectuals, critical thinkers, and erudite humanists able to pursue a wide range of careers.

This handbook has been compiled in order to help familiarize students with our procedures and policies in the graduate programs. Please note that graduate students are responsible for acquainting themselves with the general regulations of the Graduate School as listed on the University of Connecticut [Graduate policies](#) website and in the [graduate catalog](#).

GENERAL REMARKS

Representation

Graduate students form an integral part of the campus and of LCL, and their impressions and opinions pertaining to program matters mean a great deal to us. Although teaching assistants or research assistants do not have voting rights in departmental or sectional meetings, they are considered junior staff members, who fulfill an important role in our teaching and research mission. Two graduate students are elected by all graduate students to serve as liaisons to the faculty and,

as students of the Department of Literatures, Cultures and Languages, graduate students may elect a representative to the Graduate Student Council.

Offices and Mailboxes

All teaching assistants will be provided with office space. Office Hours may be held in the meeting rooms available on our floor. Teaching assistants will have a key for their offices.

E-Mail

All faculty and students communicate frequently via e-mail, and it is expected that teaching assistants use their university account for all communication both with faculty and with their own students. It is also expected that teaching assistants check their mail at least once a day and follow proper e-mail etiquette by responding within 48 hours.

Events

Teaching assistants are expected to attend whenever scholarly lectures or comparable events are scheduled by the department. These events are designed to broaden the students' horizon, build connections, and introduce them to the world of national and international scholarship.

A Note to Foreign and Exchange Students

For all matters regarding Student Visa teaching assistants should contact [International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS). Teaching assistants should be sure to take care of all necessary re-entry formalities when leaving the U.S. for a visit, such as the letter for re-entry. Any contracts they sign outside the department (e.g. apartment leases) are legally binding. The department can take no responsibility for these agreements.

ABOUT THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

General Admissions

The Graduate School requires a minimum grade-point average on a four-point scale of 2.6 points for provisional admission and 3.0 points for regular admission to the M.A. Program, and a minimum of 3.0 for admission to the Ph.D. Program.

Graduate Record Examinations, though not required for admission, are recommended for U.S. citizens who apply. For admission, international students who are not native speakers of English must obtain a minimum score of 550 on the paper TOEFL or 79 on the computer-based TOEFL, an overall score of 6.5 on the IELTS, or a minimum score of 53 on the PTE. Some international students may qualify for a waiver of this requirement (<https://grad.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2114/2018/07/Revised-Language-Proficiency-Policy-7.17.18.pdf>). In addition to the English language admission requirement, international students with a Teaching Assistantship must also meet an additional English proficiency requirement before being allowed to teach at the university (<https://ita.uconn.edu/testing-english-proficiency-certification-effective-for-teaching-assistants-starting-in-fall-2014-or-after/>). All this information is available on the Graduate School website: <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/requirements/>

The Department of Literatures, Cultures and Languages requires the applicant to send

1. a 2-page, single-spaced statement of purpose that specifically addresses the goals or research topics of interest for the student for pursuing the M.A. or the Ph.D.;
2. three letters of recommendation;
3. and a sample of written work in the target area of specialization (for instance, a class paper). If possible, a paper written in the primary language the student wishes to study is encouraged. All application materials must be submitted through the Graduate School online application system.

The Graduate School allows a maximum of 6 credits of coursework to be transferred from other institutions for credit toward the University of Connecticut M.A., provided that these credits were not already used for another degree. Faculty

of the Department of Literatures, Cultures and Languages, with permission of the Graduate School, will determine University of Connecticut equivalents for courses taken elsewhere. Information on transfer credit for the M.A. program is available here <https://wp.gradcatalog.uconn.edu/grad-school-info/standards-degree-requirements/>

For information on transfer credits for the Ph.D., please consult this site:

<https://wp.gradcatalog.uconn.edu/grad-school-info/standards-degree-requirements/>

For admission to the M.A. program, the applicant must hold a baccalaureate degree, preferably in a field closely related to the planned area of graduate study. A student applying for one of the major national language and culture fields should have completed coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major in that national language; or in a related field like History, Philosophy, or Latin American Studies, but the student needs to prove fluency through the sample paper they provide or with a skype or telephone interview. If planning to specialize in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies (CLCS) or Hebrew and Judaic Studies (HEJS), the student must have substantial coursework in at least one of the target languages, and preferably have begun work on others. This requirement normally includes 24 credits of language, literature, or civilization coursework beyond the intermediate college level.

THE M.A. PROGRAM

When applying, all students must select a field that closely matches their intended area of study (see list of major fields below, in the Ph.D. section). The M.A. program requires 30 credits of graduate coursework. M.A. students must take CLCS 5302, the 3-credit Literary Theory course, and LCL 5030, the 3-credit Methods and Approaches to Second Language Acquisition course, during their first year in the program. The rest of their plan of study must be designed in consultation with the student's M.A. advisory committee.

Master's degrees may be earned under either of two plans, as laid out by the graduate school <https://wp.gradcatalog.uconn.edu/grad-school-info/standards-degree-requirements/> and as determined by the advisory committee. Either Plan A or Plan B may be used for completing the M.A. Plan A requires not fewer than 21 credits of advanced coursework and not fewer than 9 additional credits of Master's Thesis Research (GRAD 5950 or GRAD 5960), and the writing of a thesis. Plan B requires not fewer than 30 credits of advanced coursework and a final examination, but no thesis. In either case, advisory committees may require more than the minimum number of credits. Specific characteristics of the thesis or the exam will also be determined by the advisory committee.

M.A. students planning to apply to the Ph.D. program should complete during the first year of the M.A. program the 3-credit course in Literary Theory (CLCS 5302) and the 3-credit course on Methods and Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (LCL 5030).

THE PH.D. PROGRAM

The department offers a single Ph.D. with a concentration in one of six **primary fields of study**: French and Francophone Studies, German Studies, Hebrew and Judaic Studies, Italian Literary and Cultural Studies, Spanish Studies, and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies. The Graduate School, in collaboration with various departments and institutes, offers a variety of Graduate Certificates in Human Rights, College Instruction, Digital Humanities and Media Studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies that students may choose to pursue as well <https://wp.gradcatalog.uconn.edu/grad-school-info/standards-degree-requirements/>.

The flexible design of the program and the close scholarly and professional mentoring by clusters of faculty experts will provide graduates with the skills necessary for a broad range of academic units (i.e., literature and language departments, general humanities programs, interdisciplinary programs, digital culture and media studies, and film studies, among others). With its strong emphasis on pedagogical theory and practice the program also trains teachers

capable of meeting the educational needs of a growing, culturally diverse community and the demands for innovative instruction at a variety of levels.

Admission

Students who hold a master's degree in a relevant field –Classics, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Media Studies, Philosophy, Anthropology, History, English or another modern language, among others— or who are close to completing such a degree, may apply for admission to the doctoral program. When applying, all students must select a major field (see below) that closely matches their intended area of study. All applicants are urged, and some may be required, to submit results of the Graduate Record Examinations for both the General Test and the Subject Test in their field. In the modern languages, applicants are expected to be able to participate in seminars at the graduate level conducted in the foreign languages.

In order to receive full consideration for admission and financial support, applicants are strongly urged to submit all materials, together with letters, a critical and analytical original paper, and a statement of purpose to the admissions committee by December 1. Admission is competitive, and most admitted graduate students are financially supported as teaching or research assistants.

General Ph.D. Requirements

The following are the minimum requirements for all Ph.D. students:

1. at least 24 credits of coursework. The specific plan of study must be approved by each student's advisor. These courses may not be substituted by an Independent Study (see Independent Study course policy below);
2. reading competence of scholarly literature in one language besides English and the major field language (for Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies and Hebrew and Judaic Studies special language requirements see section below);
3. successful completion of the Ph.D. comprehensive examinations;
4. approval of a dissertation prospectus; and
5. successful defense of a dissertation.

Ph.D. candidates must complete during the first year of graduate study one 3-credit seminar course in Literary Theory (CLCS 5302) and one 3-credit course in Methods and Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (LCL 5030). During the second year of the Ph.D. program students are expected to take a research methodology and professionalization course called Scholarship and the Profession (LCL 6XXX). If equivalent courses have been taken by the Ph.D. candidate at a different institution, they can be accepted with advisor's approval. Ph.D. Requirements that have been completed by students during their M.A. at UConn, must not be retaken during the doctoral program.

Policy on Individual and Independent Studies Courses: Requirements cannot be substituted by an Independent Study. Students may complete a maximum of 8 credits of Independent Studies courses after the completion of the M.A. and before the Ph.D. comprehensive examination. Within these 8 credits, Ph.D. students may take the independent study preparation for the prospectus defense only once and for a maximum of 3 credits.

As required by the Graduate School, all Ph.D. students must demonstrate reading competence of scholarly literature in one language besides English and the language of their major field of study. This third language must be approved by the student's advisor. Please consult the Graduate Catalog for the different ways to fulfill this requirement <https://wp.gradcatalog.uconn.edu/grad-school-info/standards-degree-requirements/>

Primary Fields of Departmental Scholarly Expertise:

French and Francophone Studies engages the diversity of French literary and cultural production from a multiplicity of viewpoints: from France to former French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean; in the Muslim world from Senegal to Syria; and in Asia and the Americas, from Vietnam to Quebec.

Seminars in the Department's core strengths – including Medieval Studies, Digital Culture & Media Studies, and Film – are central to the French and Francophone Studies Program, which stresses interdisciplinary, intercultural, and transnational

approaches. Seminars in specialized topics include medieval literature, culture and languages; animal and environmental studies; fantasy and science fiction studies; poetry and philosophy; social and literary theory; postcolonial literatures, cultures and theories; literature and media; urban, material and consumer cultures; and contact linguistics. The faculty also supports a rigorous language and pedagogy program, which may lead to certification for secondary school teaching.

German Studies offers seminars in German literature, culture, and linguistics leading to the Ph.D. degree. Interdisciplinary studies in Comparative Literature, Linguistics, Women's Studies (WS Certificate), and Human Rights (HR Certificate), among others, are available in cooperation with other programs and departments. The graduate program strongly supports an interdisciplinary, intercultural, and transnational approach to German Literary and Cultural Studies, including trans-disciplinary literary and cultural theory, "interkulturelle Germanistik," applied linguistics, literature and other arts, and political, historical and philosophical inquiries into literary studies, beginning with the 18th century. Additional expertise: Black-German Studies, Gender Studies, Film and Media Studies, German-Jewish Studies, Literature/Culture and Philosophy, Digital Humanities, and Interarts Studies.

Hebrew and Judaic Studies: The specializations of our Judaic studies specialists cluster around several areas of inquiry and interests that cut across the traditional periods and methods of studying Jewish literatures, cultures and civilization.

The three *primary* "clusters" within Judaic Studies itself are:

1. **Biblical Studies.** This includes not only the study of Hebrew Scripture *per se*, but especially its transmission, translation, exegesis, and comparative study from the ancient to the modern period.
2. **Relations between Jews and Non-Jews.** This includes the Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds, Jewish-Christian relations (from ancient to early Modern times), and the Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Medieval and early Modern period.

3. **Varieties of Jewish Identities and Expression.** The self-perception and presentation of the Jews in their literatures as well as their representation and the mediation of Jewish themes in the writings of non-Jews.

Italian Literary and Cultural Studies offers graduate courses in all periods from the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the present. Their interdisciplinary, intercultural, and transnational approach encompasses the Italian Diaspora to the Americas, Mediterranean Studies, Ethnic and Gender Studies, and Film and Media Studies. Students are strongly encouraged to draw upon the resources associated with interdisciplinary programs such as Medieval Studies, Women Studies, and the program in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies.

Spanish Studies offers graduate courses in Latin American, Peninsular, and US Latina/o literature, culture, film, and linguistics leading to the Ph.D. degree. The research program in Spanish includes Spanish Literary and Cultural Studies, Golden Age, Colonial, 18th-21st-century Peninsular, 19th-21st -century Latin American Studies, US Latina/o Studies in U.S., and Caribbean Literary and Cultural Studies, as well as a diversity of theoretical fields such as Gender Studies, Film and Media Studies, Performance Studies, and Applied Linguistics.

Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies. The graduate program offers students the opportunity to develop an interdisciplinary, transcultural study of literatures and the arts. Students design their own plan of study in consultation with a group of faculty from the program and/or other academic departments. Ph.D. candidates are expected to pursue studies in three different fields and demonstrate advanced proficiency in at least two languages in addition to English.

PROGRESSING TOWARDS THE PH.D.

Advising and dissertation committee

All Ph.D. candidates will be assigned a departmental advisor when they enter the program. This advisor will discuss all university and departmental degree

requirements with them and will assist them in course selection while they have not yet formed their own dissertation committee.

By the beginning of their second year (third semester) in the Ph.D. program, students must choose a major dissertation advisor and two associate advisors. This decision should be informed by the topic of their dissertation, which students must identify by the end of their first year in the Ph.D. program. Any questions students need answered pertaining to requirements or the selection of courses must be directed toward their major advisor first. Choice of courses should be discussed with the major advisor before or during the first week of classes. Candidates may change advisors if their objectives change or if it becomes desirable for other reasons.

THE PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The student should select his or her examination topics so they constitute a preparation for his or her dissertation. Written examinations ought to reveal the student's familiarity with the current debates in the chosen areas, familiarity with secondary literature, ability to engage in scholarly debate, and ability to analyze primary texts. The exam topics and the preparation process should be discussed in detail with the advisory committee members and the examiners of individual exam topics several months before the exam. They will assist the Ph.D. candidate in selecting primary and critical works for study.

Oral Pre-Exam Consultation

During the 3rd or the 4th semester, the candidate enrolls in an independent study course with her or his major advisor to prepare the prospectus and limit the fields of the Ph.D. examination. The student needs to file a [Plan of Study](#) and has to demonstrate reading knowledge of a language other than English or the language of the main field.

Examination (written and oral)

A standard Ph.D. examination in our department contains 4 sections: 3 written and 1 oral. Each **written exam** focuses on a specific field considered essential to the student's proposed dissertation. Each member of the Ph.D. committee, in consultation with the major advisor, develops along with the Ph.D. candidate an independent list of readings in a specific field of expertise. The exam dates are determined by the committee in consultation with the candidate, but should *not be later than the fifth semester* if the student holds a teaching assistantship. Each member of the student's doctoral dissertation committee, based upon the corresponding reading list, gives the candidate a written exam consisting of two questions. Students select **one of these two** questions and have seven days in which to compose a response in the form of an academic essay. The three written examinations should be taken within a period of four months.

The **oral exam** requires the candidate to offer a half-hour scholarly presentation of his or her prospectus, a draft of which the candidate is required to have finished by this date. Questions and discussion from attending faculty follow the presentation. More specific characteristics of the exam might be determined by the student's advisory committee in accordance with the usual practices in his or her field.

Preparation of the Ph.D. Prospectus

By the beginning of the 2nd year of the Ph.D., the student must have a clear idea of a general topic that will serve as a point of departure for the Ph.D. dissertation. During the semester preceding the preliminary examination, the student should discuss the exam topics with the advising committee members and the examiners of the student's specific exam topics so that they can help the student select primary and critical works for preparation. In an independent course with his or her major advisor the student should formulate a draft of the 10-page (plus bibliography) prospectus keeping in mind the structure that is required. The final prospectus must be written in English and include the following sections:

1. Statement of thesis
2. Novelty of the study

3. Purpose of the study
4. Methodology
5. Organization
6. Resources to be consulted
7. Working Bibliography

Once it is approved by all the members of the Ph.D. committee, the prospectus is submitted to the Department Head who sends it to two anonymous readers who may make further suggestions for revision to the student. Once the main advisor, the committee, and the Department Head agree to approve, the final version of the prospectus is sent to the Graduate School.

THE DISSERTATION

For details pertaining to the dissertation, see the Graduate School Catalog (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/doctoral-degree-programs/dissertation-information/>). What follows here are some aspects to keep in mind which may vary with each candidate. When **selecting a dissertation topic**, candidates should make sure that they will find enough support in their specialized research area among the faculty at UConn or, if necessary, from other universities. After candidates have selected a dissertation topic, they should get as much input as possible from faculty inside and outside the department.

Candidates should select their advisory committee with great care, taking into consideration the faculty members' fields of specialization, and the personal relationship entailed in the work between the advisors and the candidate. Any member of the graduate faculty may serve as a major advisor. Associate advisors may be members of the section that represents the student's main field, but may also be chosen from other fields.

The advisory committee must approve the student's preliminary dissertation prospectus at the time of the general examination and should be kept closely and regularly informed of the student's progress. A dissertation may be written in the language of the student's main field or in English and must adhere to the format

prescribed by the Graduate School (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/doctoral-degree-programs/dissertation-specifications/>) A Ph.D. candidate is responsible for adhering to all Graduate School requirements regarding: continuous registration; the payment of fees for candidacy, formatting, microfilming, copyright, and binding; and for meeting the various university deadlines. At least one copy of the dissertation in its final typed form must be deposited in the departmental office no later than two weeks before the date of the dissertation defense.

Defense of the Dissertation

The dissertation defense consists of an oral presentation of the main aspects and findings of the student's dissertation (usually of about 30 minutes) followed by a discussion with the members of the student's dissertation committee members, the external readers of the dissertation, and, if time allows, the audience at large. A dissertation defense generally lasts between one and two hours. The dissertation defense is a public event and must be announced in the University Calendar. The evaluation of the defense is made by the candidate's dissertation advisory committee.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In addition to the financial aid opportunities available to all students, the graduate program offers alternative ways to fund students at the M.A. and the Ph.D. programs.

- Teaching Assistantships

- Research/Administrative Assistantships

- Pre-doctoral Fellowships

All graduate students enrolled in the LCL M.A or Ph.D. program are eligible for a Graduate Assistantship. As a recipient of an assistantship a student is required to spend a certain amount of time per week fulfilling a departmental function. Graduate Assistants may be assigned to teach first or second year courses (including Reading courses), LTL sections, advanced language courses, to assist

in large lectures, to assist in the Multi Media Center in the department, or to perform other departmental duties in lieu of teaching, such as: assisting with the administration of Linkage Through Language or work as a research assistant. Stipend rates are published each year in the Graduate Catalog and are available on the Human Resources website.

Awards for assistantships and fellowships (often a combination of both) are made by the admissions committee in the major field. These awards are renewable semi-annually or annually and are dependent upon:

1. availability
2. the student's academic standing
3. progression toward completion of degree
4. overall performance as a TA and graduate student

Teaching Assistantships at the M.A. level are guaranteed for two years (provided the student is in good academic standing, making adequate progress toward the degree, and fulfilling the duties associated with the assistantship). Teaching Assistantships at the Ph.D. level are guaranteed for three years at the time of admission into the program, but Ph.D. students can typically expect funding for an additional two years (for a total of five years) if they are in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Stipends for TA-ships increase with completion of the master's degree and again after the successful completion of the general Ph.D. examination. Generally, if funds are available, the Graduate School awards ABD students \$2,000 to be used for their research needs (<https://grad.uconn.edu/financing/assistantships/>) After completing the degree, the student ought to make sure that any required documentation is promptly filed at the Graduate Records Office. Fellowship payments are made at the beginning of each semester. Assistants are paid on a bi-weekly basis with the payroll cycle beginning early in the semester.

Summer teaching opportunities are often available (but contingent on funding and departmental needs). Summer fellowships for doctoral and pre-doctoral students are awarded to the students of our Department upon nomination by the Department Head. They are awarded on a competitive basis to Ph.D. candidates who wish to explore possible areas for their dissertation. Applications are available

at the departmental office in March of each year. The Humanities Institute also provides fellowships for advanced doctoral students (<https://humanities.uconn.edu/fellowships/become-a-fellow/>). The Graduate School offers several dissertation fellowships for a semester or a year of full-time dissertation research. These are also granted on a competitive basis, upon application by the candidate. Occasionally, graduate students are offered summer research assistantships to work with individual faculty members. Connecticut residents are eligible for Connecticut State Scholarship Grants. Students are also eligible for University Pre-doctoral Fellowships. International students are eligible for most types of financial aid based upon academic merit. They are not eligible for need-based financial aid.

Occasionally, part-time lecturer positions at UConn or institutions nearby may be offered to qualified Ph.D. candidates working on their dissertation.

For general information see The Graduate Catalog's section on Financial Aid (<https://grad.uconn.edu/financing/assistantships/> and <https://financialaid.uconn.edu/graduate/>)

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Teaching Assistantships are awarded to selected candidates. Our department considers teaching experience an essential part of the graduate students' academic and professional development. It serves the purpose of developing teaching strategies and experience that is essential in the job market. The University requires Teaching Assistants to be full time students and remain registered for at least 6 credits while holding the appointment, and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least B (3.00).

- Each class taught by a TA is calculated as equivalent to 10 hours of work per week.
- All graduate students are required to participate in all orientation events organized by the language coordinators before the beginning of the fall semester.

- Students should enroll in and successfully complete Methods and Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (LCL 5030), and remain in good academic standing (B average) and make progress toward their degree.
- TAs must assign and correct homework, administer tests and quizzes, evaluate and grade each student at mid-term as well as at the end of the semester. TAs are expected to be accessible to their students by holding regular office hours and by replying to emails and requests for help in a timely manner.
- It is critical that the TA coordinator be notified as soon as possible about any changes in the schedule or any problems that may impede the TA's performance of his or her teaching responsibilities.