

Comparative Literature

Department Website: <http://complit.uchicago.edu>

The major in Comparative Literature leads to a BA degree. This program is designed to attract students who wish to pursue an interdisciplinary plan of course work focused on the study of literature as written in various languages and in various parts of the world.

Such a student might come to the University with a strong background in languages other than English and want to work in two or more literatures (one of which can be English). Another student might have a strong interest in literary study and wish to address general, generic, and/or transnational questions that go beyond the boundaries of national literature offered by English and other literature departments. Or, a student might wish to pursue an in-depth study of the interrelationship of literature and culture, as well as issues that transcend the traditional demarcations of national literary history and area studies.

These descriptions of academic interest are not mutually exclusive. Each student will design a plan of course work that will suit his or her individual goals and that will take advantage of the rich offerings of this university.

Program Requirements

The requirements outlined below are in effect as of Autumn Quarter 2017. Students in the Classes of 2018 and 2019 will follow the previous Comparative Literature requirements. If the updated program makes sense with their interests and fits within their graduation plans, they may request to switch to the new requirements. Those in the Class of 2020 and beyond will follow the requirements below.

Students interested in applying to the major in Comparative Literature should review the following guidelines and consult with the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Comparative Literature. These guidelines are to assist students in developing a balanced and cohesive interdisciplinary plan of study.

The major is comprised of seven literature courses selected in consultation with the department, two foundational courses in comparative literary theory and history, and two courses in comparative literature methods and topics, with a BA project workshop serving as a capstone to the major.

1. Prospective majors in Comparative Literature must complete the second-year sequence in a language other than English (for example: Persian, Kirgiz, Latin, Italian, etc.) or demonstrate language ability at an equivalent level through accreditation by the time they apply to the Comparative Literature program, typically by the end of the second year. Exceptions may be granted by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.
2. **Four courses in a primary field**, or in closely-linked subject areas in more than one field. The primary field must focus on literature in a language other than English.
3. **Three courses in a secondary field**, or in closely-linked subject areas in more than one field. The secondary field may be literature in another language (including English), or else a discipline or area of intellectual interest (e.g., mathematics, performance studies, etc.) or literary theory, and must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.
4. **Two foundational courses** in comparative literary theory and methods: CMLT 29701 Introduction to Comparative Literature I: Problems, Methods, Precedents and CMLT 20109 Comparative Methods in the Humanities. These can be taken in any order, but students are encouraged to take them fairly early in their studies.
5. **Two 20000-level special topics, methods, or theory courses** in Comparative Literature.
6. CMLT 29801 BA Project and Workshop: Comparative Literature is a capstone project completed in the student's last year of study. See BA Project for details.

Summary of Requirements

4 courses in a primary literature		400
3 courses in a secondary field or literature		300
CMLT 29701	Introduction to Comparative Literature I: Problems, Methods, Precedents	100
CMLT 20109	Comparative Methods in the Humanities	100
2 methods or theory courses in Comparative Literature (20000-level)		200
CMLT 29801	BA Project and Workshop: Comparative Literature	100
Total Units		1200

The department encourages students to pursue further language study by taking courses in a second or third language. NOTE: Those language courses will be approved for use in the major only if they are at an intermediate or advanced level; elementary-level courses cannot be counted toward the total number of courses needed to complete the major.

A student wishing to work in two literatures (one of which can be English) might choose two literatures as the primary and secondary fields. A student interested in literary study across national boundaries with a focus on generic and transnational questions might create a primary field along generic lines (e.g., film, the epic, the novel, poetry, drama, opera); the secondary field might be a particular national literature or a portion of such a literature. A student interested in literary

and cultural theory might choose theory as either a primary or secondary field, paired with another field designed along generic lines or those of one or more national literatures.

Courses in the various literature departments and in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities are obviously germane to the building of any individual program. A student is likely to find courses in the Humanities Collegiate Division and in the Department of History that extend beyond the usual definitions of literature (e.g., film, art, music, history) to be appropriate to her or his individual program of study. Study abroad offers an attractive means of fulfilling various aims of this program as well. More than half of the major requirements must be satisfied by courses bearing University of Chicago numbers.

Participation in the Program

Students should express their interest in the major as soon as possible, typically before the end of their second year. The first step is to meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to consult about a program of study. Thereafter, students are required to submit a written proposal of about one thousand words in length that consists of two parts:

1. a statement explaining how the proposed plan of study will take advantage of existing College offerings and meet departmental requirements
2. a list of proposed courses (as well as alternates) and indications of how they will fulfill the department's requirements

Applicants must also submit a list of completed courses and a list of courses in which they are currently registered. Special mention should be made of language courses or other language training that affirms a student's level of language proficiency. Each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the interest of the student and his or her achievement in the languages needed to meet the goals of the intended course of study. Students will be notified by email of their acceptance to the program. Students will need to formalize their declaration through my.uchicago.edu with the assistance of the College adviser.

Comparative Literature majors should demonstrate proficiency in a literary language (other than English) that is relevant to their proposed course of study (as indicated in requirement number one above). This requirement must be met at the time of application or shortly thereafter. Such proficiency is measured by the completion of a second-year sequence in the language, or by demonstration of an equivalent skill. Language ability is essential to work in comparative literature of whatever sort. The Department of Comparative Literature takes language preparation into consideration when evaluating applications, but it will also help students achieve their individual goals by suggesting programs of study that will add to their language expertise as appropriate.

BA Project

The project should be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and is supervised by a faculty member of the student's choice in Comparative Literature. It may be co-advised by a faculty member from another department. Students must complete their formal application to the major by spring of third year and should identify a faculty advisor at that time.

One obvious choice for a BA project is a substantial essay in comparative literary study. This option should not, however, rule out other possibilities. Two examples might be a translation from a foreign literature with accompanying commentary, or a written project based on research done abroad in another language and culture relating to comparative interests. Students are urged to base their project on comparative concepts, and to make use of the language proficiency that they will develop as they meet the program's requirements. Visit complit.uchicago.edu/undergraduate for details on the BA project.

This program may accept a BA paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program chair. Approval from both program chairs is required. Students should consult with the chairs by the earliest BA proposal deadline (or by the end of third year, when neither program publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both chairs, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

Grading

All courses to be used in the major, except for CMLT 29801 BA Project and Workshop: Comparative Literature, must be taken for a grade of B- or higher. CMLT 29801 is graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Honors

To be eligible for honors in Comparative Literature, students must earn an overall cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher, and a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the major. They must also complete a BA essay or project that is judged exceptional in intellectual and/or creative merit by the first and second readers.

Advising

Students must consult on an ongoing basis with the Director of Undergraduate Studies for selection and approval of course work for the major. Students will need to regularly provide documentation of any approvals for the major to their

College adviser for the necessary processing. Further advice and counseling will be available from the preceptor for the program and from the faculty member who supervises the student's BA project.



Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.