

Qualifying Examination Overview & Checklist

General Information

- The QE examination is taken in January of your 2nd year, the week before Spring semester classes begin. It is held in a computer lab on campus. All exam materials will be provided.
- There are two parts to the exam, each lasting 2 ½ hours with a 1½ hour break in between (typically Part I is from 9:00-11:30 and Part II is from 1:00-3:30).
 - Part I: Literary Theory—students choose one question to answer about literary theory. Questions are based on work done in CL 385 & CL 390.
 - Part II: Text Interpretation—explication of a literary text in the student’s first foreign (non-native language) literature. Students may choose to respond to one of two passages drawn from a list of approximately 20 texts prepared in advance with an appropriate supervising professor and approved by the graduate adviser.
- Students may use their own dictionaries in any language but dictionaries will not be provided.
- Students must pass the examination in order to continue on towards doctoral work in their fifth semester. A “high pass” is assigned to recognize exemplary answers and a “low pass” is assigned to inform students of limitations in their work, which may affect their progress at the doctoral level. Only Pass/Fail is reported to the graduate school. In exceptional cases, a student may be permitted to retake the examination at the discretion of the qualifying examination committee and the graduate adviser.
- Grading is based on the quality of the essays written. Essays should be well-informed and well-constructed rather than encyclopedic recapitulations. They should pursue a reasoned argument rather than offering unordered observations regarding theories or particular texts. The examination committee encourages a range of critical and theoretical approaches and has no preconceived approaches or answers in mind.
 - Sample examinations (which have received a “high pass”) from past students are available for review in the Comp Lit office. Students are responsible for all copying charges.
 - It is recommended that students use the first half hour of each exam portion to make extensive outlines of their thoughts as a backup in the event of computer failure. The examination committee will have the opportunity to see this outlines.
- Students will be notified in writing about the results of the exam, usually within 10 days.

QE Checklist

- Spring Semester, 1st Year—consult an area specialist in Comparative Literature and draft your reading list. This reading list should consist of approximately 20 works at the core of the national literature chosen and should represent a cross-section of genres, including prose, poetry and drama.
- October, 2nd year—submit a final version of your reading list (signed by your supervisor) for approval by the QE committee and the graduate adviser. This list should include the names of all faculty members consulted during the development of the list.

Tips on Preparing for the QE:

- **Part I:** Students are responsible for knowing the historical outlines of the development of literary studies. Students must be able to compare/contrast theorists' uses of terms and concepts, outline historical changes, and to explain the significance and impact of theories. Questions generally require comparison/contrast of theories from different time periods.
- **Part II:** Students should know the following about the authors and texts on their reading list: implications and formal aspects of the genre within the national literary tradition; the aesthetic or philosophical implications and concepts which inform the text; the questions of language modality or register, style, and audience which determine possible readings of a text; authorial intent and aesthetic (or that of the author's group or movement) as reflected in the text; and the historical conditions for the writing, transmission, and reading (or reception) of the text.

**A document entitled Qualifying Examination Procedure contains more detailed information about the QE exam.
*IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN AND READ THIS DOCUMENT.***

IF, FOR ANY REASON, YOU ARE NOT PLANNING/ABLE TO TAKE THE QE IN THE JANUARY OF YOUR SECOND YEAR YOU MUST INFORM THE C L GRADUATE COORDINATOR AND GRADUATE ADVISOR AS SOON AS REASONABLY POSSIBLE.