

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ITALIAN STUDIES

*This material supplements information in the Graduate Catalogue
(<http://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/>)*

Web Site: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/frenchitalian>

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Italian Studies Graduate Program, based in the Department of French and Italian, is a broad-based, interdisciplinary program designed to offer students maximum flexibility in course selection and choice of specialization. Because the graduate program in Italian Studies is a Ph.D. program, only students intending to pursue the Ph.D. will be considered for admission. The M.A. degree may be awarded *en passant* to the Ph.D. at the end of the second year of course work provided the student has satisfied the M.A. requirements of the Graduate School. While core courses in Italian literature, cinema, linguistics, and culture are taught by Italian faculty in the Department of French and Italian, the program also draws heavily on the talents of scholars in other disciplines at the University of Texas at Austin—such as Archeology, Architecture, Art History, Classics, Comparative Literature, English, Film Studies, History, Linguistics, and Music—who have expertise on Italian topics. Students will benefit from ample training in specialized Italian courses as well as from the intellectually stimulating experience of being in the classroom with graduate students from other departments. For today's competitive job market, in which interdisciplinary skills are at a premium, graduates of the program will be exceptionally well prepared for university-level teaching and research.

Designed to train students in the methods of scholarly research and to prepare them for college teaching, the Italian Studies graduate program offers financial assistance in the form of academic employment, i.e., Teaching Assistantships (TAs) and Assistant Instructorships (AIs). As Teaching Assistants, graduate students help faculty with their regularly scheduled courses. Graduate students who hold a Master's degree (or have completed 30 hours of graduate coursework), have teaching experience, and have completed a course in teaching methods are eligible for employment as Assistant Instructors. AIs, though still under the supervision and direction of department faculty, teach their own courses (generally lower-division Italian language classes). Competitive fellowships administered by the Graduate School are another possible source of financial support. Graduate students in the program will also learn to exploit the benefits of innovative technologies in teaching and research. The Faculty in the Department of French and Italian has developed several award-winning digital humanities projects, and students may have opportunities to assist in the development and implementation of new projects. The teaching experience and research skills acquired by Italian Studies graduate students will help them immensely in making the transition from graduate school to full-time employment.

Additional information regarding academic employment is available at the following sites:

- <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/frenchitalian/GraduateProgram/FinancialAid/Academic-Employment.php>
- <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/employment/academic.html>

Additional information regarding fellowships administered by The Office of Graduate Studies can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/funding/fellowships/>.

FACULTY AND PROGRAM RESOURCES

The core Italian Studies faculty consists of **Daniela Bini** (nineteenth and twentieth centuries), **Douglas Biow** (Renaissance), **Guy Raffa** (medieval and modern), **Cinzia Russi** (linguistics, history of the language), and **Paola Bonifazio** (cinema, contemporary culture). Affiliated faculty and members of the Graduate Studies Committee for the program in Italian Studies include: **Mirka Benes** (Architecture), **Joseph Coleman Carter** (Classical Archaeology), **John R. Clarke** (Art History), **Penelope J. E. Davies** (Art History), **Andrew Dell'Antonio** (Music), **Robert Desimone** (Music), **Alison K. Frazier** (History), **Karl Galinsky** (Classics), **Luisa Nardini** (Music), **Wayne A. Rebhorn** (English), **Rabun Taylor** (Classics), **Louis A. Waldman** (Art History), and **Hannah C. Wojciehowski** (English).

General Libraries at the University of Texas at Austin, among the top ten research libraries in the U.S. and Canada, is well furnished with primary and secondary source materials in Italian language, history, literature, and film. The Fine Arts Library and the Architecture and Planning Library both have excellent holdings on Italian arts and culture, and the Visual Resources Collections contain over 50,000 slides of Italian artwork. Manuscripts and rare books on Italian subjects from the holdings of the renowned Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center provide unprecedented research opportunities for Italian Studies graduate students: holdings include 20 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, 200 incunabula, 5,345 manuscripts from the fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, and over 1,600 other rare works. The Suida-Manning Collection, one of the finest university collections of Renaissance and Baroque art in the United States, is another world-class resource for graduate work in Italian Studies. Housed in the Blanton Museum, this collection includes approximately 250 paintings, 400 drawings, and 50 sculptures spanning the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries, with exceptional depth in sixteenth- through eighteenth-century Italian art. The university currently has three excavation projects in Italy: Metaponto and Croton (Southern Italy), Torre Annunziata (Naples), and Ostia (Rome).

ADMISSION AND REQUIREMENTS

Applicants who hold or who are in their final semester of completing a B.A. or an M.A. degree in Italian or in a related area may request admission to the Ph.D. graduate program.

Transfer of graduate credits from other institutions must be recommended by the Department and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. No more than 6 semester hours of transfer credit can be approved for the graduate degree.

Prospective candidates must first meet the minimum requirements for admission, as determined by the Graduate School. Applicants who fail to meet these requirements will not be admitted except in rare cases.

The application for admission should be filled out online at ApplyTexas.org.

All supporting original documents—official transcripts from other universities or colleges attended, official Graduate Record Examination and TOEFL scores (if relevant)—must be electronically uploaded through the application status check or sent to:

The Graduate and International Admissions Center
The University of Texas at Austin
P. O. Box 7608,
Austin, TX 78713-7608

Additional information about admission requirements and deadlines can be found at:

- <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/admissions/requirements.html>
- <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/admissions/howtous.html>
- <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/frenchitalian/GraduateProgram/Admissions/Admissions1.php>

Details on how to check the status of your application are available at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/admissions/status.html>

FINANCIAL AID

Various types of financial aid are available. Students in graduate programs other than Italian (e.g., FLE, Spanish-Portuguese, Communications, Comparative Literature) must understand that in most cases they will not have first priority for aid.

Teaching Assistants will receive a stipend, a waiver of the non-resident portion of the tuition, and a Tuition Reduction Benefit (TRB). These assistantships involve a modest amount of supervised teaching. Opportunities are also available for Italian Studies graduate students to work as TAs for large signature courses (UGS 303) offered through the School of Undergraduate Studies (<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/sig>). Signature course TAs earn valuable teaching experience by leading their own discussion sections of these lecture courses, several of which are taught by Italian Studies faculty: "Italian Cinema" (Biow), "Dante's Hell and Its Afterlife" (Raffa), and "Italy through the Arts" (Bini).

Assistant Instructorships will also receive a stipend, a waiver of the non-resident portion of the tuition, and a Tuition Reduction Benefit (TRB). Students with teaching experience, the completion of a teaching methodologies course, and an M.A. degree (or with 30 credit hours of graduate work) are eligible to work as Assistant Instructors and will teach one course each semester.

Stipends and Tuition Reduction Benefits can change. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator for current rates.

University Fellowships for First-Year Students are prestigious awards offered by the Graduate School to attract top quality graduate students to The University of Texas. Graduate Advisors identify and nominate eligible applicants for graduate admission. These fellowships are not available to students who are currently or were previously enrolled in a Graduate School program at UT Austin; however, UT Austin undergraduates who meet the criteria are eligible. The size of the stipend is at the discretion of the Graduate Advisors.

University Continuing Fellowships are University Fellowships awarded to advanced students, usually to those who are conducting research on or writing their dissertations. Students nominated for Continuing Fellowships become eligible for multiple fellowship competitions.

For more information on fellowships offered by the University, please visit:

- <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/funding/fellowships/>
- <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/student-affairs/Scholarships-and-Awards/>

Additional Support

Assistant Instructors are eligible for summer teaching. Whenever there are more candidates than openings for summer school teaching or for regular teaching assistantships or assistant instructorships, selection will be made on a competitive basis, based on such factors as quality of teaching and progress made toward the degree.

Competitive research awards are available—the amount to be determined by the Graduate Advisor and the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee on a case-by-case basis—for the purposes of improving Italian language proficiency or conducting academic research.

COURSE LOAD

The minimum course load is 9 hours per semester. The maximum number of semesters of financial support from the University will normally be 12 semesters.

COURSEWORK

Students are expected to take courses that provide a thorough understanding of Italian literature, cinema, history, and culture. To this end, they will take a minimum of 9 hours (usually three courses) per semester during their three years of coursework. In a given semester, students typically take two courses taught in Italian Studies (courses with an ITL designation) and a third course in a relevant field outside the department. [University rules require that at least two graduate courses be taken outside the Department of French and Italian.]

Coursework may include one three-hour upper-division course approved by the Graduate Advisor. Students must take at least eighteen hours of graduate coursework offered in Italian Studies (courses with an ITL designation), and six to nine graduate-level hours in a supporting subject or subjects in another program, department, or college. Italian students must also take CL 385 (Theories of Literary Criticism) or another graduate course on critical/literary theory approved by

the Graduate Advisor. Before completion of the second year, students must also demonstrate reading competence in one foreign language other than Italian by earning a grade of at least *B* in a reading course approved by the Graduate Advisor, in a second-year college language course, or on an examination approved by the Graduate Advisor.

With the help of the Graduate Advisor (who must approve the student's selection of courses), each student is expected to design an individual course of study and define a primary subject and supporting subject(s) of study. At least nine hours of coursework must be in a supporting subject.

In the fall semester of year 4 at the latest, students are expected to register for a 3-credit independent study / conference course (ITL 395L or the equivalent) to begin preparing for the comprehensive examination.

Coursework Policies:

Credit/No Credit. Students may take no more than two graduate courses on a CR/NC basis, neither of which can count for any core or area degree requirement. (This excludes courses taken after three years of coursework—or after one year of coursework for students entering the program with an MA or the equivalent in Italian Studies.)

Incompletes. All grades of X on a transcript must be made up within one semester or they become permanent incompletes [I] on the transcript. Students with an "I" on their record become ineligible for funding reappointment.

ADMISSION TO PH.D. PROGRAM

Students entering the program with an M.A. are admitted directly into the Ph.D. program. Students entering with a B.A. who are completing their first two years of graduate coursework in Italian Studies here and who wish to continue toward the Ph.D. will demonstrate their competency to continue toward the Ph.D. through coursework, research, and TA performance. Students must submit a request (in writing) to be considered for admission to the doctoral program to the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee. In evaluating such requests, the Committee will take into account the student's progress, defined in part by coursework (papers, examinations, classroom performance), course grades, and work as a TA or research assistance. The request must include one scholarly paper, in Italian or English, from a completed course (ideally 15-20 pages) and a brief statement (2-3 pages) discussing the applicant's experience in the Italian Studies graduate program and plans for completing the doctoral degree. The Committee will also take into consideration input from faculty members in the student's core and supporting areas, as well as input provided by the student's own performance report. The applicant must submit the paper and statement to the Graduate Studies Committee Chair (by a date determined in consultation with the Graduate Advisor)—typically by the first Monday following spring break of year 2 in the program. The entire GSC will then have an opportunity to consider the materials, and the student will be notified of the decision within one month of requesting admission.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

By the end of the fall semester of year 4 at the latest, students will take the Comprehensive Examination. Each Ph.D. candidate forms an examining committee chaired by the Italian Studies professor most likely to direct the student's dissertation research. The student, in consultation with this chair, seeks two or three other professors to serve on the examining committee. At least two of the committee members must be Italian Studies faculty in the Department of French and Italian. The candidate must obtain the signatures of the chair and the other committee members by the beginning of the fall semester of year 4—by September 15 at the latest.

The goal of the Comprehensive Exam is to assess the breadth and depth of the student's competency in Italian Studies and to assist in the conception and initial research stages of a likely dissertation project. To this end, the exam covers three major areas. The first two areas focus primarily on Italian literary studies, with one area covering major literary works and critical statements for the period 1200-1750 and the second area covering major literary and cinematic works (and critical statements) for the period 1750 to the present. The student will be provided with reading lists for these two areas created in advance by Italian Studies faculty. For the third area of the exam, the candidate—in consultation with the committee chair—identifies a special topic highly relevant to the likely subject of the dissertation project. "Topic" here is broadly defined, and may refer to various areas essential to the student's research, including (but not limited to) a particular critical theory or philosophical tradition; a historical or socio-political event or issue; a specific genre, discipline, or cultural medium. It is probable, though not necessary, that this third area of the exam corresponds in a significant way to supporting courses taken outside the department. It is the student's responsibility to consult with relevant faculty to form the reading list for this third area of the exam and to obtain the committee chair's approval by October 15 of year 4.

The committee chair, in consultation with the student and the other committee members, sets an exam period by the end of the fall semester of year 4. The student is given six questions (two per area) in the form of a take-home exam: the student provides written responses (2000-3000 words per response) to three questions, one for each area of the exam. (Non-native Italian speakers must write at least one response in Italian, and native Italian speakers must write at least two responses in English.) Within 72 hours of receiving the questions, the student electronically submits the responses to the committee chair, who then distributes them to the rest of the committee. The committee meets with the student 1-2 weeks later for the oral portion of the exam. During this oral exam, expected to last two hours, committee members may ask questions based not only on the candidate's written responses but also on the unselected questions and on any part of the reading lists. The candidate is also expected to discuss how the reading lists and written responses (for area 3 in particular) relate to likely dissertation research.

Students who do not successfully pass the Comprehensive Examination may retake it (in whole or in part, at the discretion of the examining committee) at the end of the spring semester of year 4. Only one retake is allowed.

PROSPECTUS

After passing the Comprehensive Exam, the student, working with the dissertation advisor, will write a dissertation prospectus of a length agreed upon with the dissertation committee (generally from 15-25 pages). The prospectus should be a carefully argued written presentation of the basis for the student's dissertation research. It should explain the significance of the project in relation to work in the field, justify the research methodology or approach, and set forth the sources to be examined and the critical questions to be addressed. This should be followed by brief summaries of each chapter. The prospectus should demonstrate the student's ability to undertake research on a topic within the context of current scholarship and critical methodologies, and give evidence of the student's breadth of knowledge and potential for future success as a scholar.

The dissertation prospectus must be presented in written form and orally defended to the student's dissertation committee by the end of the spring semester of year 4—or by September 15 of year 5 for students who passed the retake of the exam in the spring of year 4. Once the prospectus is successfully defended, the student is admitted to doctoral candidacy and begins working on the dissertation.

CANDIDACY

When the student has fulfilled all Ph.D. coursework and foreign language requirement, has passed the Comprehensive Examination, has defended the prospectus, and has chosen a dissertation director and a supervising committee of at least three other faculty members, then he or she will file for doctoral candidacy with the Graduate School and begin registering for the dissertation course. The student must fill out the Graduate School's Doctoral Candidacy Application (<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/>) online to obtain approval of the dissertation committee chair, the Graduate Advisor, the Graduate Studies Committee Chair of the Program, and the Graduate Dean. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for all rules governing progress and completion of the dissertation.

DISSERTATION

The purpose of the dissertation is to make a substantial contribution to existing scholarship in the field. Italian Studies students in candidacy are expected to research and write their dissertations over the next one and a half years, thus enabling them to defend their dissertations at the end of their sixth year in the program at the latest. The Graduate School requires that dissertations be written in English, unless special permission is granted prior to undertaking the project. Progress on the dissertation is regularly monitored. The dissertation must be completed and defended within a total of three years after admission to candidacy. If it is not, the Graduate Studies Committee will review the student's case.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The supervisory committee is responsible for approving the dissertation, which the student defends in an oral examination between one and two hours in length. This examination is conducted by the committee (at least four of its members must attend) and is open to the university community. The defense covers the dissertation, the general field of the dissertation, and other parts of the

student's program, as determined by the committee. Forms are available from the Graduate School both to apply for the granting of the Ph.D. and to request the official scheduling of the defense (called the "Final Oral"). The dissertation committee should be given at least one month to read the dissertation before the "Final Oral." The student should arrange with the Graduate Coordinator to arrange a date, time, and place to conduct the defense.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

All students must make satisfactory progress toward their degree goals in order to continue in the program toward the Ph.D. Satisfactory progress is defined as follows:

- A minimum 3.7 grade point average for those with fellowships and a minimum 3.4 grade point average for all other students.
- A minimum average of 3.5 out of 5 for "quality of instructor" on the student-generated Course Instructor Survey (CIS) and a satisfactory rating from the supervisor of lower-division instruction for AIs.
- The completion of all coursework, the foreign language requirement, and the Comprehensive Exam within the first four years of entering the program.
- The successful defense of the dissertation prospectus before a properly established supervisory committee within one semester of the completion of the Comprehensive Examination.
- The demonstrated potential to conduct sustained and innovative independent research deemed relevant to the discipline.
- **Termination from the program:** Progress will be measured not only in terms of objective grades, but also by feedback from faculty and statements by the students themselves via their annual progress report. The Graduate Studies Committee will continually evaluate each student for evidence of his/her potential to complete the Doctor of Philosophy. Should a student's scholarly progress in the program be deemed unsatisfactory for continuation, the student may receive a terminal M.A. degree after four or more semesters of coursework, as long as he/she maintains the minimum average grade point average of 3.0 required by the Graduate School.