

Academic Assessment Plan

(MA AND PHD PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES)
(2023)

Prepared and Submitted by
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Program Goals

1. Provide master and doctoral-level education in comparative literature and cultural studies for students with previous education in various languages and national literatures.
2. Provide a framework that will allow faculty from a variety of departments to interact effectively with a diverse group of students in pursuing individually-designed programs of study in comparative literature and cultural studies.
3. Promote cross-cultural understanding by providing an environment in which students from a variety of cultures can mutually explore the literatures and cultures of a variety of nations in a variety of genres.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Each student shall achieve an advanced knowledge of literary and cultural theory, including the ability to apply the theory to specific literary and cultural texts.
2. Each student shall acquire a solid basic knowledge of literary and/or cultural texts in several different areas, including different genres and different languages.
3. Beginning with this background, each student shall acquire the ability to design his or her own program of classes and research, toward eventual preparation for comprehensive examinations and successful design and completion of a thesis or dissertation project or completing a professional portfolio in the non thesis MA option.
4. Students shall gain sufficient knowledge to design, in collaboration with their faculty committees, a series of five different reading lists or completion of a professional portfolio in the non Thesis MA option.
5. Each student shall gain the knowledge and expertise necessary to complete a successful thesis or dissertation project in their particular, highly individualized field or completion of a professional portfolio in the non Thesis MA option. Students in the non thesis option of the MA must include samples of literary or cultural analysis in their professional portfolios.
6. Each student shall acquire reading competence in at least one language other than English at the master's level and two languages at the doctoral level.

Process for Assessing each Student Learning Outcome

1. Each student in our program pursues a highly individualized program of study. Each student has his or her own timeline and goals. As a result, the timeline for assessment must be flexible as well.

2. The primary means of direct assessment for learning outcomes 1-4 shall be the series of two written and one oral comprehensive examinations that are administered individually to students by their particular 3-person faculty examination committee that is specific to each student. In the non thesis option of the MA, students must successfully complete a professional portfolio evaluated by a 3-person faculty committee on a pass/fail basis. The primary means of assessment for learning outcome 5 will be the thesis or dissertation itself, which will be completed and defended under the guidance of a three-person faculty committee that is specific to each individual student. Outcome 5 can also be assessed by the literary and cultural analysis sample included in the professional portfolio of non thesis MA students. All of these direct means are assessed on the basis of pass/fail. Each student is also evaluated annually for acceptable progress by the Program Director using the means established by the Graduate School. The primary indirect means for current students shall be (a) the participation of students in professional activities such as attending and presenting at professional conferences and publication of work in professional journals, books, etc. The primary indirect means for students who have recently completed the program shall be their placement rate in professional careers appropriate to their training and backgrounds.

3. Results will be reported annually by the Program Director to the Dean of Fulbright College. These results will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program's structure and requirements, including student advising, which is especially crucial for a program that has no faculty or classes of its own beyond two core classes (WLIT 5193 Introduction to Comparative Literature and COMM5503 Cultural Studies).

2022-2023

Overview

The CLCS Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies had 35 active Ph.D. Students and 3 Active MA students in the fall 2022. The Program Graduated 3 PhD students and 1 MA student in the 2022-2023 Academic Year. The program has 4 new Ph.D. students confirmed for the fall 2023.

As an interdisciplinary program, each student in CLCS takes a highly individual plan of study, making cohort assessment more complex. Students are working on literatures and cultures of Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa, from classical times to the 21st Century, in a variety of languages, including English, Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, French, Chinese, German, Latin and Greek.

The direct assessment measures of student learning outcomes 1-4 in the actual Plan is the comprehensive exams, which consists of two written exams. An additional oral exam may be given to the candidate if the exam's committee determines that there are deficiencies in the written exams. Exams can only be repeated once. In addition, student learning outcomes 1-4 can be assessed through the professional portfolio option for the non-thesis MA students.

The primary assessment measure for learning outcome 5 is the thesis (for MA students in the Thesis option) or dissertation. For the non-thesis MA option, learning outcome 5 is assessed by the required sample literary or cultural analysis included in the professional portfolio.

Each student's academic performance is also evaluated annually for acceptable progress by the Program Director using the means established by the Graduate School.

The indirect means of assessment are (a) the participation of students in professional activities such as attending and presenting at professional conferences and publication of work in professional journals, books, etc. (b) another primary indirect means of assessment of learning outcomes is the student's post graduate work, admission into doctoral programs for MA students and job placement.

In the AY 2022-2023, 1 CLCSMA and 5 CLCSPH student presented and passed the comprehensive exams, and 3 CLCSMA students in the non-thesis option passed the professional portfolio. Two CLCSMA students are expected to graduate in August 2023.

In terms of completing a thesis or dissertation, 4 doctoral students successfully defended the dissertations during the current academic year.

Among the indirect means of evaluating students learning outcomes are the participation in professional meetings, publications, employment, recognition, etc.

CLCS students received 15 awards from internal and external sources, including National Humanities Endowment Summer Seminar, Utrecht University Junior Fellowship, the Linda K. Overstreet Scholarship, the SEC Emerging Scholars Program, the Sturgis International Fellowship, the Latin American and Latino Studies Program, the Graduate Schools and International Education, The Fulbright College Dissertation Research Award, the CLCS Research Award, the CLCS Dissertation Fellowship, and the Doctoral Distinguished Fellowship.

CLCS students in the program presented 15 papers at local, national and international conferences, including the American Comparative Literature Association,

U of A Teaching and Learning Symposium; the Medieval & Renaissance Studies Center Symposium, Knoxville, TN; the Newberry Library Multidisciplinary Graduate Conference; The 74e Congrès de l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, Québec; the 75th RMMLA annual convention, Albuquerque, NM; 57th International Congress on Medieval Studies; Online; Tulane Gulf South Indigenous Studies Symposium 2022; Italian Studies Conference; Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program Conference; the MAMA conference; Classical studies; American Folklore Society, and the Cultural Studies Association Conference.

CLCS students published 3 editions, 1 article in a peer review journal, submitted one article to a well known peer review journal and one book review.

Considering alumni achievements as program outcomes measure, one alumna was appointed as Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity; an alumnus got a creative writing teaching position at the University of Tulsa, and he also was selected as a public fellow at the Oklahoma Center for the Humanities; an alumna was hired as a tenure track assistant professor at Texas A&M San Antonio; another alumna was promoted to Associate Professor at Missouri State University; an alumna was keynote speaker at the UAFS Spanish Teaching Symposium and another alumna received a Service Learning Teaching award.

Summary results

Based on the learning outcomes and program outcome data presented above, both CLCSMA and CLCSPH students are progressing in their degrees and completing the program. They are involved in the profession, participating in conferences and publishing research. In addition, they are gaining recognition and awards.

Alumni news is also an indirect source of outcomes assessment. CLCS Alumni are successfully publishing, securing academic positions, earning awards and recognitions.

Outcomes Assessment Metrics Pending Revision

With the changes to the CLCSMA that allows the non thesis option to fulfill degree requirements with the completion of a professional portfolio, to be developed in ENGL 5193 Portfolio, in lieu of the comprehensive exams, the assessment metrics will have to be adjusted.