Recommendations

B.A. Comparative Literature

To learn more about making the most of your educational experiences within and beyond the classroom contact:
Alexander Beecroft, Program Coordinator, abeecrof@mailbox.sc.edu
PARTICIPATE

Community Service

Related course  GERM 401 P, SPAN 301, 305, etc.
Sites/experiences  As part of the Comparative Literature major, students acquire proficiency in two languages other than English. Many of the language programs at USC offer fantastic service-learning opportunities to put that language expertise into practice in the community. Students are encouraged to consult with the program of their major language for more information on these opportunities.
Why this is important  Being able to use a language within the classroom setting is an important skill, and a major accomplishment. But being able to use that language in real life, outside the classroom, offers a real test of those abilities, and puts knowledge to use in the community, whether through helping children in local schools learn German, or in learning to work with Spanish-speaking patients or clients.
Getting started  Contact the program in your language of specialization.

Global Learning

Related course  CPLT 270 (Introduction to World Literature); Study abroad opportunities in your language(s) of specialization.
Timing for “study abroad”  For CPLT 270, early in your degree. For study abroad: the summer after sophomore year or one of the semesters of your junior year.
Destinations  Destinations vary according to your language of specialization.
Why this is important  CPLT 270 is the ideal classroom experience for students who want to engage in global studies. Themes vary from section to section, but each section of the course deals with major themes and global challenges through the perspective of literature from around the world. It’s an eye-opening experience!
Study abroad is invaluable for consolidating the language learning that students do in the classroom. Regular interaction with native speakers allows students to take their fluency in a language to the next level, and there’s no better way to learn about a culture than by living in it and being part of it!
Getting started  The Comparative Literature major is very supportive of study abroad opportunities in the languages; consult with the program of your major language for more details.

Peer Leadership

Student Organization(s)  The Comparative Literature major is small, and does not have its own student organizations, although our students have been actively involved in many other student organizations, from the German and Russian clubs to the Classics and Spanish fraternities.
Why this is important  By connecting with fellow students with shared interests, students learn about opportunities to put their knowledge into practice and about career opportunities.
Getting started  Contact the student group(s) in your language of specialization.
Internships

Recommended sites/work experiences
Many fantastic opportunities exist in the various language programs: Palmetto Luna in Spanish; Checkpoint Charlie in German; business internships in Russian; and many more. Consult with your language program for more details.

Professional Organizations
Students can become involved with the American Comparative Literature Association, the national organization for scholars of comparative literature, based right here on the USC Columbia campus!

Why this is important
Internships can be the “missing link” between the skills you acquire in the classroom, and the job you’re looking for after graduation. An internship is the perfect place to connect the language proficiency and reading/writing/critical thinking proficiency you’ve acquired as a Comparative Literature major to new and more job-specific skills. Students should also be proactive in searching out internship possibilities in areas of future career interest.

How students can get started
Consult the program of your language of specialization and talk about internship possibilities with your academic advisor.

Research

Related courses
Students complete a senior thesis (CPLT 499), an integrative research and writing experience involving the language(s) they’ve studied. Students in Comparative Literature have also been very competitive in winning Magellan Grants to conduct research alongside faculty members.

Sample research projects or topics
Almost unlimited: topics have ranged from the use of folklore in Ralph Ellison’s The Invisible Man to literature and film about the Nazi occupation of France (senior thesis) to preparing an online student edition of Aesop’s fables in Greek (a recent Magellan Grant).

Why this is important
The senior thesis is a fantastic integrative project, bringing together the language skills students have acquired in their major languages(s) along with the skills they’ve acquired in reading, thinking, and writing about literature. Those students who are interested in graduate study find the experience invaluable as a stepping-stone towards the master’s thesis or the doctoral dissertation. Students going in other directions gain important skills in project management; it’s a great opportunity to learn how to manage a complex long-term project, which is a skill that is useful in almost any professional career.
LEAD

Initial career opportunities

Students who graduate with a BA in Comparative Literature, have excellent skills in two languages other than English, as well as in critical reading, thinking, and writing in English. That's a pretty unbeatable combination of abilities, and study after study has shown that these are the kinds of skills that lots of employers are looking for. Rather than being trained for any one career option, Comparative Literature students have a skill set that is highly prized in every business and professional context. Students in Comparative Literature work with their advisor to develop specific career goals, and to acquire the additional preparation (coursework, internships) they need to succeed at those goals.

Related graduate programs

Students are of course well-prepared to enter graduate programs in Comparative Literature itself or in the language of their specialization, at the MA or PhD level, and some of our students do just that. But the skills that make you a successful Comparative Literature major also lead to success in all sorts of other graduate or professional programs: Law, Education, the MBA.

Future career opportunities

There are no limits to the career opportunities that are open to Comparative Literature majors. Nationwide, students with a BA in Comparative Literature have done everything from run internet start-ups to editing major magazines, to serving as Appellate Court judges. Aside from the obvious possibilities of academia, education and law, students with undergraduate experience in Comparative Literature excel in corporate communications and marketing, consulting, publishing, and even medicine, where their language skills and cross-cultural awareness are a major asset!

The listed experiences are a sample of options for your major. See the USC Connect experiences database to search for more opportunities.

www.sc.edu/usccconnect/participate