

MA Comprehensive Examinations
German Program
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
Approved Fall 2010

Written exam

Reading list

The core list of 25 (plus 1 contemporary) works and 25 (plus 1 contemporary) poems constitutes a minimum basic standard to which all candidates for an MA degree in German will be held. It contains works from the Middle Ages to the Present. Candidates must read these works carefully and understand their literary and cultural significance. See Appendix A & B for the core list of works and poems.

Scheduling

The comprehensive exam will be held together with the other language programs at the beginning of January usually on the Thursday before the first Monday of Spring classes. The exam date will be posted on the web and announced during the fall semester. Students must declare their intention to take the exam to the graduate director. Make-up exams will be held at the discretion of the examination committee and the Graduate Director in early April.

Description of the exam

The written exam will last four hours and test the student's knowledge of the works on the MA reading list. Students must answer four essay questions. There will be a choice of questions composed by the faculty of the German Program for each of the following periods: 1. Medieval and Early Modern, 2. 18th and Early 19th Century, 3. 19th Century and Early 20th Century, 4. 20th and Early 21st Century. Any of the questions may have a theoretical component and students will be required to answer at least one question with a theoretical component. The exam is intended to test the candidate's basic knowledge of the main periods, trends, authors and works of German literature from the Middle Ages to the Present. Examinees should also be familiar with the significant events, shifts, trends and personalities of German cultural and political history.

Grading

The exam is graded by the MA comprehensive examination committee, in consultation with the rest of the German Program faculty. The grade is either pass or fail, although pass with distinction is possible. The committee may require a candidate to retake the entire exam or parts of the exam. Only one retake is allowed. After a student has passed the written comp they may proceed to the oral comp.

Oral Exam

Reading list

In consultation with the thesis advisor or the expanded seminar paper advisor, the degree candidate will prepare a bibliography consisting of works related to the topic of their thesis or expanded paper. For students specializing in literature, the list will contain primary and secondary texts, including background on the period of the work or works to be dealt with. For students specializing in linguistics, the list will contain monographs and journal articles, as well as handbooks providing the background of the topic to be studied.

Thesis Proposal (thesis option)

Working with their advisor, the candidate will compose a thesis proposal. The proposal should introduce the topic, placing it into the context of significant previous research in the field, as well as outline the proposed study.

Scheduling

The oral exam will normally be scheduled for the end of January. Thesis students will turn in their thesis proposal, non-thesis students a prospectus of their expanded seminar paper at the end of the fall semester. Upon acceptance of the proposal or paper, the oral exam may be scheduled.

Description

The oral examination will last an hour to an hour and a half and the advisor and second reader of the thesis or expanded paper will be present. The student will present a summary of the thesis proposal or expanded paper, followed by discussion. Examiners may also ask general questions and questions related to the student's written exam.

Grading

The grade is either pass or fail, although pass with distinction is possible. The committee may require a candidate to retake the exam. Only one retake is allowed. After a student has passed the oral comp, the student may proceed to writing the thesis or expanded seminar paper.