

The M.A. Comprehensive Examination

Upon completion of the General Requirements for the Degree, M.A. students are required to take a series of comprehensive examinations in order to prove competency in the specified fields of study. **NB: all coursework, including the foreign language requirement, must be fulfilled before the student may take his/her comps. A student may not take the comps while completing course work that applies to the M.A. in the same semester.**

The student's exam must demonstrate the following:

1. Explain in detail the characteristics or tenets of the area of study;
2. Analyze the major debates and paradigm shifts of a critical tradition or region;
3. Analyze the main visual, written, and musical texts of a critical tradition or region, or the major theoretical debates, visual, and written texts of a cultural theme;
4. Explain and apply the ideas of scholars of a given area of study to his or her analysis of a cultural text(s); and,
5. Cite relevant sources.

Semester Prior to Taking the Exam

Students will meet with the Graduate Advisor *at least* a semester prior to the exam being taken to determine whether the general requirements have been met. If so, the advisor will sign off on the coursework so the student may proceed.

Subsequently, students will schedule the exam with the Program Assistant, William Rutledge, **no later than the last day of the first week of classes in the semester in which the student intends to take the exam..** Exams can be taken from the fifth to the tenth weeks of the Fall or Spring Semesters (examinations are not offered during the summer session).

Semester that the Exam is to be Taken

Register for BOTH the appropriate amount of reading hours, HUM6904, and for the exams themselves, HUM8966.

- Remember, coursework MUST be completed the semester before you may take the exams.

Write and submit (as MS Word or .rtf document) **course summaries**, which should include the following for every course counting towards the M.A.:

1. student name and examination date,
2. course number, title, and professor (complete with email and phone number),
3. a single paragraph description,
4. list of texts read, and;
5. topic of the student's research project from the course.

See Appendix 4.1 for an example. The course summaries are due the *first week* of the semester the exams are to be taken.

If planning to graduate, make sure to also register for graduation. See the FSU graduate student handbook for more information.

Preparing for the Exam

1. Make sure to save all of your course syllabi, notes, essays, texts, and papers to use for writing course summaries as well as preparing to take the exam.
2. Review major concepts presented in each course, remembering that these exams are comprehensive in scope.
3. When re-reading texts, make sure to identify key passages that speak to several themes in order to potentially cite them in the exam.

4. Remember that interdisciplinary approaches to the humanities test the ability to both analyze *and* synthesize, or in other words, moving between specifics and generalities to reach substantial and worthwhile conclusions.
5. If unsure about the process, always remember that your Graduate Advisor is there to help.

NB: Fall 2008 marks a significant change in exam procedures, in particular the section entitled 'The Nature of the Exam'. Students who entered the program prior to Fall 2008 may opt to follow the Old Bulletin if they so choose. You MUST make your choice when you sign up to take your exams (i.e. no later than the last day of the first week of classes in the semester you intend to take your exams).

Old Bulletin M.A. exam

The Nature of the Exam

The Exam is divided into three parts taken over three days:

- Core
- Seminars and/or Pedagogy
- Area of Study

The graduate student reports to the office manager at the scheduled time to receive his or her set of questions for that particular day, who will escort the student to the appropriate location where a computer is provided. The graduate student has **three (3) hours to complete the Core exam, and two (2) hours** to complete the other parts unless the student is registered with S.D.R.C. and needs more time (see Graduate Advisor if this applies). Each exam is crafted to the individual student's coursework, as questions are solicited from the student's instructors and compiled by the Graduate Advisor or Department Chair.

The format is likewise tailored to the individual, but the exams are generally (though not always) organized as follows:

- For Core, the student is given three comprehensive questions (one from each time period) and **is required to answer all three.**
- For Seminars and/or Pedagogy, the student will be given a number of questions (typically 4-6, from which she will choose

- two) drawn from the seminars, as well as pedagogical questions designed to integrate knowledge and teaching the major area from an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, the student may be called to construct a syllabus or explain how certain texts should be taught in a humanities course.
- For the Area of Study, the student will typically choose from a selection of 4-6 questions, answering two.

New Bulletin M.A. exam

The Nature of the Exam

The Exam is divided into three parts taken during one week, administered in-house (computer provided):

- Core
- Seminars and/or Pedagogy
- Area of Study

The written exam will be a take-home exam; the student will have one week to complete all three questions that comprise the written portion of the comprehensive exam. The written answer to each question should be a maximum of ten double-spaced pages. The advisor will guide the student as to the level of rigor that is expected in the essays.

The graduate student reports to the office manager/program assistant at the scheduled time to receive his or her set of exam questions. The graduate student has **one (1) week to complete the exam**, unless the student is registered with S.D.R.C. and needs more time (see Graduate Advisor if this applies). Each exam is crafted to the individual student's coursework, as questions are solicited from the student's instructors and compiled by the Graduate Advisor or Department Chair.

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- For Core, the student is given three comprehensive questions (one from each time period) and **is required to answer all three.**
- For Seminars and/or Pedagogy, the student will be given a number of questions (typically 4-6, from which she will choose two) drawn from the seminars, as well as pedagogical questions designed to integrate knowledge and teaching the major area from an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, the student

- may be called to construct a syllabus or explain how certain texts should be taught in a humanities course.
- For the Area of Study, the student will typically choose from a selection of 4-6 questions, answering two.

Evaluation of the Exam

After the Exams have been administered, they are sent by the Department Chair to the appropriate professor(s) and graded. See Appendix 3.1 for evaluation criteria typically used to assess the exams. The Department Chair receives back and reviews the graded exams, making the final determination of the student's success.

Professors who grade part or all of any given exam use the following scale: Pass, Low Pass, High Pass, Fail. Should a student fail a single question on any given exam, the professor may opt to allow the student to rewrite the question. The student will be notified if this is the case and will then seek out the professor in question to determine the nature, scope and time-frame for this extra work. Should a student fail a majority of the exam, he/she may reschedule a second, and final, retry.

Because multiple professors are involved in the evaluation process, students should keep in mind that the process takes time. Professors are asked to submit their graded responses within three weeks of having received them. Students should leave it to the Department Chair to follow up. The student will be notified in writing of the results of the exams.

Appendix 4.1

Course Summaries for M.A. [or Ph.D.] NAME

1. Required HUM Courses (9 hours)

HUM 5227: Greek/Roman Dr. Leon Golden (Fall 02)

This course covers several principle texts of the Classical world. The first unit addresses the Greek concept of the heroic in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The second looks at the Greek concept of tragedy. The three types of tragedy discussed include 'pity and fear,' 'hubris, ate, nemesis,' and 'pathos.' The portion on Roman civilization discusses two kinds of

ancient comedy, critical and great. 'Pietas' and 'furor' characterizes the Roman concept of the heroic, while Roman tragedy moves toward the 'grotesque.'

TEXTS: *The Iliad* (trans. Stanley Lombardo); *The Odyssey* (trans. Stanley Lombardo); Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*; Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*; Euripides, the *Bacchae* and *Alcestis*; Plautus, *The Brothers Menaechmus* and *The Swaggering Soldier*; Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*; Seneca, *Oedipus* and *Thyestes*

ASSESSMENT: Midterm and Final Examinations

(...)

2. HUM 6939 Courses or Seminars (12 hours) [9 hours for Ph.D.]

HUM 6939: Science Fiction and Technology

Dr. Gary Stillwell (Summer 02)

This course identifies key scientific achievements and how they influence science fiction. Topics included the history of the atom that leads to the development of the atomic bomb, an overview of cosmology, a history of machine intelligence, and space travel and relativity. These coincide with the four categories of science fiction that include 'utopia/distopia,' 'mythology,' 'technology, discovery and invention,' and 'fantastic voyage.'

TEXTS: Vonnegut, *Player Piano*; Asimov, *I, Robot*; Heinlein, "Expanded Universe" and "Solution Unsatisfactory;" Lindsay, *Voyage to Arcturus*; Stapledon, *First and Last Men*

ASSESSMENT: Midterm and Final Examinations; Class Presentation entitled "The Application of Chaos Theory to Literary Analysis;" Term Paper entitled "Chaos in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*"

(...)

3. Cultural Period or Theme (12 hours) [18 hours for major/ 12 for minor for Ph.D.]

MMC 5305: Media and Globalization

Dr. Greg Elmer (Fall 03)

'Media and Globalization' looks at how conflicts emerge on local, national and international levels through the recent trends of globalization, due largely to changes in media and communication technologies. It explores the dynamic relationship between the 'core' or conventional centers of global power that range from Hollywood to Hong Kong, and 'periphery,' which combats globalization by implementing more of a 'grass-roots' approach to media technologies. Other theories of globalization discussed include 'Origins and Spread of Nationalism' and 'Media and Cultural Imperialism.' The second section entitled 'Text, Technology, Space' deals with specific media technologies that

contribute to globalization including satellites, television and film, and world music. Other topics in this section include 'Indigenous Peoples and Global Media,' 'Media and the Politics of War, Peace, and Terror,' and 'Global Piracy and Copyright: From Napster to Kazza and Beyond.'

TEXTS: Thussu, *Electronic Empires: Global Media and Local Resistance*; Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*; Hardt and Negri, *Empire*; Miller, *Global Hollywood*; Essays Selected by Instructor

ASSESSMENT: In-class Presentation of Assigned Reading; Research Paper entitled "An 'I' for an Eye: An Attempt at Understanding the Role of Self-Observation in *Empire* through Art"