

**Minimum core requirements for the PhD include the following**

**CL 402: Introduction to Comparative Literature**

**A course in any three of the following four categories, one of which must be a 500-level seminar home-based in or cross-listed with Comparative Literature. In rare cases, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, a course outside of Comparative Literature might fulfill one of these categories**

**Category I: Transcultural Studies**

Transcultural Studies brings a cross-disciplinary and cross-regional perspective to the study of cultural artifacts and their mobility. Courses in this category therefore study the circulation of subjects, ideas, and texts in specific historical and geographical contexts and provide students with the theoretical and conceptual tools to analyze depictions and narratives of cultural exchanges and conflicts. Courses may include, for example, the relation between different forms of movements across space (the *experience* of travel, diaspora, pilgrimage, migration, exile, displacement) and cultural production (form, aesthetics); historical processes that altered the relationship between the local and the global; poetics/narrative forms of texts that challenge real and imagined boundaries between nations, languages, and cultures under such rubrics as transnationalism, transatlanticism, hemispheric studies, Pacific Rim studies, Continental European studies, globalization, world literature, immigrant literature, and oceanic studies. Within this framework Comparative Literature at Washington University currently has particular strengths in the following areas: theoretical approaches to mobility, cultural circulation, diaspora and migration; the fields of Transatlantic Studies, transnational Caribbean literature, Sinophone cultural studies, European literatures, and the study of World and multilingual literatures.

**CL 501 Topics in Transcultural Studies.** Studies in and applications of methodologies of humanistic inquiry that transcend national and disciplinary borders and aid in understanding the movement, routes, channels, ethics, and politics of cultural production, exchange, and consumption synchronically and diachronically (topics vary).

**Category II: Translation Studies**

Since the 1980s, translation as practice and as theory has become central to Comparative Literature. As the canon of world literature has expanded to include many non-European literatures, including various creole and hybrid literatures and oratures, scholars have acknowledged the necessity of using translations in research as well as in teaching. Whereas it used to be the case that most major African literary works could be read in either French or English, such is not the case of the work of writers such as Ngugi wa’Thiongo, whose African languages also require translation. Along with the practical turn to translation in Comparative Literature has come, not surprisingly, the critical and theoretical assessment of translation in the context of globalization, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity, post-colonial theory, and an emphasis on interdisciplinarity. With its interest in crossing the borders between languages, cultures, and national literatures, Comparative Literature is implicitly committed to performing and also to assessing theoretically the function and value of “translation” in the widest sense of the term.

**CL 551 Methods of Literary Study:** The Theory and Practice of Literary Translation I. A review of translation theories, with a study of translation practices of various literary forms (prose, poetry, drama) and media. Prerequisite native or near-native competence in English and another language. Also open to qualified students not in the Certificate Program.

**CL 552 Methods of Literary Study:** The Theory and Practice of Literary Translation II. A review of translation theories and the study of translation practices of various literary forms (prose, poetry, drama) and

media. Prerequisite native or near-native competence in English and another language. A more general approach to translation and cultural exchange in a globalizing world than Part I. Topics will include the ideological underpinnings of translation, the political uses of language in intercultural communication, and the multiple uses of translations of all kinds of literature in a multicultural world. Students will choose a text that has already been translated for critique in addition to producing their own translation; students will be expected to report orally on the process and the product of this project several times during the semester.

### **Category III: Literature, Politics, and Society**

Raising basic questions about writing in, for, and about the world, studies in category III are based in the premise that literature has historically mattered and continues to matter to lived human experience and human communities and that it addresses, engages in, produces, and is produced by power relations and social formations worldwide across languages, cultures, and nations. Courses in this category investigate the roles of literature in social, religious, and political movements (for example, anarchism, feminism, nationalism, fascism); literature, biopolitics, and secularism; literature and geo-political arrangements, storytelling and group formation; narrative medicine; the representation of “ordinary” quotidian experience vis-à-vis crisis; the role of literature and its producers in political dissent; and the interventions undertaken by literature in questions of human rights, law, religious freedom and oppression, access to resources, torture, and citizenship. Studies in this area also investigate literature itself as the product of social, economic, and political formations and their attendant pressures; they investigate and problematize censorship, book burning, the market (local and global), literary fashion, celebrity, literary prizes, academic institutions and the teaching of literatures, translation, and the very agency and autonomy of the author.

**CL 503 Topics in Literature, Politics, and Society.** Studies in and applications of approaches to literature, politics, and society. Seminars will be explicitly comparatist in their examination and applications of different methodologies to particular issues and/or in attention to specific problems in different historical or regional circumstances.

### **Category IV: Media Ecologies, Media Histories, Media Poetics**

Courses in this category facilitate broad, theoretically informed, and historically grounded thinking about the effects of media transformation on both production and consumption, on the self-conceptions of authors (artists, composers), producers, and consumers (readers/viewers/listeners). With a variety of media and hybrid media, from the book to contemporary digital media, as objects of study, courses in this category address both moments in which transformations in media constitute a crisis, becoming the objects of reflection, and periods in which media do their work “quietly” and surreptitiously, evading reflection. Courses explore how media not only “mediate” but structures knowledge, cultural exchange, artistic expression, perception, and indeed experience itself, asking timely questions about the aesthetics, ethics, and politics of media. They consider such critical issues as intellectual property, the dynamic of “private” and “public” media, and the commodification of media. Attention may also be given to competitions between media, to remediation, intermediality, and the mutual incorporations between media, to the ways new media reconfigure the conception, function, and imagined provenance of older media, both in the past and in the twenty-first century. They might also examine digital technologies, their potential as tools of humanistic research, and their status as themselves media that reshape knowledge and experience.

With permission from the Graduate School, students who pursue this area in depth might supplement their theoretical and historical study with praxis by taking select courses in the making of media objects.

**CL 504: Topics in Media** Studies in media (e.g., handwriting, oil-painting, videotape, print, digital stream, lp, film, games) both as formal determinants of artistic practice and as cultural agents. Seminars will be explicitly comparative either in their attention to the relation (competitive, mutually transformative) between media or in their attention to the different aesthetic and social functions of a medium in different historical or regional circumstances.