

University of Pittsburgh

Department of French and Italian

Graduate Handbook

Revised, August 2022

(D.P. / L.I.)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| I. Degrees Offered by the Department | 4 |
| II. Fields of Study for the MA and PhD Degrees | 4 |
| III. The Major Adviser | 4 |
| IV. Programs of Study | 4 |
| <i>A. MA in French</i> | 4 |
| <i>B. MA in Italian</i> | 5 |
| <i>C. PhD in French with MA en route</i> | 6 |
| <i>D. PhD in French</i> | 7 |
| <i>E. PhD in Film and Media Studies with a Concentration in French</i> | 8 |
| V. Exchanges, Residence Requirements, and Grade Options | 9 |
| <i>A. Exchange Positions</i> | 9 |
| <i>B. Residence and Grades</i> | 10 |
| VI. Course Load | 10 |
| <i>A. Course Requirements</i> | 10 |
| <i>B. Directed Studies</i> | 10 |
| <i>C. TA/TF Appointments and Outside Appointments</i> | 10 |
| VII. Language Requirements | 10 |
| VIII. Timeline and Examinations for the French MA | 11 |
| <i>A. MA Evaluation</i> | 11 |
| <i>B. MA Reading/Viewing Lists</i> | 12 |
| <i>C. MA Comprehensive Exam in French</i> | 12 |
| <i>D. Post-MA Students</i> | 12 |
| IX. MA Comprehensive Exam in Italian | 13 |
| X. Timeline and Examinations for the PhD with MA en route | 14 |
| <i>A. Preliminary Evaluation</i> | 14 |
| <i>B. MA comprehensive exams</i> | 15 |
| <i>C. Funding and Time to Degree</i> | 15 |
| <i>D. Comprehensive Examinations for the PhD with MA en route in French</i> | 15 |
| <i>E. Syllabus Design</i> | 17 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>F. Oral Exam</i> | 17 |
| <i>G. PhD Comprehensive Exam Timetable (PhD w/ MA en route)</i> | 18 |
| <i>H. Composition of PhD Comprehensive Exam Committees</i> | 18 |
| <i>I. Evaluation of PhD Comprehensive Exams</i> | 19 |
| XI. Timeline and Examinations for the PhD without an MA | 19 |
| <i>A. Preliminary Evaluation</i> | 20 |
| <i>B. Funding and Time to Degree</i> | 20 |
| <i>C. Comprehensive Examinations and funding for the PhD in French</i> | 21 |
| XII. Language, Dates and Repetition of the Comprehensive Examinations | 23 |
| <i>A. Language used in the PhD Comprehensive Examinations</i> | 23 |
| <i>B. Dates of Comprehensive Examinations</i> | 23 |
| <i>C. Repetition of MA and PhD Comprehensive Examinations</i> | 23 |
| XIII. Thesis and Dissertation Requirements | 24 |
| <i>A. The MA Degree</i> | 24 |
| <i>B. The PhD Degree</i> | 24 |
| <i>C. The Language of the Dissertation</i> | 25 |
| <i>D. Steps in Writing the Doctoral Dissertation</i> | 25 |
| <i>E. Registration</i> | 26 |
| XIV. Leaves of Absence | 26 |

I. Degrees Offered by the Department

- A. Master of Arts
- B. Doctor of Philosophy

II. Fields of Study for the MA and PhD Degrees

MA Degree:

French
Italian

PhD Degree:

French
Film and Media Studies with a Concentration in French (degree granted by the Film and Media Studies Program with French as Associated Program)

III. The Major Adviser

The Director of Graduate Studies functions as the adviser for all MA and for new doctoral students. After the initial registration, doctoral students may be advised by any departmental faculty member who will agree to the responsibility. Students must acquaint themselves with the requirements set forth in the current Graduate Catalog of the Kenneth P. Dietrich Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (<https://catalog.upp.pitt.edu/content.php?catoid=189&navoid=17967>), as well as with this statement. It is the students' responsibility to see that their advising sheets are kept up to date and to initiate all necessary steps leading toward their graduate degrees.

IV. Programs of Study

A. MA in French

A minimum of 10 one-term courses; 8 in French literature, media, and culture are required, of which at least six must be 2000-level courses.

- French 2710 (Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory) is required for all students.
- French 2970 (Teaching of French) is required for students holding a Teaching Assistantship or a Teaching Fellowship, but does not count among the eight courses.
- French 2000 (Introduction to Graduate Studies in Modern Languages and Cultures) is required of all first-year students.
- To ensure the acquisition of a broad knowledge of French and Francophone literature and culture, students must take at least one seminar in each of the following four temporal and geographic areas in this department:

- Medieval period or 16th century
- Early Modern (17th and 18th centuries)
- Post-Revolution/Modern (19th-21st centuries)
- The Global South

Additionally, students must register for at least one semester of FR 2910 (3 cr. Comprehensive Examination MA). They must also register for one semester of FR 2903 (3 cr.; MA Research Paper Directed Study), typically during their final semester in the MA phase. This research paper (6,000-8,000 words) is written in French, under the direction of the professor who is most familiar with the topic, and preferably as the result of an already existing seminar paper.

Second Language: See VII below.

B. MA in Italian

A minimum of ten one-term courses in Italian literature and culture is required, of which at least nine must be 2000-level courses. Italian 2000 (Introduction to Graduate Studies in Modern Languages and Cultures) is required of all first-year students. Occasionally, a student's particular circumstances, as well as the nature and content of an Italian-taught upper-level undergraduate course, make it suitable to be taken for credit, but only one such course may count towards the degree. Italian 2710 (Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory) is required of all students. Of the remaining courses, seven are typically seminars taught within the Department of French & Italian, or Directed Study credits when appropriate and with approval of the Italian DGS. Additionally, students must register for at least one semester of ITAL 2910 (3 cr.; Comprehensive Examination MA), typically during their third or fourth semester in the full-time program, or in any case not before completion of 12 graduate credits; and one semester of ITAL 2903 (3 cr.; MA Research Paper Directed Study), typically during their final semester in the program.

NB: Italian 2970 (Teaching of Italian) is required for students holding a Teaching Assistantship, but does not count among the ten courses. Directed and Independent Studies in Italian are offered upon request, whenever faculty members are available and willing to teach and/or supervise one or more students in a particular area of interest; such courses may be taken in addition to, but not in substitution for, regularly scheduled graduate courses, and only one Directed Study may count towards the degree (Independent Studies do not count for Masters' degrees) . Candidates must also pass comprehensive examinations and fulfill the following requirements:

1. **Research Paper:** Each MA candidate is required to write a long final paper in Italian (20-25 pages), of publishable quality at the end of the revision process. Students are strongly advised to select one paper from among their completed or ongoing seminar work. The first reader (typically the instructor for whom the work was originally done) will determine its suitability as an example of research methodology and scholarly writing, and will decide whether—with revision and expansion—it can be presented to a second reader, and then to the

Department in lieu of a thesis. Students must submit the completed thesis, to the second reader at least 10 days before the deadline for certification of graduation. Such deadline typically falls in mid-December for Fall graduation and in the last week of April or first week of May for Spring graduation.

2. **Second Language:** Candidates must demonstrate a reading knowledge of Latin or German or a Romance language other than Italian (other languages will be considered upon petition). This requirement is waived for those students who come to the program with two terms of undergraduate Latin, or four terms of German or a Romance language at Pitt or the equivalent. See also section VII.

C. PhD in French with MA *en route*

This degree is intended for students who wish to pursue the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in French but who do not already hold an MA in this field or in a closely related discipline. Students must first successfully complete the requirements for the MA in French, normally within their first two years of full-time enrollment. Students doing the PhD with the MA *en route* will be awarded an MA degree at the completion of these requirements.

To ensure the acquisition of a broad knowledge of French literature and culture, candidates must have had taken at least one course or one exam in each of the following four temporal and geographic areas before they reach candidacy:

- Medieval period or 16th century
- Early Modern (17th and 18th centuries)
- Post-Revolution/Modern (19th-21st centuries)
- The Global South

Before students may be considered for admission to candidacy for the PhD, they must successfully complete a minimum of five 2000-level courses (15 credits) beyond the MA. The five courses must include:

1. FR 2710 (if not taken during the MA phase) and an additional course in literary or cultural theory.
2. With the adviser's consent, students are free to take some of the additional required courses in other departments. Students in French are encouraged to pursue certification in one of the various programs offered by the University (Cultural Studies; Digital Studies and Methods; European Union Studies; Film and Media Studies; Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies; Western European Studies; Global Studies; and Medieval and Renaissance Studies). However, only three exterior courses may count towards the degree in French.

In addition, the candidate must present an oral close analysis of a passage or sequence before a faculty committee (completed as part of the MA comprehensive exams), fulfill the MA seminar paper requirement (completed during the MA phase; see section IV.A.1), and pass written and oral PhD comprehensive examinations. The PhD language requirement will normally be satisfied during the MA phase (see section VII below). The close analysis requirement is normally completed as part of the MA comprehensive exams.

Upon admission to candidacy, the candidate will write and defend a doctoral dissertation.

FR2601 (Dissertation Workshop) is strongly recommended for all PhD candidates on teaching fellowship, and two credits (one in fall, one in spring) satisfies the course audit requirement during candidacy (see VI.A). For PhD candidates on fellowship, FR2601 is recommended but not required.

D. PhD in French

This degree is intended for students who already hold an MA in French or in a closely related discipline. To ensure the acquisition of a broad knowledge of French and Francophone literature and culture, candidates must have had taken at least one course or one exam in each of the following four temporal and geographic areas before they reach candidacy:

- Medieval period or 16th century
- Early Modern (17th and 18th centuries)
- Post-Revolution/Modern (19th-21st centuries)
- The Global South

Before students may be considered for admission to candidacy for the PhD, they must complete successfully a minimum of eight 2000-level courses (24 credits) beyond the MA. The eight courses must include:

1. FR 2710 and an additional course in literary or cultural theory.
2. With the adviser's consent, students are free to take some of the additional required courses in other departments. Students in French are encouraged to pursue certification in one of the various programs offered by the University (Cultural Studies; Digital Studies and Methods; European Union Studies; Film and Media Studies; Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies; Western European Studies; Global Studies; and Medieval and Renaissance Studies). However, only three exterior courses may count towards the degree in French.

In addition, the candidate must pass written and oral PhD comprehensive examinations.

Upon admission to candidacy, the candidate will write and defend a doctoral dissertation.

FR2601 (Dissertation Workshop) is strongly recommended for all PhD candidates on teaching fellowship, and two credits (one in fall, one in spring) satisfies the course audit requirement during candidacy (see VI.A). For PhD candidates on fellowship, FR2601 is recommended but not required.

E. PhD in Film and Media Studies with a Concentration in French

The PhD in Film and Media Studies at the University of Pittsburgh is an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental degree that stresses the history, theory, and aesthetics of international cinema, video, television, and new media. While the student will earn a PhD in Film and Media Studies (granted by the Film and Media Studies Program), they will also be a full member of French, fulfilling all requirements for the PhD in French. French will appear as an Area of Concentration on the student's transcript. Thus, the student graduating with a PhD in Film Studies will be doubly qualified: in Film and Media studies as well as in French Studies.

Students must fulfill all of the requirements for the PhD in French or PhD with MA *en route* (see sections IV.C and IV.D) and the following additional requirements:

1. Core Courses in Film and Media Studies (7 credits):

- a two-course (6 credit) sequence taken in any order:
 - Film History/Theory I ENGFLM 2451
 - Film History/Theory II ENGFLM 2452
 Students must complete both core courses by the end of their third year.
- 1 credit Film and Media Studies Proseminar ENGFLM 2905 (Note: This will not count toward seminar credit within the French program and will be given on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis).

2. Electives in Film and Media Studies (12 credits)

- Four elective Film and Media Studies courses (in any department). Of the total six required seminars, the student must take at least two courses taught by a member of the Film and Media Studies faculty outside of French. These courses can include the two required core courses as well as any of the four electives.

Preliminary examination/evaluation: The two required core courses in Film and Media Studies (Film History/Theory I and II) will serve as the preliminary exam in Film and Media Studies. Successful completion of these two classes with a grade of B or better will constitute passing the preliminary examination. To maintain funding, students must also pass the required preliminary evaluation conducted by the French faculty at the end of the first year of enrollment.

PhD comprehensive examinations: The PhD comprehensive exams must contain at least one component focusing on Film and Media Studies and at least one component on French Studies (including its relation to film and media). Exams must demonstrate

mastery of film and media studies as a discipline, the history of French and Francophone cinema, and the relationships between French and Francophone Studies and Film and Media Studies as determined in consultation with the adviser. At least one member of the exam committee will be a member of the graduate faculty in Film and Media Studies.

Dissertation committee: The dissertation will be completed in the Department of French and Italian and must involve film and/or media studies as subject matter incorporated with French Studies (as determined by the dissertation director). The Chair of the dissertation committee will be a graduate faculty member in the Department of French and Italian who is also a member of the interdisciplinary Film and Media Studies graduate faculty. The external member of the committee will be a member of the Film and Media Studies graduate faculty from outside the Department of French and Italian.

Teaching: All French/Film PhD students will be required to serve as TA/TF for at least one film class, typically World Film History or Film Analysis. If the Department of French and Italian does not offer a film course or has no TA/TF positions for a film course, students will be required to teach one term of the undergraduate course Introduction to Film or History of French Cinema as part of their overall experience as a TA/TF.

V. Exchanges, Residence Requirements, and Grade Options

A. Exchange Positions

Students interested in going on exchange positions established with foreign universities should discuss this issue with the Director of Graduate Studies, and submit an application by October of the preceding academic year. The application should take the form of a letter explaining what the student hopes to gain from spending a year abroad, and what specific goals will be reached by the end of the exchange year. The Director of Graduate Studies will lead an ad hoc committee in charge of reviewing the applications, and of selecting the students whose case appears the strongest.

MA students selected for an exchange with a foreign university will thereby earn a third year of financial support since the faculty believes that any student at this level can profit simply from the experience of living and working in France. At the PhD level, the application letter should take the form of a detailed research proposal, spelling out precise and measurable goals for the year spent abroad.

Once the student is selected, they will produce a written plan detailing how they will use their time abroad, how it fits into their professional plans, and what outputs they will have by the end (research, publications, exam preparation, etc.) This plan can be based on their application letter, but should be something agreed upon between the student, DGS, and their advisor(s). This plan must be completed by the end of the semester preceding the exchange.

B. Residence and Grades

For the residence requirements, see “General Regulations” in the current Graduate Catalog.

A “B-” grade in a required course must be eliminated by repetition of the course.

VI. Course Load

A. Course Requirements

All full-time students (and TAs and TFs must be full-time students) are required to register for at least three courses (9 credits) per term for a letter grade. At least six of these credits must count toward course requirements for the degree. The remaining three credits can be taken in FRIT, or in another department at the 1000 (1000 level courses will not count towards the graduate degree) or 2000-level. TAs and TFs may register for a maximum of five courses (15 credits). If students register as auditors for a course (above and beyond the nine credits required), they are expected to do the reading for the course and take an active part in class discussions.

PhD candidates who hold a Teaching Fellowship are required to audit at least one course per term in the Department, or they can choose to participate more actively in only one course per year. In the latter case, they have to agree with the instructor on the modalities and the extent of their involvement in the course. In all cases, students must attend at least half of the class sessions to be considered in good standing. Taking FR2601 (Dissertation Workshop) each semester satisfies this requirement. Students holding pre-doctoral fellowships are not required to audit courses.

B. Directed Studies

Directed studies will be granted in exceptional cases at the discretion of the faculty.

C. TA/TF Appointments and Outside Appointments

Graduate students holding teaching assistantships from the University of Pittsburgh should devote their full time to the program of graduate study in which they are enrolled, and are expected to make satisfactory progress towards their degree. Students with these appointments may not simultaneously accept another appointment or be employed either within or outside the university without knowledge and approval from the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair.

VII. Language Requirements

Candidates for the MA must give evidence of ability to read another scholarly language such as Latin, German, or a Romance Language other than their major language (French or Italian). Students may petition to the DGS to have another language related to their

research interests count, such as Creole, Wolof, Arabic, or Ancient Greek. Candidates can fulfill the language requirement by satisfactorily passing a translation exam, a two-term graduate reading course, or the equivalent of a fourth-semester language course (with a grade of “B” or better). Other types of documentation may be accepted by the DGS.

Candidates for the PhD in French must give evidence of ability to read another scholarly language such as Latin, German, or a Romance language other than French. Students may petition to the DGS to have another language related to their research interests count, such as Creole, Wolof, Arabic, or Ancient Greek. Students who have satisfied the language requirement during the MA will be considered to have fulfilled this requirement for the PhD. Students may be required by their dissertation advisor to have a reading knowledge of Latin.

Students should fulfill this requirement as soon as possible, ideally by the end of their second year in the program, but no later than the date they advance to PhD candidacy. MA and PhD students may not use undergraduate, elementary language credits as part of the nine credit hours funded students are required to take each semester, and these credits will not count towards the 72 credit hours needed in order to enroll in FTDA (full time dissertation study).

VIII. MA in French

| | Fall Term | Spring Term | Summer Term |
|---------------|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Year 1 | French 2710 French 2000 2 other graduate seminars | 3 seminars MA evaluation (see below) | Read for MA comprehensive exam |
| Year 2 | 3 seminars | 2 seminars plus oral and written MA comprehensive exam (see below) | |

Candidates for all MA degrees must take written comprehensive examinations in their program. Normally, MA candidates will be expected to complete all requirements for the degree by the end of the term in which they take their comprehensives.

The University has established a statute of limitations of four years for MA candidates.

A. MA Evaluation

At the end of the first full year of coursework, MA students will be evaluated by the department. The DGS in French will contact all members of the faculty with whom the student has studied or worked in view of giving feedback to the student about their performance in coursework, their teaching, and their citizenship in the department. This

evaluation will be part of the annual report which all graduate students in the department complete in early summer.

B. MA Reading/Viewing Lists

There are four MA reading/viewing lists, one for each of the four research networks: Environment; Film and Media; Gender and Sexuality; and Nation/Transnation. Students will choose **two** of these lists to prepare for the MA exam. The lists establish the minimal requirements in each area for preparation of the MA comprehensive exams and may be obtained in the department office. These lists are intended to guide MA candidates in their preparation for the comprehensives.

C. MA Comprehensive Exam in French

The MA Comprehensive is an examination designed to ensure that the candidates have acquired a thorough overall knowledge of French language, media, culture and literature, as well as a strong competency in close analysis. It is divided into two sections, a written section and an oral section. There are two parts to the written exam: one on each of the two reading/viewing lists students have chosen. The exam is a mixture of open-ended essay questions and specific, targeted questions including identifications. The written exam will be in French. Each part of the written exam is four hours in length and is given on different days. This exam is given once per year, usually the week after spring break.

The oral component of the exam consists of three sections. First, students will present a close analysis of a textual passage or a sequence from a film. For this exam, students will have 48 hours to prepare their presentation. The close analysis will be done in French and should last approximately 25 minutes. The second part of the oral exam will be a discussion between faculty and MA candidates about the written comprehensive exams and about the texts or periods that the student did not discuss in the written exams. Finally, faculty and students will discuss the student's seminar paper. This paper (see "IV. Programs Of Study," above) must be distributed to the members of the exam committee at least two weeks in advance of the oral exam. The oral exam will usually take place 1-2 weeks after the written exam.

For further information and the reading list, see the document "Comprehensive Exam for the MA in French."

D. Post-MA Students

Students who complete the MA in French at the University of Pittsburgh and are subsequently accepted into the French PhD program will follow the timeline below for the PhD with MA *en route*, beginning in year 3 of the timeline. All work done for the MA (language requirement, coursework, etc.) will be directly applied to the PhD. These students will have a preliminary evaluation at the end of their first year in the PhD program (see below). Such students should begin working in the summer after their MA

exams to formulate reading lists for their comprehensive exams and to articulate a possible PhD project.

IX. MA Comprehensive Exam in Italian

The MA Comprehensive is a written examination designed to ensure that the candidates have acquired a thorough overall knowledge of Italian language, culture and literature, as well as a strong competency in literary analysis. It is divided into three four-hour tests.

Students prepare for the exams on the basis of the reading-list provided to them by the Italian faculty. In preparation for two of the three exams, students concentrate on two different periods of Italian Literature. Students select their periods from the 20th century and/or any combination of two other adjacent centuries. For the third written examination students are asked to prepare for a general, cross-century examination of an question of his/her choice, relevant to the history of Italian literature and culture (for example: the *questione della lingua*; the origins, development and demise or transformation of a literary genre; Italian identity and migration; the interrelations of literature and another discipline, etc.). This exam shall include a theoretical component. Students must consult with the graduate advisor and the faculty member principally responsible for the chosen topic, in order to determine a specific, appropriate reading list and narrative description (1-2 pages) for their third, diachronic, exam. While the period-specific comps must be taken in Italian, the diachronic exam may be taken in English.

Candidates should complete their coursework and written examinations according to the following schedule:

| | Fall Term | Spring Term | Summer Term |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| Year 1 | Italian 2710 Italian 2970 One other graduate seminar (in Italian) Italian 2000 | 3 seminars | Prepare 1 st comprehensive exam |
| Year 2 | 2 seminars + Italian 2910 MA Comprehensive Exam 1 st comprehensive exam by 1 Sept 2 nd comprehensive exam by 15 Dec | 2 seminars + Italian 2903 MA Research Paper Directed Study (submit draft to 1 st reader by last day of Spring Break ; submit paper to second reader by 23 Apr) Diachronic exam by 1 Apr | |

Upon review of the written examinations, the Italian faculty conducts individual oral interviews with the candidates to inform them of the results and discuss their final paper.

X. Timeline and Examinations for the PhD with MA *en route*

(See section X.D for detailed examination timeline)

| | Fall | Spring | Summer |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| Year 1 | French 2710 French 2000 2 other seminars | 3 seminars Preliminary evaluation | Read for MA exam |
| Year 2 | 3 seminars | 2 seminars plus oral and written MA comprehensive exam (see below) | Begin research on dissertation topic, select PhD exam format and committee, construct list and write description for PhD comprehensive exam |
| Year 3 | 2-3 seminars Prepare for PhD comprehensive exam Take PhD Exam | 2-3 seminars Complete and defend prospectus | Begin writing PhD dissertation |
| Year 4 | Write dissertation Complete any remaining seminar requirements | Write dissertation | Write dissertation |
| Year 5 | Write dissertation | Complete dissertation Defend dissertation (or summer) | Defend dissertation |

A. Preliminary Evaluation

In accordance with Graduate School policy, students in their first year of the PhD program will undergo a preliminary evaluation at the end of the first year of full residence. The DGS in French will contact all members of the faculty with whom the student has studied or worked in view of giving feedback to the student about their

performance in coursework, their teaching, and their citizenship in the department. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify those students who may be expected to complete a doctoral program successfully, and also to identify deficiencies in the students' preparation. To satisfy this requirement, graduate students in French will meet with their adviser in the second term of residence for an evaluation of the record of performance in their first term on the basis of grades and reports from the students' instructors.

B. MA comprehensive exams

In their second year of full-time study, students take MA comprehensive exams. See above under MA (section VIII.C.) for a description of the exams. The exam for students completing the PhD with MA *en route* is the equivalent of the “MA comprehensive exam” for MA students and will be given on the same dates as that exam. Students will receive one of three grades: honors with permission to continue on to the PhD, pass with permission to continue on to the PhD, conditional pass, or a terminal MA.

C. Funding and Time to Degree

The University has established a statute of limitations of ten years from the student's initial registration for graduate study or eight years from the initial registration for students holding an MA degree. Although the Department adheres to this regulation, it points out that students doing the PhD with MA *en route* can only receive up to **five** years of financial support.

Under exceptional circumstances, students may be eligible for a sixth year of support. To qualify, they must complete their written comprehensive exams at the beginning of the sixth semester of support, and they must defend their prospectus by the end of the sixth semester or the beginning of the following summer. Students should enter candidacy by the end of the summer term of their third year. To apply, they must submit a document describing why their progress has been delayed and detailing a timeline for completion of the dissertation. Their advisor must read this document and submit a letter of support.

The department will not renew Teaching Fellowships after the students have benefited from **six years** of support. One year of financial support is typically a competitive fellowship. The typical five years of support include TFships and any competitive fellowships within the University of Pittsburgh, though they do not include an exchange year in France.

D. Comprehensive Examinations for the PhD with MA *en route* and PhD in French

Given that students in the PhD with MA *en route* degree program have already taken a diachronic exam as a part of their MA requirements, they only need to take *one* PhD comprehensive exam. Students in the PhD in French degree program *without MA* must take *two* PhD comprehensive exams, one of which must have a diachronic focus (see XI.C below).

PhD examinations normally should be passed at least eight months (two terms) before the degree is to be awarded. Students may present themselves for the examinations only after passing all preliminary examinations and language and other requirements, except for courses that are currently being taken.

The comprehensive exam is meant to help the candidate develop a scholarly and original approach to the study of literature, media, and culture in the French language. The exam tests whether or not the student has sufficient knowledge of their fields of specialization to write a dissertation. Students should be able to articulate the shape of these fields and they should be conversant with current trends in scholarship. The exam also evaluates if the student has acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in a college or university environment by addressing periods outside the area of specialization and by creating a balance between general and specialized topics, including a mastery of the French language. The exam is meant to serve as a bridge between the more general diachronic MA examination and the research project which will result in the dissertation. After completing this exam, students write a prospectus (see below).

The PhD comprehensive exam consists of one written component and one oral component. The choice of language for the written exam is decided in consultation with the exam committee and the DGS, but it is typically the students' non-native language. In the case that neither French nor English are native languages for the student, the exam should be taken in the language that the DGS and exam committee deem most useful for the students' ongoing linguistic development.

The student should work with the faculty members of their comprehensive exam committee (see below) to select a format, bibliography, and set of research questions for the written exam. The format for the exam must be finalized and approved by the full exam committee in writing at least one month prior to the scheduled date of the exam and submitted to the DGS. No changes may be made to the exam questions or format without approval of the full exam committee.

The department encourages graduate students and faculty to consider a range of strategies in designing written exams. The exam should enable students to benefit to the greatest degree possible, expedite their progress in the program, advance their intellectual and scholarly skills, and prepare for the professional goals that students have discussed with their committee members. Some of the strategies that graduate students and faculty are encouraged to consider include:

- Exams should balance historical and theoretical knowledge. Reading/viewing lists are typically 30-40 titles, including at least five secondary or theoretical readings.
- Students and faculty should decide on a chronological framework for each exam and consider whether a diachronic or a period-specific approach would best help the student progress in the skills and knowledge needed for the dissertation, their teaching, and their professional goals.
- The department strongly encourages all exam committees to orient at least one of the exams to the Research Networks.

- Students can choose, in conjunction with their exam committees, alternative options for the exams, such as:
 - a carefully considered 20–25-page essay
 - alternatives to the written essay, such as a video essay, a digital humanities project, or a public humanities project
 - a syllabus and accompanying rationale for a course (see below)

For traditional written exams (timed or untimed), students should prepare a written 1–2-page description of the topic, research area, and questions that they plan to examine.

E. Syllabus Design

The goal of this type of exam is to create a teachable undergraduate course proposal that demonstrates a students' ability to translate their knowledge of a research field into the design of an advanced undergraduate course. The course proposal consists of a rationale, an outline of class sessions including the reading assignments students will complete *and* the additional background reading that the instructor would do in preparing for the course. The course outline should be annotated with topics and questions for the students. It should also include two activities in which students practice and refine their use of the French language. Students and the exam committee should agree on a course topic, but should choose topics that allow them to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge in a given research field.

The **course rationale** (about 2,500 words) explains the choice of the course topic, lays out how the course reflects recent research trends in a given area, and engages with secondary literature in pedagogy on teaching the topic, where applicable.

The **course outline** details topics and reading/viewing assignments week by week, for a typical semester of 14 weeks. The reading assignments should not exceed 50 pages or 90–120 minutes of media per week, and should consist of primary and/or secondary texts rather than textbooks.

The course proposal must include a week-by-week, or section-by-section explanation of the sequence of themes and the choice of assignments. The course proposal should include information on course requirements, such as how students will be evaluated and what types of assessment will be used (papers, exams, oral interviews, etc.), as well as a sample “prompt” with guidelines addressed to students for a midterm or final project.

F. Oral Exam

The second exam, to be taken no later than the first week of September, will be followed by an oral exam in French or English scheduled within two weeks of the written exam and conducted by the student's examination committee. During the oral exam, the student will answer questions on written exams, syllabus, reading/viewing lists, or other outputs, discuss the development of the research question(s) across the exams, and present plans

for the dissertation prospectus. Students will receive feedback on their comprehensive exam portfolio and on the conception and planning of the dissertation prospectus.

G. PhD Comprehensive Exam Timetable (PhD w/ MA *en route*)

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Year 2/Summer | <p>Determine Exam committee (3-4 faculty members including exam advisor) and choose exam advisor (in most cases, this person will become your dissertation advisor). Exam advisor, committee, and format must be agreed upon and reported to the DGS and graduate administrator by May 31.</p> <p>Begin work on list for Exam 1.</p> <p>Finalize list and description for Exam 1 and work on exam research question by the end of the summer.</p> |
| Year 3/Fall | <p>Submit final version of exam format, including reading/viewing list and description to exam committee, DGS, and graduate administrator by the end of second week of fall semester.</p> <p>Students may have until the week after fall break to submit a revised exam description, if necessary.</p> <p>Prepare for Exam (register for PhD comp credits).</p> <p>If applicable, schedule the Exam with exam committee and graduate administrator no later than one month before projected exam date.</p> <p>Take Exam during the first two weeks of December (or the second week of January at the latest).</p> |
| Year 3/Spring | <p>Take oral exam, to be scheduled within two weeks of second written exam.</p> <p>Write dissertation prospectus (prospectus defense at the end of spring semester).</p> |

H. Composition of PhD Comprehensive Exam Committees

The student will ask a faculty member in a specialization pertaining to the field of their exam to chair the committee. For the second exam, the chair of the committee should also be the student's intended dissertation director. The exam committee chair must be a member of the French graduate faculty; they may be, but are not required to be, the

student's prospective dissertation advisor. The student, with the approval of the committee chair, will ask at least two other members of the faculty to serve on the exam committee. This committee, composed of at least three members, will guide the student in deciding on the exam format, preparing a reading/viewing list, and writing the description (if applicable). The committee will also supervise the administration of the written examinations. This committee will evaluate the examinations along with other specialists who will be called upon as deemed appropriate by the faculty member chairing the committee.

I. Evaluation of PhD Comprehensive Exams

Exam 1: Students will receive individual written comments and a common exam grade from the exam committee within 2 weeks of the exam date. The exam is graded as Fail, Pass, or Honors, with +/- grades possible.

Exam 2: Students will receive a common exam grade for the written and oral sections of the exam (same grading rubric as Exam 1). Feedback on both parts of the exam will be given at the time of the oral examination.

Students must pass all of the PhD comprehensive exams in order to proceed to the prospectus. A student who fails an exam may be permitted to retake the exam once according to a schedule determined by the exam advisor and committee, but no later than 3 months after the original examination.

XI. Timeline and Examinations for the PhD without an MA

This timeline is for students who enter the PhD program with an MA in French or in a closely related field (See section X.G. for detailed examination timeline).

| | Fall | Spring | Summer |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Year 1 | FR2710 FR2000 2 other seminars | 3 seminars Preliminary evaluation | Begin preparing PhD comprehensive exams |
| Year 2 | 3 seminars | 2 seminars Prepare PhD comprehensive Exam 1 Take PhD Exam 1 | Prepare PhD comprehensive Exam 2 |
| Year 3 | Take PhD Exam 2 | Begin writing dissertation | Write dissertation |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| | Complete and defend prospectus | | |
| Year 4 | Write dissertation | Write dissertation | |
| Year 5 | Write dissertation | Complete dissertation Defend dissertation | |

A. Preliminary Evaluation

In accordance with Graduate School policy, students in their first year of the PhD program will undergo a preliminary evaluation by the end of the first year of full residence. The DGS in French will contact all members of the faculty with whom the student has studied or worked in view of giving feedback to the student about their performance in coursework, their teaching, and their citizenship in the department. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify those students who may be expected to complete a doctoral program successfully, and also to identify deficiencies in the students' preparation.

The preliminary evaluation for students entering with an MA will constitute an oral discussion between the student and three faculty members (one of which must be the DGS) held at the end of the spring semester (typically after grades are submitted in April/May). The student will submit one seminar paper in French and one in English written during their first year. They will also submit a 1-page, single-spaced *précis* of their emerging dissertation research area, including a list of 6-8 secondary sources that represent current scholarship in that area. Students will discuss the role of these papers in their scholarly trajectory thus far and talk more broadly about their research plans and the future. The goal of this preliminary evaluation is not only to decide whether or not students should proceed but also to begin the mentoring process of working towards a dissertation topic.

B. Funding and Time to Degree

The University has established a statute of limitations of ten years from the student's initial registration for graduate study or eight years from the initial registration for students holding an MA degree. Although the Department adheres to this regulation, it points out that students doing the PhD can only receive up to **five** years of financial support.

However, to be eligible for a fifth year of support, students must complete their written comprehensive exams at the beginning of the fifth semester of support, and they must defend their prospectus by the end of the fifth semester. Students should enter candidacy by the end of their fifth semester.

The department will not renew Teaching Fellowships after the students have benefited from **five years** of support. The five years of support include TFships, an exchange year in France, and any competitive fellowships within the University of Pittsburgh.

C. Comprehensive Examinations and funding for the PhD in French

Students in the PhD in French degree program *without MA* must take *two* PhD comprehensive exams, one of which must have a diachronic focus.

The comprehensive exams are meant to help the candidate develop a scholarly and original approach to the study of literature, media, and culture in the French language. The exams test whether the student has sufficient knowledge of their fields of specialization to write a dissertation. Students should be able to articulate the shape of these fields and they should be conversant with current trends in scholarship. The exams also evaluate if the student has acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in a college or university environment by addressing periods outside the area of specialization and by creating a balance between general and specialized topics, including a mastery of the French language. The exam is meant to serve as a bridge to the research project which will result in the dissertation. After completing this exam, students write a prospectus (see below).

The PhD comprehensive exams consist of two written components and one oral component. One of the written exams is produced in French and the other in English. It is recommended that the second exam be taken in the language of the dissertation.

The student should work with the faculty members of their comprehensive exam committee to select a format, bibliography, and set of research questions for the written exam. See Section X.D. above for an explanation the PhD comprehensive examination format options and process.

The format for the exam must be finalized and approved by the full exam committee in writing at least one month prior to the scheduled date of the exam and submitted to the DGS. No changes may be made to the exam questions or format without approval of the full exam committee.

D. PhD Comprehensive Exam Timetable (PhD in French)

Year 1/Summer

Determine Exam 1 committee (3-4 faculty members including exam advisor) and choose exam advisor. The Exam 1 advisor does not have to be your dissertation advisor.

Begin work on list for Exam 1.

Year 2/Fall

Exam advisor, committee, and format must be agreed upon and reported to the DGS and graduate administrator by September 15th.

Finalize list and description for Exam 1; work on exam research question.

Year 2/Spring

Submit final version of exam format, including reading/viewing list and description to exam committee, DGS, and graduate administrator by the end of first week of spring semester.

Students may have until the week after spring break to submit a revised exam description, if necessary.

Prepare for Exam 1 (register for PhD comp credits).

If applicable, schedule Exam 1 with exam committee and graduate administrator no later than one month before projected exam date.

Take Exam 1 in April or the first two weeks of May.

Make contact with Exam 2 advisor (in most cases, this person will become your dissertation advisor); discuss the composition of Exam 2 committee (3 faculty members, including exam advisor), format, and research questions.

Year 2 Summer

Submit final version of Exam 2 format, reading/viewing list, and description to Exam 2 committee, DGS, and graduate administrator by June 30. (Students may have until July 20 to submit a revised exam description, if necessary).

Prepare for Exam 2.

If applicable, schedule written section of Exam 2 with exam committee and the graduate administrator no later than one month before exam date.

Year 3/Fall

Complete written part of Exam 2 during the first week of September, at the latest.

Take oral exam, to be scheduled within two weeks of second written exam.

Write dissertation prospectus (prospectus defense at the end of fall semester).

XII. Language, Dates and Repetition of the Comprehensive Examinations

A. Language used in the PhD Comprehensive Examinations

For students in the PhD with MA *en route*, the choice of language for the written exam is decided in consultation with the exam committee and the DGS, but it is typically the students' non-native language. In the case that neither French nor English are native languages for the student, the exam should be taken in the language that the DGS and exam committee deem most useful for the students' ongoing linguistic development.

For students in the PhD in French program, the PhD comprehensive exams consist of two different exams, one of which is written in French and the other in English. It is recommended that the second exam be written in the language of the dissertation.

B. Dates of Comprehensive Examinations

Comprehensive examinations for the MA degree in Italian will be given by the Department throughout the course of the student's second year in the program, as outlined in part IX, above.

The Department expects MA students in French who are applying to the PhD program to take and pass the comprehensives by March of their second year.

The **two** sections of the MA comprehensive examinations in French have to be taken by the end of March in the second year of the TAship. The exam will be given only once per year, so that all students have to take the written exams on the same day.

Students in the PhD with MA *en route* will take the only examination of the PhD comprehensive examinations at the end of fall semester of their third year, in December or early January; students in the PhD, at the end of their second year in April or May. Students in the PhD will take their second examination at the beginning of the fall of their third year, in September. The written portion of the exam, to be taken no later than the first week of September, will be followed by an oral exam scheduled within two weeks of the written exam.

C. Repetition of MA and PhD Comprehensive Examinations

Students who fail one or more parts of the written examinations may, on the recommendation of the Department, be permitted to repeat those parts that they failed. MA students may (if faculty is available) be given an opportunity to make up the failed section or sections of the examination over the summer.

Students must pass all their PhD comprehensive exams in order to proceed to the prospectus. A student who fails an exam may be permitted to retake the exam once according to a schedule determined by the exam advisor and committee, but no later than 3 months after the original examination.

XIII. Thesis and Dissertation Requirements

A. The MA Degree

No formal thesis is required. Candidates for MA degrees must take one seminar in which a major research paper is required (see the MA seminar paper requirement, section IV.A.). The instructor will grade the paper for form and content and decide whether it is suitable, with or without revision, to be presented to the Department in lieu of a thesis.

B. The PhD Degree

A doctoral dissertation is required. This must meet the standards established by the University. Students should visit the ETD website (<https://etd.pitt.edu/>) specifying these standards as soon as their prospectus has been accepted. Dissertations must be submitted electronically to the University. Students are responsible for completing all necessary paperwork before graduation.

The format of PhD dissertations in the French program has typically been the proto-monograph: four 30–40-page chapters, one 20–25-page introduction, one 8–10-page conclusion, and a works cited section. Given changes in the academic job market, in modes of presenting humanities scholarship, and in professional goals of students who seek employment outside the academic job market, students may now also select a portfolio format for their dissertation. The PhD is first and foremost a research and writing degree, so the dissertation as portfolio must demonstrate significant expertise in these skills.

The minimum format requirements for the PhD dissertation as a portfolio is three journal-length articles (6000-8000 words) that are connected by a shared research agenda. One of these should be published by the time of the defense and another should be under review. The portfolio should also include a 15–20-page introduction that describes the portfolio's shared research project and how the articles are connected. It should also include an 8–10-page conclusion that indicates directions for future research and public engagement. One of these articles may have a teaching or pedagogy focus. For students interested in digital humanities or public humanities modes of scholarship, one of the journal articles in the portfolio may be replaced by an alternative mode of sharing humanities research, including, but not limited to, an exhibit, a website, podcast, or a video essay.

Students who decide to pursue the portfolio format for their dissertation must discuss their professional goals and their desired format options with their complete committee before the prospectus defense. Furthermore, the dissertation prospectus must describe the format, its rationale, and its connections to the student's professional goals. Following a

successful prospectus defense, no changes can be made to the dissertation portfolio format without the written agreement of the whole dissertation committee.

C. The Language of the Dissertation

Normally, dissertations are written in English, as prescribed by the Graduate Faculty. A student intending to petition for permission to write the dissertation in French, shall write at least two seminar papers in English in order to demonstrate competence in the language. The student is advised to make an early written petition to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies, Dietrich Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and is warned that such permission may not be granted. The petition should be accompanied by a letter from the adviser and a copy of the papers written in English. In the petition, the student should present sound reasons for writing the dissertation in a language other than English. The reason for writing a dissertation in a language other than English must pertain to the student's professional goals and future publication venues for the dissertation. This petition must be submitted by the time of the student's prospectus defense.

D. Steps in Writing the Doctoral Dissertation

It is the student's responsibility to design a topic suitable for research resulting in a doctoral dissertation. Students are encouraged to start thinking about a topic and to seek advice from faculty members as soon as they join the PhD program.

By the end of their first year in the PhD phase, they must already have at least a rough idea of the direction in which they want to launch their research project.

As soon as the comprehensive examinations have been passed, the student and their adviser should agree on a dissertation committee including at least three members of the department (including the director) and one member chosen from another department in an area of expertise relevant to the dissertation topic.

Usually during the third year (PhD only) or fourth year (PhD with MA *en route*), the student must submit a prospectus to the director for circulation among the committee members, typically by the end of the fall semester. The scope, size, organization and format of the prospectus are specified in a separate departmental document, which PhD students should receive or request as soon as they pass their comprehensive examinations.

The student then defends the prospectus in front of the committee. Upon acceptance of the prospectus by the committee, the student applies to the graduate school for admission to candidacy for the degree.

The dissertation committee must meet with the student at least once per academic year until the dissertation is completed.

The student continues research and writing under the supervision of the director. After the director has read and approved the entire dissertation, copies are distributed to the other members of the committee. The director sets a date for the defense in consultation with the candidate and with the other members of the committee. Committee members must receive their copy of the dissertation at least four weeks before the defense date.

Upon successful completion of the defense, the director sends formal notification to the Dietrich Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the various administrative requirements for graduation are satisfied in time.

E. Registration

All graduate students must register in each term in which they are using University facilities; they must be registered for at least one credit whenever a landmark (passing the preliminary or comprehensive examinations, defending the prospectus and being admitted to candidacy, and defending the dissertation) is being completed. If the graduate student is active during the summer (meaning they have been registered in the previous three terms) they do not need to be registered in the summer to take the doctoral preliminary evaluation or the doctoral comprehensive exams (this policy applies only to the summer).

A student who is not registered for at least three credits during a 12-month period will be transferred to inactive status and must file an application for readmission to graduate study before being permitted to register again. Readmission is not automatic nor does it necessarily reinstate the student in the status enjoyed prior to becoming inactive. When readmitted, the student must be prepared to demonstrate proper preparation to meet all current degree requirements.

There is a seven-year strictly enforced statute of limitations on the validity of the results of the comprehensive examination for PhD students and a strictly enforced statute of limitations of four-years for MA students. After this deadline has passed, parts of the comprehensive examinations will have to be re-taken to reassess the currency of the knowledge held by the student in light of the developments newly appeared in the discipline.

XIV. Leaves of Absence

A graduate student must apply for an official leave of absence in cases of illness or personal concern. Leaves are considered on a case by case basis and are recommended to the Assistant Dean on the discretion of the DGS. The application can be made for maximum of one year for MA students or two years for PhD students. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance. The leave must be approved by the Assistant Dean.

If the leave of absence has been approved, the statute of limitations for the degree is extended by the length of the time of the leave. However, PhD students will not be permitted an extension of the 7-year limit on the PhD comprehensive exam. PhD students must retake the comprehensive if they do not graduate within 7 years of the exam dates. This will also apply for the 4-year limit for MA students.

While on leave students are not permitted to use university facilities or faculty time. If a student is on an approved leave and needs to be registered to use university facilities, faculty time, or to defer loans and maintain visa status, they must cancel their leave.

An approved leave only holds a student's place in their class, it does not guarantee funding. If a student takes a leave, they may not have funding when they return.