PhD Comprehensive Examination

Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to test the student’s knowledge of significant literature in two fields: the general field of study to which the student has applied (Religion and Culture; Religions in Canada; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World) and the specific field of study to which the student’s thesis will contribute.

Reading lists

a. General field of study

Option 1:

The department will maintain reading lists for each of the general fields of study: Religion and Culture; Religions in Canada; Religions in the Graeco-Roman World. The student, in consultation with the thesis director, will select 30 to 50 titles from the list of one of these fields. The student may substitute 10 titles with books or major articles of the student’s choice, subject to the approval of the thesis director. After approving the list, the thesis director will obtain the agreement of two faculty members to be examiners of the field. Both examiners must be authorized to supervise theses and at least one examiner must be a member of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies.

Option 2:

Students whose field of research is pluridisciplinary may propose a pluridisciplinary reading list of 30 to 50 significant scholarly works (books, articles) for their general field examination. The reading list must be accompanied by an explanation, no more than one page single-spaced, 12-point font, of the proposed field and reading list. The reading list must be approved by the thesis director and two faculty members who have agreed to be examiners of the field. It is the responsibility of the thesis director to obtain the agreement of these two faculty members. Both examiners must be authorized to supervise theses and at least one examiner must be a member of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies.

After the reading list (Option 1 or Option 2) has been approved, it is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies, along with a cover page that indicates:

- Name of student
- Degree sought
- Name(s) of the thesis director(s)
- Name of the general field of study
- Names of two faculty members who have agreed to be examiners
- Signatures of the student and the thesis director
- Date signed
This document will be deposited in the student’s file in the departmental office.

b. Specific field of study

The student, in consultation with the thesis director, will prepare a reading list of 30 to 50 significant scholarly works (books, articles) in the field of study to which their thesis will contribute. The reading list must be accompanied by an explanation, no more than one page single-spaced, 12-point font, of the proposed field and reading list. The reading list must be approved by the thesis director and two faculty members who have agreed to be examiners of the field. It is the responsibility of the thesis director to obtain the agreement of these two faculty members. Both examiners must be authorized to supervise theses and at least one examiner must be a member of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies. The examiners of the specific field of study need not be the same persons as the examiners of the general field of study.

After the reading list has been approved, it is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies, along with a cover page that indicates:

- Name of student
- Degree sought
- Name(s) of the thesis director(s)
- Name of the specific field of study
- Names of two faculty members who have approved the reading list and agreed to be examiners
- Signatures of the student and the thesis director
- Date signed

This document will be deposited in the student’s file in the departmental office.

Examination

Prior to the oral examination, the student will prepare an analytical discussion, approximately five pages single-spaced, 12-point font, of each of the two reading lists. The purpose of this paper is to allow the student to demonstrate her or his understanding of the literature and to provide the examiners with a point of departure for the oral examination.

The student will submit these papers to the thesis director and the Director of Graduate Studies, along with title pages indicating the name of the student, the name of the field, the thesis director, the names of the two examiners, and the date of submission. The Director of Graduate studies will then schedule oral examinations for each field. In each case, the purpose of the oral examination is to evaluate the student’s knowledge of the field as delimited by the reading list and the student’s ability to discuss salient points, developments, or debates in the literature.

The examination will be evaluated Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory. A student may attempt an examination of a field a second time if the result of the first examination is Not Satisfactory. The examiners may request a supplemental written examination if they deem this necessary.