

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

Students will propose a reading list of 30 to 50 significant scholarly works (books, articles) for a) their general field of study, and b) their specific field of study. Each 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 lists must be approved by the thesis director and two faculty members who have agreed to be examiners of the fields. 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 lists have been approved by the examiners, each 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 field of study
- Names of two faculty members who have agreed to be examiners
- Signatures of the student and the thesis director
- Date signed

These documents will be placed in the student's file.

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 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 a title page indicating the name of the student, the names of the fields, the thesis director, the names of the two examiners, and the date of submission. The thesis director and two examiners must approve the papers in order for the oral examination to take place. Should the paper not be acceptable, the student will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit it.

After approval by the thesis director and examiners, the Director of Graduate Studies, through the Graduate Assistant, will schedule oral examinations for each field. In each case, the purpose of the oral examination is to evaluate a) the student's knowledge of the field as delimited by the reading list and b) the student's ability critically to assess the assumptions, arguments, and methods of 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.

The list below outlines the learning outcomes that are expected from the comprehensive examination, and the attached template will be used to assess the level of understanding and critical awareness that the student has attained. The form will be filled out by all members of the examining committee. The final evaluation will require a consensus among the committee. In the event of disagreement, there will be discussion on the part of the examining committee. An evaluation of 'satisfactory' will require scores of 'good' to 'excellent' on all of the points in the template.

Learning outcomes

1. Knowledge
 - a. Knowledge of the important scholarly literature in the field
 - i. Diachronic: knowledge of the "classics" in the field
 - ii. Synchronic: knowledge of current scholarship
 - iii. Comprehensive: knowledge of scholarship written in English, French, and other languages as relevant to the field of study
 - b. Knowledge of the main lines of scholarly inquiry
 - i. Diachronic: historically
 - ii. Synchronic: at the present time
2. Critical thinking
 - a. Ability to discern the underlying assumptions
 - b. Ability to engage in analysis and critique of scholarship
 - c. Ability to critically compare and contrast methodologies
 - i. Diachronic
 - ii. Synchronic
 - d. Ability to situate one's own project in the broader context
3. Communication
 - a. Written
 - b. Oral

Template for the evaluation of comprehensive examinations

Degree level expectation	General learning outcome to evaluate	Specific learning outcome to evaluate	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
Depth and breadth of knowledge	Knowledge of scholarly literature	Diachronic					
		Synchronic					
		International					
	Knowledge of main lines of inquiry	Diachronic					
		Synchronic					
	Advanced Critical Thinking	Scholarship	Presuppositions				
Critique							
Methods		Diachronic					
		Synchronic					
		Applications of methods					
Communication		Written	Clarity				
	Depth						
	Thoughtfulness						
	Oral	Clarity					
		Depth					
		Thoughtfulness					