Comparative Literature, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description
Designed for students who want to study literature with an interdisciplinary and global perspective, the major in Comparative Literature crosses the boundaries of geography, time, nationalities, languages, and cultures. The world of literature taught draws upon readings from the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and from many historical periods. The range includes recognized great books along with less-known works, timeless myths and up-to-date graphic novels and video games, gender studies, colonial and postcolonial literatures, indigenous literatures, testimonies, legends, banned books, literatures of the occult, detective fictions, virtual worlds, and cultural theory, and more. Students engage with different languages and cultures, develop the critical skills for literary and cultural analysis, and relate literature to other media, including film and digital media. The major also encourages students to explore the relationship between literature and ethics through course offerings focused on transnational identities, human rights, cultures of globalization, and the problem of violence. A senior seminar clarifies the mysteries of literary theory and provides opportunities for individual projects.

Students majoring in Comparative Literature take courses in the Department of Comparative Literature and in other departments. They also develop competence in a foreign language. Study abroad is encouraged: students may count up to 18 Education Abroad credits toward the major. The department endeavors to provide all Comparative Literature majors with opportunities for an individualized “engaged scholarship” experience, such as an undergraduate research project, an opportunity to assist faculty in research or teaching, an internship, an experience studying or working abroad, etc.

Graduates of the Department of Comparative Literature have undertaken careers in teaching, completed advanced degrees in literature, librarianship, law, and similar fields, entered the Peace Corps or other types of government service, and pursued careers in writing and communications.

The department offers a minor in World Literature, a major in Comparative Literature and an innovative integrated undergraduate-graduate degree through which students obtain both a B.A. and an M.A. in Comparative Literature.

What is Comparative Literature?
Comparative literature is a discipline of literary studies that explores exciting approaches to literature and culture in a global context. It also examines global media (print, visual, electronic), and engages with questions of ethics, human rights, and the real world contexts of literary and cultural production.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (http://complit.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/)

You Might Like This Program If...
- You are curious about other cultures beyond your own and want to learn to think critically and creatively about cultural difference and convergence in our interconnected world.
- You want to acquire important skills such as analytical writing, argumentation, and communication in an international context.
- You are interested in acquiring knowledge of a second language and/or culture, which is a key component to success in the global economy.

Entrance to Major
In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:
1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have third-semester classification (http://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/)

Degree Requirements
For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Comparative Literature, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Degree</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of coursework in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Recommended Academic Plan for your intended program.

General Education
Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.
Foundations (grade of C or better is required.)
- Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
- Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

Knowledge Domains
- Arts (GA): 6 credits
- Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
- Humanities (GH): 6 credits
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 6 credits
- Natural Sciences (GN): 9 credits

Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)
- Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements
First Year Engagement
All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition
The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements
Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

Requirements for the Major
A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44).

Code | Title | Credits
---|---|---
CMLIT 10 | World Literatures | 3
CMLIT 100 | Reading Across Cultures | 3
CMLIT 400Y | Senior Seminar in Literary Criticism and Theory | 3

Supporting Courses and Related Areas
Select 27 credits from sections A, B, and C, including at least 15 credits at the 400 level:

A. Concentration

Select one of the following concentrations:

- Language Emphasis
  - Select 6-18 credits in the study of a single world language and/or literature beyond the 12th credit level; see department list

- Student-designed Thematic Emphasis
  - Select 6-18 credits of CMLIT courses, in consultation with your adviser, organized around a theme you devise, subject to your adviser’s approval of a 1-page academic plan in which you explain your theme and the courses that fit into it.

B. Literatures

Select at least 6-18 credits in courses on literature. Up to 12 of these credits can be taken through departments other than Comparative Literature. Up to 18 credits may be taken as courses offered through an Education Abroad program with departmental approval.

C. Comparative Literature

Select 3 credits in Comparative Literature at the 400 level

Integrated B.A. in Comparative Literature and M.A. in Comparative Literature

Requirements for the Integrated B.A. in Comparative Literature and M.A. in Comparative Literature can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/comparative-literature/#integratedundergradgradprogramtext).
Program Learning Objectives
After completing this program, students will be able to:

1. Identify formal and aesthetic aspects of literary texts—including genre, period, style, theme, language, and narrative structure—as they emerge within global patterns of production, translation, or circulation.

2. Analyze literary texts and other artistic media through close readings within a comparative or global context.

3. Utilize library and digital resources to locate, access, and assess relevant research materials.

4. Compare literary texts from different cultures, regions, languages, time periods, and genres with special attention to the benefits and challenges of the comparative method.

5. Produce written arguments that advance a compelling rhetorical or theoretical position through analysis of textual evidence, a strong thesis statement, and a sophisticated understanding of how to read global literatures.

Academic Advising
The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/)

University Park
Liberal Arts Academic Advising
814-865-2545
Use the Liberal Arts Majors and Minors web page (https://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students/education/majors-and-minors/) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

Suggested Academic Plan
The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2020-21 academic year. To access previous years’ suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition (Note: the archive only contain suggested academic plans beginning with the 2018-19 edition of the Undergraduate Bulletin).

University Park Campus
The course series listed below provides only one of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an Academic Requirements or What If report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

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<tr>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Fall</th>
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<td>CAS 100A, 100B, 100C, 138T, or ENGL 138T (GWS)‡</td>
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<td>General Education Course (GQ)‡</td>
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<td>General Education Course</td>
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<td>General Education</td>
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<td>World Language level 5*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>BA Other Cultures course/Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Course</td>
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<td>400 Level course in Comparative Literature, English Literature, or Foreign Literature*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>General Education (GHW)</td>
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<td>Elective</td>
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<td>General Education Course (General Health and Wellness)</td>
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<td>CMLIT 400Y (US/IL)*</td>
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<td>Total Credits</td>
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</table>
Comparative Literature, B.A.

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
† Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
‡ Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy University Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

GWS, GQ, GHW, GN, GA, GH, and GS are abbreviations used to identify General Education program courses. General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS, and Integrative Studies). Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of ‘C’ or better.

Integrative Studies courses are required for the General Education program. N is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate an Inter-Domain course and Z is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate a Linked course.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and replace both ENGL 30H and CAS 100. Each course is 3 credits.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures/).

Advising Note:

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

Career Paths

Comparative Literature will give you a deeper understanding of this planet and its people, and open doors to new intellectual and cultural worlds. It will train you in important skills such as analytical writing, argumentation, and communication in an international context. The study of world literature, ethics and human rights, and global media—key areas in our program—gives students in professional and technical areas the "soft skills" that allow them to stand out from other applicants when they enter the job market and to build long-lasting careers out of the first job. Comparative Literature will expand your professional and intellectual options, not only immediately after graduation, but for the rest of your life.

Careers

A degree in Comparative Literature will aid you in finding employment in domestic and international business, public relations, publishing, education, non-profit organizations, and museum acquisitions. Our alumni also pursue graduate degrees in advanced literary studies, law, and library science; and they have become professors, attorneys, librarians, and leaders in business, private institutions, and government service.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The graduate program in Comparative Literature offers students small seminars on a diverse range of topics related to world literatures and cultures across the globe examined from a variety of theoretical approaches. We are committed to the intellectual development and professional success of all our students. We make sure they have opportunities to teach literature classes in their field(s) of study, and we work with them beginning in the second year to prepare them to write for publication. We also offer students the possibility of pursuing internships that prepare them for careers in and beyond academia.

Contact

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cmlit@psu.edu