

East Asian and Comparative Literatures, PhD

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Degree Requirements

Doctoral Candidacy

To earn a PhD at Washington University, a student must complete all courses required by their department; maintain satisfactory academic progress; pass certain examinations; fulfill residence and Mentored Experience Requirements; write, defend, and submit a dissertation; and apply to graduate via Workday Student. For the details of doctoral degree general requirements in Arts & Sciences, including an explanation of Satisfactory Academic Progress, students should review the Doctoral Degree Academic Information page of the Arts & Sciences *Bulletin*.

Program Requirements

- **Total Units Required:** 36 (**Note:** Remission applies for a maximum of 72 graduate-level units.)
- **Degree Length:** Six years
 - **Note:** Students must be enrolled in 9 graduate credits each semester to retain full-time status. As students complete their course work, if enrolled in fewer than 9 graduate credits, they must enroll in a specific Arts & Sciences graduate course that will show 0 units but does count as full-time status. Students should connect with their department to ensure proper enrollment prior to Add/Drop.
- **Grade Requirement:** The minimum grade required for a course to count toward the PhD is a B-.
 - This dual PhD degree requires study of East Asian literature and culture, over the course of which the student virtually duplicates the courses and other preparations expected of a doctoral candidate in East Asian Languages and Cultures. Students additionally complete the 12-unit core requirement for the Comparative Literature PhD program, which includes COMPLITHT 5200 Introduction to Comparative Literature. For a description of this core, see the [PhD in Comparative Literature](#).

Required Courses

Course Requirements

All PhD candidates must complete a minimum of 12 graduate-level courses selected to yield a broad and deep familiarity with the literary and cultural history of the country of focus and a secondary area (or areas) of focus. Language courses will not count toward the 12 required courses.

For this dual degree, the 12 courses must include the following:

- Four courses in one East Asian literature, including two seminars at the 5000 level
- Four courses in a second literature or other field to be determined in consultation with the advisor
- Four courses comprising the Comparative Literature core requirement, including COMPLITHT 5200 Introduction to Comparative Literature and three additional courses distributed among designated categories (refer to PhD in Comparative Literature for the listing of designated categories).

Beyond these requirements, students may take up to three additional courses to fulfill requirements for a certificate or to supplement their training.

Language Requirements

All PhD students must demonstrate native or near-native competence in both the language of focus (Chinese, Japanese or Korean) and English. Course work in premodern forms of the language of focus may also be required. In addition, reading knowledge of a third language on at least the research level is required. Students should select these languages in consultation with their advisory committee.

- Upon joining the dual degree program, students must be competent in a minimum of two languages pertinent to their work and their objectives. Both languages will be evaluated by an expert in each language.

Competency in the third language must be demonstrated before students defend their dissertation prospectus by doing one of the following:

1. Earning at least a B in a 5000-level course that requires the use of the language in which students wish to develop competence. (For example, in the case of a 5000-level EALC course taught in English, the student's written work must incorporate research in and/or analysis of material in the original language in which the student seeks to demonstrate competency.)
2. In the case of an East Asian language, placing out of at least the third-level of the language in the department's standard placement exam.

Qualifying Examinations

Progress toward the PhD is contingent upon the student passing examinations that are variously called *preliminary*, *qualifying*, *general*, *comprehensive*, or *major field exams*. The qualifying process varies according to the program. In some programs, it consists of a series of incremental, sequential, and cumulative exams over a considerable time. In others, the exams are held during a relatively short period of time. Exams may be replaced by one or more papers. The program, which determines the structure and schedule of the required examinations, is responsible for notifying the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, of the student's outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful.

Qualifying Evaluation

The Graduate Committee will conduct a screening of PhD students no later than the end of their second year. By November 15 of their third semester, students will submit a research statement (approx. 500 words) and a writing sample (complete seminar paper). During reading week, they will be expected to give a 10-minute formal presentation to the department faculty. By the end of the fall semester, primary faculty advisors will submit an evaluative report of progress for each of their advisees. The Graduate Committee will then assess each student's academic performance and either recommend or not recommend advancement. Students not advancing will be recommended for conferral of the MA degree in lieu of a PhD. The second element of this qualifying evaluation assesses the student's progress in their primary language of focus (Chinese, Japanese, or Korean). This evaluation will be waived in the case of native speakers.

Comprehensive Examinations

Comparative Literature Dual PhD degree students will take the comprehensive examinations required in the EALC department. At least one of these examinations must entail a comparatist element; this element is to be identified and negotiated with the examination committee, which will include at least one faculty member representing Comparative Literature.

The PhD comprehensive examinations are intended to test a student's general knowledge as well as mastery of their area or areas of focus. Near the end of formal courses, students begin preparing to complete three examinations, which include the following:

- Their major field, generally defined as modern or premodern literature/culture of China, Japan, or Korea
- Two minor fields, defined in consultation with and approved by the student's advisory committee. One minor field may be directly related to the student's dissertation research, but the second must demonstrate greater breadth in terms of period, discipline, or cultural-linguistic area. One of the minor fields may be comparative or theoretical.

- Students who have completed a certificate in Film and Media Studies; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Data Science in the Humanities; Early Modern Studies; or Translation may, with advisory committee permission, waive one of the minor exams.

In consultation with relevant faculty, students will prepare a comprehensive bibliography prior to each exam.

Students should expect to begin the exams before the start of the sixth semester and to have completed all three no later than the end of the eighth semester.

Dissertation Prospectus

Following the successful completion of the three examinations and prior to starting their fifth year in the program, students will present their dissertation prospectus in a public forum before a panel of relevant faculty.

Dissertation

Students will complete a doctoral dissertation based on extensive research on a literary or cultural topic that produces new knowledge of publishable quality in the field of East Asian Studies. Dissertation research and writing is usually completed during the last two years of graduate study. For the dual degree, the dissertation must be of a comparative nature, and the dissertation committee must include at least one faculty member representing Comparative Literature. The dissertation itself should, in its theoretical grounding, approach, transnational or transcultural scope, and/or interdisciplinarity, speak to the field of Comparative Literature as currently constituted.

Mentored Experience Requirements

Doctoral students at Washington University must complete a department-defined Mentored Experience. The Mentored Experience Requirement is a doctoral degree requirement that is notated on the student's transcript when complete. Each department has an established Mentored Experience Implementation Plan in which the number of units that a student must earn through Mentored Teaching Experience(s) and/or Mentored Professional Experience(s) is defined. The Mentored Experience Implementation Plans outline how doctoral students within the discipline will be mentored to achieve competencies in teaching at basic and advanced levels. Some departments may elect to include Mentored Professional Experiences as an avenue for completing some units of the Mentored Experience Requirement. Doctoral students will enroll in ASGS 8005, 8010, or 8015 Mentored Teaching Experience - Assistant in Instruction; ASGS 8020 Mentored Teaching Experience - Mentored Independent Teaching; or ASGS 8120 Mentored Professional Experience to signify their progression toward completing the overall Mentored Experience Requirement for the degree.

The Doctoral Dissertation

A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) must be created no later than the end of the student's third year; departments may set shorter timelines (e.g., by the end of the student's second year) for this requirement. As evidence of the mastery of a specific field of knowledge and of the capacity for original scholarly work, each candidate must complete a dissertation that is approved by their RAC.

A Title, Scope & Procedure Form for the dissertation must be signed by the committee members and by the program chair. It must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, at least six months before the degree is expected to be conferred or before the beginning of the fifth year of full-time enrollment, whichever is earlier.

A Doctoral Dissertation Guide and a Dissertation Template that give instructions regarding the format of the dissertation are available on the website of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Both should be read carefully at every stage of dissertation preparation.

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, requires each student to make the full text of the dissertation available to the committee members for their review at least one week before the defense. Most degree programs require two or more weeks for the review period; students should check with their faculty.

The Dissertation Defense

Approval of the written dissertation by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is strongly recommended before the student can orally defend the dissertation. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee that examines the student during the defense consists of at least five members. Normally, the members of the RAC also serve on the Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The dissertation committee is then additionally augmented to ensure that the following criteria are met:

1. Three of the five members (or a similar proportion of a larger committee) must be full-time Washington University in St. Louis faculty members or, for programs involving Washington University in St. Louis-affiliated partners, full-time members of a Washington University in St. Louis-affiliated partner institution. All members must be authorized to supervise PhD students and have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study. One of these three members must be the PhD student's primary thesis advisor, and one may be a member of the emeritus faculty.
2. All other committee members must be active in research/scholarship and have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study whether at Washington University in St. Louis, at another university, in government, or in industry.
3. At least one of the five members must bring expertise outside of the student's field of study to the committee, as judged by the relevant department/program and approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

The approval processes outlined in the RAC section of the Doctoral Council bylaws also apply to the doctoral dissertation committee, including approval of each dissertation committee by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

The student is responsible for making the full text of the dissertation accessible to their committee members for their review in advance of the defense according to program rules. Washington University in St. Louis community members and guests of the student who are interested in the subject of the dissertation are normally welcome to attend all or part of the defense but may ask questions only at the discretion of the committee chair. Although there is some variation among degree programs, the defense ordinarily focuses on the dissertation itself and its relation to the student's field of expertise.

Attendance by a minimum of four members of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee, including the committee chair and an outside member, is required for the defense to take place. This provision is designed to permit the student's defense to proceed in case of a situation that unexpectedly prevents one of the five members from attending. Students should not plan in advance to only have four members in attendance. If four members cannot attend, the defense must be rescheduled. The absence of all outside members or of the committee chair also requires rescheduling the defense.

Students, with the support of their Doctoral Dissertation Committee chair, may opt to hold their dissertation defense in person or by utilizing a virtual or hybrid format.

Submission of the Dissertation

After the defense, the student must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation online to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. The submission website requires students to choose among publishing and copyrighting services offered by ProQuest's ETD Administrator. Students are asked to submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates separately. The degree program is responsible for delivering the final approval form, signed by the committee members at the defense and then by the program chair or director, to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Students who defend their dissertations successfully have not yet completed their PhD requirements; they finish earning their degree only when their electronic dissertation submission has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.