

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (BA)

Department Website (<http://as.nyu.edu/complit/>)

NYSED: 80086 HEGIS: 1503.00 CIP: 16.0104

Program Description

The major in comparative literature is aimed at students with broad interdisciplinary interests, a desire to explore new fields and forms of experimental thinking, and diverse language backgrounds (including mother tongue or second languages that are engaged in a comparative way). We offer many seminar-format courses with intensive faculty interaction and discussion. Our faculty specializations cover European, Anglo-American, African-American, African, Slavic, Latin American, Caribbean, Chinese, South Asian, and Middle Eastern literatures. Departmental courses immerse students in ancient, early modern, and modern global literatures, often with an emphasis on Continental philosophy and literary and critical theory more generally.

Students are given flexibility in the design of the major (which has two tracks, one in literature and one in literary and cultural studies) and can integrate into their course of study coursework in anthropology, philosophy, psychoanalysis, gender and race studies, history, political theory, religion, art, music, and film and media studies, among other fields. Qualified students are encouraged to take part in the department's honors program, which culminates in the writing of a senior honors thesis under the supervision of a faculty member. A minor in comparative literature is available for students majoring in a different discipline or field. We also strongly encourage prospective double majors who may seek to combine this humanities major with another specialty.

The department's rigorous teaching and rich curriculum have proved to be excellent preparation for our majors, many of whom have gone on for advanced study of literature at the graduate level or for professional education in law or medicine. Others have pursued successful careers in academia, human rights, translation, international relations, education, publishing, journalism, arts, media, film, performance, and other creative career options.

General Information

The guidelines of our program allow students great flexibility in shaping a course of study suited to their own intellectual goals. While all majors in comparative literature must take four courses originating in the Department of Comparative Literature, our commitment to a global and interdisciplinary outlook means that the remaining six courses required for the major can be taken in other departments or even, by taking advantage of NYU study away opportunities, on other continents. All students planning to major in comparative literature register with the director of undergraduate studies, who works closely with them to develop a coherent sequence of courses suited to their individual interests. Regular advising sessions with the director of undergraduate studies and a remarkably low student-faculty ratio help our students make the most of the wide range of possibilities that define the major. To take full advantage of the opportunities provided by comparative literature, students are encouraged to declare the major as early in their academic career as possible. In addition, please note that students planning to study away should consult and declare with the director of undergraduate studies well before their departure.

Internships

The department offers its majors and minors elective credit for internships in publishing, at literary agencies, and at other professional offices. Please consult the internship section of our website and contact the director of undergraduate studies for more information.

Double Major

As a promoter of interdisciplinary work, the department encourages double majors between comparative literature and other departments. The possibility of pursuing a double major should be discussed with the director of undergraduate studies.

Honors Program

To graduate with honors in the major in comparative literature, a student must maintain at least a 3.65 average in the ten courses required for the major, earn at least a 3.65 overall GPA in the College of Arts and Science, and write a senior honors thesis in his or her final year. At the end of the junior year, each honors student meets with the director of undergraduate studies for initial advisement and approval. Following this approval, a student may write the honors thesis by taking COLIT-UA 400 Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature in the fall semester and then enrolling in COLIT-UA 997 in the spring semester. This independent study will generally be conducted under the supervision of a faculty member of the Department of Comparative Literature whose area of academic expertise coincides with the focus of the honors thesis. To be awarded honors, a student must complete this two-course sequence and produce a quality senior thesis. COLIT-UA 400 Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature is an 11th course for the major, in addition to the four courses originating in the Department of Comparative Literature and the other six courses for the major. The independent study may count as one of the ten courses required for the major, pending approval from the director of undergraduate studies.

Admissions

New York University's Office of Undergraduate Admissions supports the application process for all undergraduate programs at NYU. For additional information about undergraduate admissions, including application requirements, see [How to Apply \(https://www.nyu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/how-to-apply.html\)](https://www.nyu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/how-to-apply.html).

Program Requirements

Course	Title	Credits
General Education Requirements		
First-Year Seminar		4
EXPOS-UA 1	Writing The Essay:	4
Foreign Language ¹		16
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Physical Science		4
Life Science		4
Texts and Ideas		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
Societies and the Social Sciences		4
Major Requirements		
Select one of the following tracks:		40
Literature (see track requirements below)		

Literary and Cultural Studies (see track requirements below)	
Course in the National Literature Dept. ²	4
Electives	
Other Elective Credits	36
Total Credits	128

1

The foreign language requirement is satisfied upon successful completion through the Intermediate level of a language. This may be accomplished in fewer than 16 credits, but those credits must then be completed as elective credit.

2

The course taken in the National Literature Department must be taken at the 100 level or above, conducted in the language of that literature. In order to be eligible to enroll in a National Literature Department course at the 100 level or above, students will have had to complete a course above Intermediate II and below the 100 level.

Track Requirements Literature

This track of the comparative literature major requires ten 4-credit courses (40 credits) completed with a grade of C or better, comprised of the following:

Course	Title	Credits
Department of Comparative Literature Courses		
COLIT-UA 116	Introduction to Comp Lit:	4
COLIT-UA 200	Comp Lit Junior Seminar:	4
Select two Comparative Literature Courses ¹		8
Subtotal:		16
National Literature Department Courses		
Select four national literature department courses ²		16
Subtotal:		16
Related Cultural Field or Discipline Courses		
Select two courses in a related cultural field or discipline ³		8
Subtotal:		8
Total Credits		40

1

Must be taught by a full-time faculty member of the Department of Comparative Literature on the Washington Square campus; they cannot be cross-listed courses originating in another department.

2

At the 100 level or above, conducted in the language of that literature.

3

Fields could include history, art history, religion, philosophy, classics, politics, cinema studies, and so on, and could also be another foreign language or literary area. If the national literature department selected for specialization is English, these two courses must be conducted in a foreign language. The choice of these courses will be made in consultation with the adviser to form a coherent intellectual field and a defined objective in the major.

Literary and Cultural Studies

This track of the comparative literature major requires ten 4-credit courses (40 credits) completed with a grade of C or better, comprised of the following:

Course	Title	Credits
Department of Comparative Literature Courses		
COLIT-UA 116	Introduction to Comp Lit:	4
COLIT-UA 200	Comp Lit Junior Seminar:	4
Select two Comparative Literature Courses ¹		8
Subtotal:		16
Related Cultural Field or Discipline Courses		
Select four courses in a related cultural field or discipline ²		16
Subtotal:		16
Foreign Literature Department Courses		
Select two foreign literature department courses ³		8
Subtotal:		8
Total Credits		40

1

Must be taught by a faculty member of the Department of Comparative Literature on the Washington Square campus; they cannot be cross-listed courses originating in another department.

2

Fields could include history, art history, religion, philosophy, classics, politics, cinema studies, and so on. The choice of these courses will be made in consultation with the adviser to form a coherent intellectual field and a defined objective in the major.

3

Conducted in the language of that literature, normally at the 100 level or above.

Sample Plan of Study Literature

Course	Title	Credits
1st Semester/Term		
Foreign Language		4
Texts and Ideas		4
First-Year Seminar		4
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Credits		16

2nd Semester/Term

EXPOS-UA 1	Writing The Essay:	4
Societies and the Social Sciences		4
Foreign Language		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
Credits		16

3rd Semester/Term

COLIT-UA 116	Introduction to Comp Lit:	4
Cultural Major Elective 1 of 2 ¹		4
Foreign Language		4
Physical Science		4
Credits		16

4th Semester/Term

COLIT-UA XXX	Departmental Major Elective 1 of 2 ²	4
Cultural Major Elective 2 of 2 ¹		4
Foreign Language		4
Life Science		4
Credits		16

5th Semester/Term

COLIT-UA XXX	Departmental Major Elective 2 of 2 ²	4
Foreign Language ³		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Credits		16

6th Semester/Term

COLIT-UA 200	Comp Lit Junior Seminar:	4
National Literature Major Elective 1 of 4 ⁴		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Credits		16

7th Semester/Term

National Literature Major Elective 2 of 4 ⁴		4
National Literature Major Elective 3 of 4 ⁴		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Credits		16

8th Semester/Term

National Literature Major Elective 4 of 4 ⁴		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Credits		16
Total Credits		128

1

Chosen by advisement, from another department.

2

Must originate in Comparative Literature and be taught by faculty in this department.

3

First course above the intermediate level; prerequisite to National Literature Major Electives.

4

At or above the 100 level and conducted in the language of that literature.

Literary and Cultural Studies

Course	Title	Credits
1st Semester/Term		
Foreign Language		4
Texts and Ideas		4
First-Year Seminar		4
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Credits		16

2nd Semester/Term

EXPOS-UA 1	Writing The Essay:	4
Societies and the Social Sciences		4
Foreign Language		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
Credits		16

3rd Semester/Term

COLIT-UA 116	Introduction to Comp Lit:	4
Cultural Major Elective 1 of 4 ¹		4
Foreign Language		4
Physical Science		4
Credits		16

4th Semester/Term

COLIT-UA XXX	Departmental Major Elective 1 of 2 ²	4
Cultural Major Elective 2 of 4 ¹		4
Foreign Language		4
Life Science		4
Credits		16

5th Semester/Term

COLIT-UA XXX	Departmental Major Elective 2 of 2 ²	4
Foreign Language ³		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Credits		16

6th Semester/Term

COLIT-UA 200	Comp Lit Junior Seminar:	4
National Literature Major Elective 1 of 2 ⁴		4
Elective		4
Elective		4
Credits		16

7th Semester/Term

National Literature Major Elective 2 of 2 ⁴		4
Cultural Major Elective 3 of 4 ¹		4
Elective		4

Elective	4
Credits	16
8th Semester/Term	
Cultural Major Elective 4 of 4 ¹	4
Elective	4
Elective	4
Elective	4
Credits	16
Total Credits	128

1

Chosen by advisement, from another department.

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3

First course above the intermediate level; prerequisite to National Literature Major Electives.

4

At or above the 100 level and conducted in the language of that literature.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of program requirements, students are expected to have acquired:

1. Familiarity with a range of texts in, although not limited to, literature, film, philosophy, and literary and critical theory, across a variety of linguistic and formal traditions and historical periods.
2. Advanced skills in analyzing and interpreting literary and other texts from languages that may not be one's own, and in comparing texts from a variety of different traditions, genres, periods, and areas.
3. A sensitivity to how translation facilitates the circulation of texts, and how the meaning of texts is affected by their translation.
4. Critical skills to write research papers that display clear knowledge of research protocols on literature and allied textualities, with an attention to historical, cultural, intellectual-historical, and political context.
5. A facility in moving among and between different languages and cultures, including research and study abroad, with a view to becoming attuned to the global diversity of approaches to the analysis of literary, philosophical, and other textual forms.

Policies

NYU Policies

University-wide policies can be found on the New York University Policy pages (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/nyu/policies/>).

College of Arts and Science Policies

A full list of relevant academic policies can be found on the CAS Academic Policies page (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/undergraduate/arts-science/academic-policies/>).