

Doctoral Program in Comparative Literature, University of Szeged

(last update: 25 March, 2019)

Workshop Seminar

This course runs in a rotational system, with a new topic and instructor every semester. Topics may cover the classical forms of comparative literature, recent schools and methods, intersections between literature and the sister arts, as well as between literary studies and related disciplines (from art theory and aesthetics, through media and cultural studies, to economics or the social sciences), problems of translation and intercultural relationships, the self and the foreign, questions of regionality, with a special focus on East-Central Europe as a hybrid literary and cultural space.

A single course is offered each semester both in the Hungarian and English language programs. Students of the Hungarian program, regardless of which year they are, all participate in the course offered in Hungarian, while international students all take the one offered in English. (Besides, Hungarian students may also take the course offered in English and international students may also take the one offered in Hungarian, provided they have the required language competence.)

Dissertation Seminar

This seminar is offered by supervisors in order to provide space for the study and discussion of methods and themes related to the guided dissertations, as well as specific analyses prepared by students.

The course is automatically offered every semester by each supervisor. Weekly consultations are scheduled for the same time slot for all advised students, Hungarian and international students alike. Each time the supervisor may decide whether students are integrated or consulted separately. In case of two supervisors (i.e., two members of faculty guiding the same dissertation), the course is to be taken either from one or the other supervisor according to an agreement between the supervisors, of which the student is informed in due course.

Chosen Special Course

This course is chosen by the student in any topic relevant to his or her field of research, but it should be approved by both the supervisor and course instructor.

Students are recommended to choose courses on a doctoral level, but under specific circumstances the selection of an MA (or even BA) course can also be justified, provided assignments and evaluation criteria are adjusted to the doctoral level. Courses can be either seminars or lectures, from the Department of Comparative Literature, or from other departments, or, in special cases, even from other universities. While we suggest that students possibly take courses offered in a foreign language, language courses cannot be chosen under this rubric. In order to expedite the necessary coding of chosen courses, students are kindly asked to make up their minds as early as possible and make preparatory agreements both with supervisors and course instructors in advance, then inform the director of the doctoral program via email.

Research Work

Students do individual research based on a special reading list of secondary materials assembled in consultation with their supervisors. (Where no supervisor has yet been appointed, as well as in case of two supervisors, students are asked to consult the instructor whose Dissertation Seminar they take in the given semester.) In the first phase of the program, reading lists are related to the Dissertation Seminar and consist of 2 items, while in the second phase they consist of 4 items. (1 item equals 1 book or 4 essays.) Students prepare a reading journal consisting of brief summaries and critical reflections, to be submitted by the beginning of the examination period. The required length

is 2 pages per item (i.e., 2 pages per book, or half page per essay). The supervisor discusses the readings with the student on the basis of the submitted reading journal, and evaluates the performance of the student.

In the second phase of the program, students may choose to write a dissertation chapter instead of writing a reading journal. The minimum length is 20,000 characters including word spacing and footnotes, but without bibliography, edited according to Chicago Style.

Publication and Presentation

2 essays and 2 presentations in no set order: 1 essay in English, 1 essay optionally in English or in a language other than English, 1 conference presentation in English, 1 conference presentation optionally in English or in a language other than English. (Languages other than English should preferably be one of the major European languages, like German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, or, of course, Hungarian.) These accomplishments can be fulfilled in advance during the time of the program, so they need not take place in the particular semester.

Report

Students do 5 reports altogether, 3 of which are special events, that is, public presentations followed by discussion, where all supervisors and students of the program are present (co-supervisors from other departments are to be informed and alerted by their fellow supervisors):

2nd semester: research plan

(an updated 3-page-long, i.e. 6,000 to 8,000 characters, version of the plan submitted in the admission process, with a title and description of the topic, an indication of its relevance and stakes, and an overview of the research procedure)

5th semester: dissertation prospectus

(a prospectus including the prospective title and contents of the dissertation, a 2 or 3 pages hypothesis and summary, and a bibliography including primary and secondary materials, the latter part of which should consist at least of 20 items, i.e. 20 books, or 80 essays, or for example 15 books and 20 essays; at least half of the items have to be in English; the plan of the dissertation may undergo some changes later on)

8th semester: half of the dissertation

(chapters with footnotes and bibliography; the minimum length is 150,000 characters including word spacing and footnotes, but without bibliography, edited according to Chicago Style)

Written materials are to be submitted via email to the director of the program and the supervisor(s) until 30 April or 30 November, in the spring and fall terms, respectively. The director of the program appoints a committee of 3 members of faculty to each student, in view of their submitted research plan, before the report in the second semester. The committee consists of the supervisor(s) and 1 or 2 reader(s). They grade the student's performance at the special report events (2nd, 5th and 8th semester) by voting. All other reports (6th and 7th semester) are evaluated solely by the supervisor(s). The report consists of a 20-minute improvised presentation, followed by 20 minutes of discussion. The use of handouts, projector, audio etc. is optional.

Teaching or Further Research Work

From 5th to 8th semester students may choose between teaching activity and further research work. Teaching means running a seminar. The topic of the seminar is to be approved in advance by the supervisor and the head of the department. The further research work can be an extension of the basic research work, but it can also consist of other research activities (e.g. translation, editorial work, organization, moderation, assistance in guiding a BA or MA thesis or an essay prepared for the student essay competition, etc.). Those wishing to choose this option should consult both their supervisor and the director of the program.

Comprehensive Examination

Prior to the Comprehensive Examination the advisor writes a 1-page-long assessment of the student's performance (in case of two advisors, a single, mutual assessment is prepared), to be submitted by 30 April via email to the director of the program, who then forwards it to the chair of the examination committee.

The Comprehensive Examination is an oral exam taken before an examination committee of at least 3 members at the end of the 4th semester. The committee is set up by the council of Doctoral School of Literary Studies at least three months before the date of the exam. The exam consists of two parts. The first ("theoretical") part focuses on two subjects and related secondary readings previously announced in accordance with the student's research plan, and possibly drawing on the orienting reading lists assembled by the doctoral program. In the second ("dissertational") part, students give a scholarly presentation, which, on the one hand, provides an account of the research steps taken and the results achieved, while on the other, it gives an overview of the prospective schedule of further research activity, dissertation writing, and publications. A successful exam is required for the entrance into the second phase of the program. According to the National Higher Educational Act, Nftv. 53. § (4), the doctoral dissertation must be submitted within 3 years after the Comprehensive Examination.

For general info, please consult the „Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree" (as of 28th November, 2016) at the University of Szeged Doctoral Institute website (<https://www.u-szeged.hu/doctoral/regulations/>).