Humanities

Comparative Literature

The Comparative Literature Department at Emory offers Ph.D. students a wide-ranging theoretical and interdisciplinary curriculum that prepares them to engage in research and teaching across traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Rigor and Innovation

Comparative Literature at Emory reflects the strengths of a distinguished group of faculty internationally recognized for their literary scholarship as well as for their theoretical work.

- Comparative Literature at Emory brings the traditional aims of a Comparative Literature degree—the comparison of literatures across national boundaries—into constellation with the aims of other disciplinary formations such as Philosophy and Psychoanalysis.
- We encourage innovative theoretical reflection informed by vigilant attention to the intricacy and performative power of language.
- We recognize the crucial significance of engaging “languages” more broadly defined, including, for instance, languages or symbolic systems central to development in the sciences and technology.

Students who wish to pursue in-depth training in a particular literary tradition may study toward Certificates in English, French, and Spanish. Certificates are also offered in Philosophy and Women’s Studies. An additional option is a Minor in Psychoanalytic Studies, which provides courses both in the University and in the Emory Psychoanalytic Institute.

Professional Development

Laney offers a range of programs that encourages students to develop their professional skills, engage with broader professional communities, and prepare for their careers. Visit gs.emory.edu to learn more.
Intellectual Community
The graduate program in Comparative Literature involves not only formal scholarly training but also intellectual activities guided and hosted by graduate students, including a series that brings speakers to Emory specializing in theoretical, literary and comparative topics, and an annual conference on cutting-edge theoretical and literary concerns central to students in the program.

Speakers in the lecture series have included Cynthia Chase, Ross Chambers, John Felstiner, Adrian Johnston, Jacques Lezra, Avital Ronell, Jean-Michel Rabaté, Elaine Scarry, and Andrzej Warminski.


Students have also produced mini-seminars and the Department as a whole regularly brings in visiting faculty for lectures and seminars on major writers and theorists as well as topics such as the Holocaust, Trauma Studies, Ethics, Psychoanalysis, Globalization, Political Theory, Aesthetics, and Poetics.

Curriculum
The curriculum in Comparative Literature asks students to focus on a range of literary and theoretical areas of inquiry.

Students choose one primary and one secondary body of literature representing different traditions along with a set of defined theoretical, critical and/or historical areas of inquiry pursued within the framework of their chosen literatures.

In developing their program, candidates are encouraged to pursue one or more of five theoretical areas that cross disciplinary boundaries:

A. Trauma, Psychoanalysis and Testimony;
B. Literature and Philosophy;
C. Politics and Global Culture;
D. Comparative Literature and Religion;
E. Literature, Technology, and Human/Post-Human Studies.

These fields represent the scholarly expertise of the Comparative Literature faculty as well as the interdisciplinary emphasis of the University.

Degree Requirements
All students are required to take a core course entitled “Literary Theories” and two courses to prepare them for teaching: “The Teaching of Literature” and “Composition Theory” or a course that prepares them for language teaching. Other courses are chosen according to a student’s selected course of study. Courses are offered on a rotating basis, and students may choose courses outside of Comparative Literature as appropriate to their fields of study. (The Comparative Literature website archives past courses with course descriptions, events organized by faculty and graduate students, and faculty listings which offer an idea of faculty interests and strengths).

In addition to coursework, students must

- Demonstrate proficiency in one foreign language and a good reading knowledge in a second foreign language.
- Pass a qualifying examination and a Ph.D. examination.
- Write a doctoral dissertation.

For a detailed list of degree requirements, please visit our website, www.comparativelit.emory.edu.

Certificate Options for Comparative Literature Ph.D. Candidates
Certificate options available to graduate students in Comparative Literature include the certificates offered through the Emory University Department of Philosophy, Department of English, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Department of French and Italian, and the Department of Women’s Studies.

A certificate is available to graduate students in Comparative Literature through the Psychoanalytic Studies Program.
Training in Teaching
At Emory, all doctoral students receive training in pedagogy and other elements of teaching, through the Teaching Assistant Training and Teaching Opportunity Program (TATTO) administered by the Graduate School. The program includes a summer workshop that covers broadly applicable issues and skills, a course on pedagogical issues in comparative literature, and teaching opportunities that provide a mentored and progressive development of teaching skills and experience.

Graduate students have a unique opportunity to participate in the undergraduate program and to enhance their teaching and mentoring skills by leading an undergraduate theory reading group, undergraduate coffee hours and an undergraduate colloquium. This collaboration has proved highly successful in bolstering intellectual community in both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Students
There are currently 24 doctoral students in the Comparative Literature program. They are working in a variety of languages and literatures including French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, among others. Students create their own scholarly itineraries and final projects according to their languages, conceptual frameworks and theoretical and disciplinary interests. Recent and current dissertations include:

- A Path Through the Abyss: Re-inventing Testimony Through Post-Holocaust Survivor Poetry, Memoir and Video Oral Histories
- Counterfeit Politics: The Conspiracy Narrative in Twentieth Century U.S. and Argentine Literature
- Errant Grounds: Eco-epic Textures in Contemporary Caribbean Literature
- Une Autre Oreille: Staging Difference in Henry James and Marguerite Duras
- Mnemotechnologies: Memory and Experience in Late 20th-century Philosophy and Literature
- Reading Now: Historical Danger in Spanish Caribbean Literary Modernism
- Subjects of Love and the Vicissitudes of Reading: Rousseau, Stendhal, Baudelaire, Derrida, Barthes
- All Access: YouTube, the History of the Music Video, and Its Contemporary Renaissance
- The Rest of the World: Inoperative Modernism and the Conditions of Translatability

Faculty
Comparative Literature at Emory is known nationally and internationally for its stellar scholars and cutting-edge research and teaching in fields such as literary theory, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, trauma studies, ethics, new media studies, post-colonial theory, and queer theory. Our faculty are recognized worldwide for their leadership in theoretical and interdisciplinary innovation as well their outstanding skills in the teaching of close reading in a variety of textual genres.

The Comparative Literature program has 18 core faculty members, some of whom have appointments in French, English, German, Film Studies, Classics, Philosophy, Russian and East Asian Languages and Literatures, Religion, and Spanish. The program also has a number of associated faculty members from across the university, including faculty from the Psychoanalytic Institute.

Our website has a complete list of both core and associated faculty members, with information about research interests and publications.
Administrative Faculty

**GEOFFREY BENNINGTON**

**CHAIR**

*D.Phil., Oxford University, 1984; Asa G. Candler Professor of Modern French Thought and Professor, French and Comparative Literature. Modern French Literature and Thought; Eighteenth Century Novel; Literary Theory; Deconstruction.*

**WALT REED**

**DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

*Ph.D., Yale University, 1969; William R. Kenan, Jr. University Professor. Romantic Literature; history and theory of the novel; the Bible as literature; literature and psychology.*

**MUNIA BHAUMIK**

**DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

*Ph.D., University of California-Berkeley, 2012; Assistant Professor, Comparative Literature. American and World Literatures; political philosophy; post-colonial studies; critical theory; dramatic form; lyric poetry; translation; citizenship; comparative racialization; queer feminism.*

For Further Information Contact

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