

Program proposal for Comparative Literature Minor

Catalog Copy:

MINOR IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

- 19 hours required
- a maximum of 9 hours may overlap with a major in English or Foreign Languages
- Foreign Language Requirement (4 hrs) FOR 116 or equivalent
- Required Core (3 hrs) ENG/FOR 256
- Core Comp Lit Electives (6 hrs) 2 of the following: ENG/FOR 257, 258, 259
- Foreign Language Literature Course (3 hrs) 1 of the following FOR courses:
 - FRE 220, 221, 222; GER 211, 222; LAT 221, 222; SPA 233, 253, 254, 255
 - or any FOR literature course at the 300 level
- Elective (3 hrs) 1 of the following: ENG/FOR 257, 258 or 259 (if not used to fulfill the core requirement); A second FOR lit course chosen from the list above; ENG 252, 255 or 352
- Minimum 2.5 GPA in FOR 111-116

[See attached course proposals for:

ENG/FOR 256 Theories and Methods of Comparative Literature

ENG/FOR 257 Historical Approaches to Comparative Literature

ENG/FOR 258 Cross Cultural Approaches to Comparative Literature

ENG/FOR 259 Conceptual Approaches to Comparative Literature]

Institution Illinois State University

Responsible Department or Administrative Unit English/Foreign Languages

Proposed Program Title MINOR IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Previous Program Title [not applicable]

CIPS classification 23.0301 Comparative Literature

An instructional program that studies the literatures of different societies and linguistic groups in comparative perspective, including analyses of cross-cultural influences, globalization, national literatures, shared and contested literary heritages, and translation. Includes instruction in the study of literatures in the original languages as well as in English translation.

Date of Implementation Summer 2002 [2002-2003 Catalog]

Description of Proposed Program

The minor in Comparative Literature at Illinois State is a collaborative project between the Departments of English and Foreign Languages, designed to introduce students to comparative approaches to the study of the literatures of a variety of cultures and traditions. This program is based on a careful study by comparatists of some 40 such programs across the country as well as on the guidelines and standards established for undergraduate programs by the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA). A new core course and core electives in Comparative Literature are complemented with appropriate existing literature courses in English and Foreign Language.

Comparative literature involves the study of literature in a global context, across national and linguistic boundaries and from interdisciplinary and multicultural perspectives. As formulated in its most recent statement, the ACLA considers the discipline to include:

comparisons between artistic productions usually studied by different disciplines; between various cultural constructions of those disciplines; between Western cultural traditions, both high and popular, and those of non-Western cultures; between the pre-and post-contact cultural productions of colonized peoples; between gender constructions defined as feminine and those defined as masculine, or between sexual orientations defined as straight and those defined as gay; between racial and ethnic modes of signifying; between hermeneutic articulations of meaning and materialist analyses of its modes of production and circulation; and much more (Bernheimer, ACLA Report, 1993).

Rationale for language requirement

Foreign language study is central to the discipline of comparative literature which contends that understanding a people's language is crucial to understanding its literary and cultural productions. As noted in the CIPS description, students in all comparative literature programs are expected to study literature in at least one language other than English. In the proposed minor, students may fulfill the language requirement through FOR 116 or through the 116 proficiency test.

Rationale for GPA requirement

Foreign language competency is crucial preparation for comparative literature courses. Students who do not maintain at least a C average in basic language courses do not have the language skills necessary to study literatures written in the language. This skill is a basic requirement in all comparative literature programs across the country and will be advantageous both to students wishing to continue on to graduate school and to students pursuing careers in primary and secondary teaching.

Rationale for proposal

The proposed minor will support the university's mission, particularly in its efforts to "increase understanding of global and national interdependence and expand knowledge of other cultures in a multicultural society." [*Academic Plan 2000* p. 4.] Comparative Literature is founded upon the recognition that literary production does not take place in isolation from other social and cultural factors, that national literatures are products of border pressures and influences, and that they take form and shape in a global context in which cultural maps rarely coincide with national contours. These considerations govern the intelligibility of texts we read and it is to this awareness that the discipline of Comparative Literature responds.

Several concrete ways that the program increases global understanding and expands knowledge of other cultures is by encompassing the literatures of many cultures and theorizing the relations between them; by teaching students to think critically about how books come to be designated as "great" in a particular culture and what social and economic interests are served by such designation; by encouraging students to work in the original language of a text and to be sensitive to the cultural lessons imbedded in the language itself; by teaching students to critically consider translation and its effects; and by encouraging students to work across disciplinary boundaries.

This proposal also addresses the needs identified in the latest English Department Program Review and in the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education report, both of which urge greater globalization of English programs. Specifically, NCATE expressed concern that "World Lit in required courses is restricted almost exclusively to Greek and Roman literature and to Western world literature" [*NCATE Second Critique*.] The new courses in Comparative Literature will broaden the scope of those offerings significantly both by including texts from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America and by reading canonical (Greek, Roman and Western) texts within a global context. that recognizes them as intercultural products of, for example, migration, trade, enslavement, and colonization.

Arrangements to be made for program faculty and students

The staffing requirements of this minor can be met by pooling existing resources from the two departments. Three of the six courses in this minor will be drawn from existing courses in English and Foreign Languages. The other three (core and core electives) will be drawn from among four new courses. Both English and Foreign Languages have agreed to assign faculty to the new comparative literature courses, and each department has a large pool of qualified faculty. Frequency of offering will be adjusted to suit student demand, but the program could begin with a yearly offering of only two courses: the core course and one of the three core electives. This minimum would ensure that transfer students would be able to complete the minor within their average two years at Illinois State.

The experience of similar programs across the country suggests that the new minor might attract 20-30 students within the first few years. Most of these students are likely to be majors in either English or Foreign

Languages. Each major could overlap with the new minor by the permissible nine hours. Provided that they choose the appropriate courses in the major, such students will need only 3 additional courses to complete the minor.

Anticipated impact on other campus programs

The anticipated student pool should be composed almost entirely of English and Foreign Language majors, and the additional coursework required by the minor will come from English for FL majors and FL for English majors. Many of these students will have no current minor. Impact on other campus programs should be minimal.

Anticipated budgetary effect

The incremental cost of this minor should be minimal, since every course will draw from two existing student populations. The existing English and Foreign Language courses that have been incorporated into the minor already count as requirements or electives for English, English Education, Foreign Language or Foreign Language Education majors or minors. The four new courses will count as electives in the English and English Education programs. The appointment of an advisor will not have a budgetary effect since it will not be sufficient additional work for reassigned time. No new faculty need be hired to staff the program.

Compliance with other requirements

Curriculum change rules state that minors may have 18-36 hours of courses and prerequisites.

This minor requires 19 hours of coursework and 4-7 hours of prerequisites (depending upon the student's choice of FOR literature course and elective.) FOR 115 is the prerequisite for FOR 116 and for the core course ENG/FOR 256. Several of the FOR literature courses require an additional three hour prerequisite course beyond 116. English 252, 255, and 352 require ENG 100.

This minor has 4-8 hours of "hidden prerequisites," depending upon the student's level of foreign language proficiency upon admission to Illinois State. This number of hours is in compliance with curricular rules. FOR 115 is the stated prerequisite for FOR 116 and ENG/FOR 256. FOR 111 and 112 are sequential "hidden" prerequisites to FOR 115. Students may enter the FOR course sequence at 111, 112, 115 or 116, depending upon their preparation in high school or through other experience with the foreign language. FOR 111 is designed for students who did not study a language in high school, or who studied for only one year. 112 generally serves students who studied a language for 2 years in high school. Students with 3-4 years of high school language study typically enter FOR 115 (or 116 if the high school preparation was exceptionally strong.)

The minor is also in compliance in terms of the number of hours from any one department, and the overlap permitted between the minor and any major. No more than 12 hours in this minor come from any one department. No more than 9 hours of minor coursework will be permitted to overlap with any major.