Comparative Literature (BA/BS)

The undergraduate program offers a unique major that cuts across disciplines, teaches critical skills, and provides an intellectually challenging curriculum that trains students to analyze, critique and contribute to culture while preparing them for possible careers in the public humanities, media and multi-media, law, government, non-profit work, political activism and organization, public relations, advertising, or teaching. Students with a good background in one or more languages other than English find that the program gives them the opportunity to study literature and related cultural productions in a variety of historical and theoretical perspectives.

The program combines flexibility with a rigorous grounding in the basics of literary theory, cultural studies, and critical writing. Based on their interests, majors choose one of two tracks: language and culture or disciplines in dialogue. In the first, students develop proficiency in two linguistic traditions. In the second, students explore links between a single linguistic tradition and a nonliterary field. Both tracks are ideally suited to students considering either a double-major or a major and a minor, as students can combine their multiple interests into a single program of study.

A carefully designed core curriculum takes students through the basics of comparative literature as a discipline. Course work culminates with Capstone Seminar (COLT 415). This small seminar, capped at fifteen, offers both personalized attention and the sorts of pedagogical experiences that a small course enables, from workshop style formats to lengthier, individualized final projects. In addition, the Capstone allows students to work closely and collaboratively with other advanced students in their cohort.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Foreign-language proficiency: Majors are required to develop reading proficiency in at least one language other than English (many of our majors work in two). This requirement is fulfilled by the completion of three upper division courses in that language.
- National-Linguistic Fields: Majors are required to develop a familiarity with the literature and culture (including non-literary media and related cultural forms) in at least one national-linguistic tradition other than English (many of our majors work in two such traditions, though British or American literature is also fully acceptable as one of their two required fields). This requirement is satisfied by the completion of four upper-division courses in which materials are studied in the original language.
- Critical and Interpretive Reading: We endeavor to teach our students to read, not for merely plot or comprehension but with a heightened sensitivity to the ways in which literary works and related materials are informed by myriad linguistic ambiguities and shadings, by rhetorical and generic traditions, as well as by contexts that are themselves not “given” but are often only fully manifest in the texts they envelop.
- Theoretical Preparation: Comparative Literature has been defined historically not only by its multi-linguistic, cross-national habit but also by its emphasis on theoretical approaches—doubly important within a field in which students working in a variety of traditions cannot be expected to have a common textual base. We expect our majors to become familiar with a range of literary-theoretical orientations and to be able to apply them in the analysis of literary, cinematic or related works.
- Analytical Writing: Students are expected to be able to write probingly analytical essays that demonstrate not only a facility with various critical registers, but which also demonstrate an ability to read carefully and closely.
- Interdisciplinarity: Comparative analyses of literary and other works often hew closely to approaches developed in disciplines such as philosophy, linguistics, political thought, cultural history, religious studies, and more. Our students are expected to demonstrate a working awareness of the inherent interdisciplinarity of our field. This is more explicit in the “disciplines in dialogue” track of our major, but it is true also of our “literature and culture track.”
- Diversity: Diversity is “built in” to the structure of a field that, by definition, places different cultures in dialogue. Our program endeavors to extend our students’ awareness of diversity along multi-cultural axes.

Note: The courses that satisfy the learning outcome one and two requirements may overlap. Because these courses are taken under prefixes other than COLT, for example FR, IT, GER, SPAN, RUSS, JPN, success in these courses will reflect the learning outcomes developed by the home departments.

Comparative Literature Major Requirements

The comparative literature major offers two tracks, language and culture and disciplines in dialogue. In order to complete a bachelor’s degree in comparative literature in the language and culture track, it is necessary to complete the language and culture language requirement. Students may demonstrate language proficiency in any one of the following ways: 1) The student is a native speaker of a language other than English. 2) One of the upper-division courses used to complete the Primary Linguistic Tradition was taught in the target language; that is, the course must be a full-fledged literature or cinema course, not a course whose primary focus is language acquisition. 3) Three, 300-level (or higher) language courses in the same language (not English).

In order to complete a bachelor’s degree in comparative literature in the disciplines in dialogue track, it is necessary to complete at least the third term of the second year of a second-language course taught in the language (i.e., the language requirement for the Bachelor of Arts degree). Note that this requirement applies to students who seek both the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science degree.

All coursework required for the comparative literature major and minor must be taken for a letter grade and passed with grades of mid-C or better. Online courses do not count toward the comparative literature major.

Code	Title	Credits
Language Requirement [1]		
Core Courses		
Two COLT electives		8
COLT 301	Approaches to Comparative Literature	4
or COLT 305	Cultural Studies	
Select one of the following:		4
COLT 302	Theories of Poetry	
COLT 303	Theories of the Novel	

400-level COLT elective		4
COLT 415	Capstone Seminar	4
Focus Fields Courses		
Three upper-division courses in primary linguistic tradition [1,2]		12
Three upper-division courses in a secondary linguistic tradition (language and culture track) or a nonliterary discipline (disciplines in dialogue track)		12
Total Credits		**48**

1 With the approval of the director of undergraduate studies, courses taken abroad may be used to fulfill this requirement.

2 One of these courses may be on a non-literary topic relevant to the field such as history or philosophy.

Honors in Comparative Literature

Comparative literature students may apply to enter the honors track during spring of their junior year. Admission to the honors track is based on the recommendation of a comparative literature faculty member, instructor, or a participating faculty member; a writing sample; and the student's transcript. Materials should be submitted by week 2 of spring term of the junior year. Completion of the honors track requires the successful completion of a bachelor of arts honors thesis. Students invited to participate in the Honors Track will develop and present a thesis prospectus in the fall term of their senior year. The thesis must be comparative in nature, and should entail work in both of the student's focus fields. If the prospectus is approved by the director of undergraduate studies, then the student enrolls in Thesis (COLT 403) during winter of the senior year. The full draft of the thesis is due by the end of week 10 of winter term. The thesis is completed under the supervision of the thesis advisor, and must be submitted to both the advisor and a second reader by the fifth week of spring term. The thesis must then be approved by the advisor and second faculty member after a formal presentation and defense, which will be held in spring term. The thesis advisor and the second reader should be chosen from the comparative literature faculty or participating faculty. With approval of the director of undergraduate studies, a second reader who is not a participating member may be chosen from another department.

Tracks within the Major

Because there are many different ways of thinking about literature from a comparative perspective, two emphases within the major are offered. One track, language and culture, features comparative study across different linguistic traditions. This track is recommended for students who want to study abroad, attend graduate school in comparative literature, or want to gain an in-depth understanding of linguistic cultures in addition to their own. A second track, disciplines in dialogue, requires less formal language study and allows students to combine the critical study of literature with work in another field. This emphasis offers a manageable path for students considering a double major in literature and another discipline. It is also well-suited to students who want to combine literary and cinema studies with creative writing, performance, the visual arts, philosophy, history, and journalism.

Language and Culture Track

Students in this track designate two linguistic traditions, a primary linguistic tradition and a second linguistic tradition. In addition, the language chosen to fulfill the language requirement should coincide with one of these national-linguistic traditions. The linguistic traditions commonly studied for the comparative literature major are listed below. Other traditions may be chosen, but must be approved by the department.

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Classics
- English
- French
- German
- Greek
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Romance Languages
- Russian
- Scandinavian
- Spanish

Disciplines in Dialogue Track

Students in this track designate one linguistic tradition and one additional disciplinary field. Courses taken in this disciplinary field may be spread out across several subject codes, with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies. The disciplinary focus fields commonly studied for the comparative literature major are listed below. An individualized course of study may be chosen, but must be approved by the department:

- African Studies
- Anthropology
- Art
- Art History
- Asian Studies
- Black Studies
- Business
- Cinema Studies
- Computer Science
- Comics and Cartoon Studies
- Creative Writing
- Dance
- Economics
- Environmental Studies
- Folklore
- Global Studies
- History
- Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies
- Journalism
- Judaic Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Linguistics
- Music
- Philosophy
- Planning, Public Policy, and Management
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Sociology
- Theater Arts
- Women and Gender Studies

Students are strongly advised to complete their language requirement in a language relevant either to their linguistic tradition or to their disciplinary field.

Languages

The study of comparative literature entails advanced interdisciplinary work. Students who pursue the languages and culture track work across and between languages, and develop proficiencies beyond the two years required for the UO Bachelor's of Arts Degree. This proficiency can be demonstrated in a number of ways (see below). Students who pursue the disciplines in dialogue track develop the language proficiency required for the UO Bachelor of Arts Degree.

Four-Year Degree Plan

The degree plan shown is only a sample of how students may complete their degrees in four years. There are alternative ways. Students should consult their advisor to determine the best path for them.

Bachelor of Arts in Comparative Literature

Course	Title	Credits	Milestones
First Year			
Fall			
COLT 101	Introduction to Comparative Literature	4	
WR 121Z	Composition I	4	
First term of first-year second-language sequence		4	
Core education course		4	
	Credits	**16**	
Winter			
COLT 102	Introduction to Comparative Literature	4	
Second term of first-year second-language sequence		4	
WR 122Z or WR 123	Composition II or College Composition III	4	
Core education course		4	
	Credits	**16**	
Spring			
COLT 103	Introduction to Comparative Literature	4	
Third term of first-year second-language sequence		4	
Core education courses		8	
	Credits	**16**	
	Total Credits	**48**	

Course	Title	Credits	Milestones
Second Year			
Fall			
Lower-division COLT course		4	
First term of second-year second-language sequence		4	
Core education courses		8	
	Credits	**16**	
Winter			
Lower-division COLT course		4	
Second term of second-year second-language sequence		4	
Core education course		8	
	Credits	**16**	
Spring			
Lower-division COLT course		4	
Third term of second-year second-language sequence		4	
Core education courses		8	
	Credits	**16**	
	Total Credits	**48**	

Course	Title	Credits	Milestones
Third Year			
Fall			
COLT 301	Approaches to Comparative Literature	4	
Upper-division language course		4	
Upper-division course in primary focus field		4	
Upper-division course in secondary focus field		4	
	Credits	**16**	
Winter			
COLT 302 or COLT 303 or COLT 304		4	
Upper-division language course		4	
Upper-division course in secondary focus field		4	
Core education course		4	
	Credits	**16**	
Spring			
COLT 305	Cultural Studies (COLT 301 Fall Term or COLT 305 Spring Term)	4	
Upper-division language course		4	Complete third-year language proficiency
Upper-division course in primary focus field		4	
Elective course		4	
	Credits	**16**	
	Total Credits	**48**	

Course	Title	Credits	Milestones
Fourth Year			
Fall			
COLT 415	Capstone Seminar	4	
Upper-division course in primary focus field		4	
Upper-division course in secondary focus field		4	
Elective course		4	
	Credits	**16**	
Winter			
400-level COLT course		4	
Elective courses		12	
	Credits	**16**	
Spring			
Elective courses		16	
	Credits	**16**	
	Total Credits	**48**	