

General Examinations for the Ph.D. in Classics

First Examination.

The “First Examination” is taken in the period following the completion of 30 credits and before the completion of 45 credits. It has two parts which are taken separately:

1. The Greek Translation Exam for the Ph.D. This exam tests the student’s ability to translate from Greek to English. It consists of six passages (three prose and three poetry), each about twenty lines long, with two out of each set taken from the Greek Reading List for the Ph.D. Program. The student selects and translates two prose and two poetry passages. The time limit is three hours.

2. The Latin Translation Exam for the Ph.D. This exam tests the student’s ability to translate from Latin into English. It consists of six passages (three prose and three poetry), each about twenty lines long, with two out of each set taken from the Latin Reading List for the Ph.D. Program. The student selects and translates two prose and two poetry passages. The time limit is three hours.

Where a reading list allows a choice between various works of an ancient author, the students is invited to submit a note to the EO specifying which they have chosen. All students taking a particular examination at the same examination period will take the same exam, however, which limits the possibilities of “customization.”

There is no set order in which the parts of the “First Examination” must be taken and they are generally offered at the beginning of each semester. When a student passes both parts of the First Examination they are advanced to the second doctoral level.

The modern language exams. These may be taken anytime while the student is matriculated at the Graduate Center. The exam consists of a medium length passage on a classical topic from a scholarly article or book written in the relevant language. The student is expected to translate the passage into idiomatic English. The time limit is two hours and students are allowed to use a small dictionary. The choice of languages is German and either French or Italian.

The en route M.A. After completing the entire “First Examination,” a research paper (which may be a paper submitted as course work), one modern language exam (French German or Italian) and 45 credits with an average grade of B or higher, students may be awarded an en route Masters Degree in Classics.

Second Examination.

The “Second Examination” is taken when the student is near or has completed 60 credits. It has three parts which are taken separately:

1. - 2. Oral Examinations in the History of Greek Literature and the History of Roman Literature. Each exam will be administered by a committee of three faculty members. Two will be appointed by the Executive Officer in consultation with the Examination Committee and one, who will act as the student's advisor on a special author/topic, will be appointed by the Executive Officer in consultation with the student and the Exam Committee. The special author/topic will be approved by the advisor and the Executive Officer. The advisor will be responsible for suggesting suitable bibliography on the special topic and will question the student during the exam on this area. The committee members asking general questions may consult with each other and the advisor prior to the exam in order to avoid overlap, and may consult with the student about his/her interests.

Two hours will be allotted for the exam, with each of the three faculty questioning the student for about 40 minutes. At the conclusion of the exam, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates. The student will then be called back and the committee will announce its decision. The exam may be graded as Pass with Distinction, Pass or Fail.

The general areas of the exam will be based on the Program's PhD reading lists. Students will be expected to know basic information about the individual authors and their writings, to be able thoughtfully to answer questions about individual works in their specific intellectual and cultural contexts, and the ways these authors or their works are influenced by or themselves influence other works on the list (or authors in the other language). Some emphasis may also be laid on methodology and relevant scholarly and interpretive issues.

Exams will normally be given during the semester and students must inform the Executive Officer in writing of their intention to take either exam at least one month prior to the exam itself.

3. The Examination in the History of Greece and Rome. This written exam tests the student's knowledge of both Greek and Roman history as well as a special topic, such as archaeology, art, government, religion, or a particular historical period. The exam consists of essays (75%) and 10 of 15 identifications (25%) of significant terms, people, events, etc. from Graeco-Roman antiquity. A list of about 200 possible ID's is distributed to the students for use as a study guide. All of the ID's on the exam are taken from the list. The three essays are worth 25% each. The first essay is on a special topic selected in advance by the student in consultation with his or her adviser and the chair of the Exam Committee. The student's answer should demonstrate an awareness both of the ancient sources and relevant modern scholarship. The second and third essays, chosen by the student from a list of five, test factual knowledge of the history of the time period covered by the Greek and Latin Reading Lists for the Ph.D. Possible topics addressed are: the development of democracy, military history, the status of women, political institutions, slavery, the ancient economy, and the careers of major figures. The time limit is three hours.

There is no set order in which the three parts of the Second Examination must be taken. Following the completion of all three parts of the three parts, students are advanced to candidacy and reach level three.

The second modern language examination. This exam may be taken any time while the student is matriculated at the Graduate Center. The format is described above. If the first modern language examination was in German, the second may be French or Italian. If the first was French or Italian, the second must be German.

The dissertation.

The candidate is required to write a dissertation on a subject approved by a committee of the doctoral faculty chosen in consultation with the Executive Officer. As part of this approval process, the student will write a dissertation proposal and meet with the committee to answer questions on the proposal and the general area(s) of the dissertation. After the dissertation has been completed and approved by this committee, the candidate will defend the dissertation at a final oral examination.