

Guidelines for Examinations in the Terminal MA Program

Students generally take their examinations after they have completed all 30 required credits and have passed a reading exam in German, French or Italian. In certain cases it may be advisable to take an exam earlier and it is recommended that the modern language exams be taken as soon as possible after matriculation.

In addition to the modern language exams, which are the same for both masters and PhD students, masters students must take one translation exam in either Latin or Greek at the MA level and a History of Latin (or Greek) Literature exam. The two languages need not be the same, but generally they are. All the exams are written and are based on the MA reading lists. Copies of the lists are available online (follow a link from our homepage) and in the Program office. Where a reading list allows a choice between various works of an ancient author, the student 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.”

The MA Latin Translation exam consists of three passages of Latin poetry and three of prose from which the student must choose two in each category. The passages are about 20 lines long and the student has three hours to complete the exam. No dictionaries are allowed. The format for the **MA Greek Translation Exam** is exactly the same. Sample exams are available in the Program office from the Assistant Program Officer.

Please note that the masters exams are not the equivalent of the PhD general examinations and an MA student considering the possibility of petitioning for admission to the PhD program should give thought to taking the Greek or Latin translation exam at the PhD level. If a student takes a Greek or Latin translation exam for the MA and then enters the PhD program s/he will have to take the exam again at the appropriate level.

The MA History of Latin (or Greek) Literature exam. When you tell the EO in writing that you wish to take either the MA History of Latin or Greek literature, s/he will send you 12 essay topics which you are invited to prepare in advance. When you arrive for the exam you will be given 4 of the essays, selected by the faculty, and asked to write on 3 of them. You will have three hours to do so. You may not bring any notes into the exam, but it is expected that you will have given the essays some thought and done some research in preparation for writing them. Because you are receiving the topics in advance you should be able to support your arguments with specific examples and demonstrate a broad range of knowledge in your responses. The topics were composed with the MA reading list in mind and you should make reference to those authors and texts in your discussion.

As above, the History of Latin (or Greek) Literature exams at the MA level are not the equivalent of the PhD History of Literature exams which are oral.

Questions on any of the above may be addressed to the Executive Officer.