

Department of French and Italian
University of Wisconsin–Madison

GUIDELINES
FOR
GRADUATE DEGREES IN ITALIAN

Admission
Criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress as a Graduate Student
Master of Arts in Italian
Doctor of Philosophy in Italian

Effective April 2019
Updated April 2025

ADMISSION

Master of Arts

The B.A. in Italian or an appropriate equivalent (e.g. the three-year *laurea* in *Lettere* from an Italian university) is the normal prerequisite for admission to the M.A. program. Students with training other than a B.A. in Italian or a three-year *laurea* in *Lettere* are encouraged to apply, with the understanding that prerequisite courses may be required of successful applicants during the first year in residence.

Doctor of Philosophy

The M.A. degree in Italian or an appropriate equivalent (e.g., the five-year *laurea* or *master* in *Lettere* from an Italian university) is the normal prerequisite for admission to the Ph.D. program. Students with training other than an M.A. in Italian or a five-year *laurea* or *master* in *Lettere* are encouraged to apply, with the understanding that prerequisite courses may be required of successful applicants during the first year in residence.

Please note: on applications forms, students with degrees from universities outside North America must take care to provide titles of degrees accurately, not as equivalents of U.S. degrees.

CRITERIA FOR SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS AS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN ITALIAN

Master of Arts

- Maintenance of a 3.25 grade point average in the M.A. program.
- Minimum each semester of 9 credits at the graduate level, except for students who teach more than half-time, for whom the minimum shall be 6 credits, after approval of the Graduate Advisor.
- Satisfaction of all M.A. requirements by the end of the fourth semester of graduate studies. The M.A. exam must be completed no later than the next exam period following the fourth semester of study.

Doctor of Philosophy

- Maintenance of a grade point average of 3.3 in the Ph.D. program.
- All post-M.A. students must pass the Ph.D. qualifying examination within their first two semesters in the Ph.D. program and before beginning the preliminary examinations. Students will be given one opportunity to pass the qualifying examination.
- Before completing preliminary examinations and being admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D., students must take a minimum of 9 credits of graduate work each semester, except for those who teach more than half-time, for whom the minimum shall be 6 credits, after approval of the Graduate Advisor. See the “Departmental Guidelines” section on Pg. 4 for more detail on what types of courses can be included in these 9 credits.
- Foreign language reading requirements, requirements for the minor, and preliminary examinations should normally be completed by the end of the fifth year of graduate studies (or the third year after the M.A.).

The progress of each student is reviewed at the end of each semester to determine if the student is making satisfactory academic progress.

THE M.A. IN ITALIAN

Departmental Requirements

- Proficiency in speaking and writing Italian. Non-native speakers may satisfy this requirement with a grade of B or better in an advanced Italian language or stylistics course. For native speakers of Italian or for other students with a superior command of written and spoken Italian, no formal coursework in language or stylistics is required.
- A total of 24 credits in Italian courses. Of these 24 credits, 12 must be in courses numbered above 500, and 6 must be seminar work. Audited courses (no more than one per semester) do not count for degree credit. Seminars are typically considered inappropriate for auditing.
- No thesis is required.

The M.A. Examination

- The M.A. exam is given in January and August of each academic year, and consists of two parts: a written examination of four hours duration, followed normally one to two weeks later by a one-hour oral examination. Students must pass the written portion in order to be admitted to the oral examination.
- A sign-up period for the M.A. examination is announced several weeks before the examination date. Students must sign up for the exam with the Graduate Coordinator. Students who sign up for the M.A. exam will have until one week before the scheduled examination to remove their name from the sign-up list without the penalty of a technical failure. Students have a total of two chances to pass the M.A. exam.
- The required reading list for the M.A. exam is available on the department website online or from the graduate coordinator.
- Before taking the M.A. examination, students must have removed all Incompletes from their University of Wisconsin record.
- Students taking the M.A. exam will not be allowed to use notes or dictionaries. Students taking the M.A. exam may use a personal computer, department supplied computer, or exam booklets. Please refer to page 11 of the guidelines for University of Wisconsin-Madison academic misconduct policy.
- The written portion of the examination consists of five areas, from which students choose four at the time of the exam. Questions may be answered in Italian or English, with the proviso that at least one answer must be written in English and one in Italian. The five areas are:
 - Medieval: Duecento and Trecento
 - Renaissance: Quattrocento and Cinquecento
 - Early Modern: Seicento
 - Mid Modern: Settecento to Ottocento
 - Modern: Novecento to the Present

The exam is graded as Pass, Low Pass, or Fail. Students who receive a low pass on their M.A. exam will receive the M.A. degree, but normally they will not be accepted into the Ph.D. program. Students with a low pass who wish to be considered for admission into the Ph.D. program must make a written request to the Italian Instructional Committee. If their request is granted, they must take and pass the qualifying exam at its next offering. A student who fails the M.A. exam will not be admitted to the Ph.D. program, but may retake the M.A. exam at its next offering, to receive the M.A. degree.

THE PH.D. IN ITALIAN

The Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program who do not have the M.A. degree in Italian from the UW-Madison are expected to have a background in the subject areas indicated by the M.A. reading list. Students in this category are required to pass the qualifying examination by the end of the second semester in the Ph.D. program. It may be taken only once.

The qualifying exam is an oral presentation of approximately 30 minutes, on a topic chosen from one of the five areas (Medieval: Duecento and Trecento, Renaissance: Quattrocento and Cinquecento, Early Modern: Seicento, Mid Modern: Settecento to Ottocento, or Modern: Novecento to the Present), followed by discussion of the topic with the examining faculty. The purpose of the exam is to determine the student's capacity for advanced research. For planning purposes, students will first consult with the Associate Chair, who will indicate the appropriate faculty member primarily responsible for setting the general parameters of the exam.

Departmental and Graduate School Requirements

Graduate School Guidelines. Students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate School Academic Guidelines, which can be found online at:
<https://grad.wisc.edu/academic-policies/>.

Departmental Guidelines. Students must take a seminar in an area of Italian studies each semester until they have passed the preliminary examinations. In any given semester, this request may be waived upon approval by the Associate Chair for Italian. In addition, it is expected that students will complete the bulk of the coursework for their minor and foreign language reading requirements after taking their first set of preliminary examinations. Students are encouraged to plan ahead for a timeline to take these courses, and if a student wishes to take a course for their minor or foreign language requirement as part of their full-time load of 9 credits prior to that time, they may do so with approval from their advisor. Students should understand that it is very rare that requests to take minor or foreign language classes during the first year of study would be granted. In addition, advisors reserve the right to deny a student permission to take these classes (prior to the time of passing the first set of prelims) if doing so would directly conflict with a course offering in Italian which was important to the student's area of research. At any time, students may take a course for their minor or foreign language reading requirement as a fourth course, in addition to the 9-credit requirement in Italian, without needing approval from their advisor.

Foreign Language Reading Requirement

Advanced scholarship necessitates reading primary and secondary sources in a number of languages. The Ph.D. program in Italian requires reading proficiency in a minimum of two languages other than English and Italian, selected in consultation with the specialist in the student's projected research area. Students must show advanced competence in one language, and minimal competence in a second language. The form for language certification is available from the Graduate Coordinator.

Advanced reading competence is demonstrated by:

- Attaining a rating of Advanced on the Outreach Exam, *or*
- Achieving at least a grade of B in an advanced literature course (600 course or its equivalent) in which readings are in the original language, *or*
- Taking a reading knowledge course offered by another language department and receiving written certification as to proficiency and level, for example: German 391 (a grade of A) or Latin 391 (a grade of A), *or*
- Individual examinations administered by a faculty member, with a signed "Language Competency Evaluation Form" returned to the Graduate Coordinator, *or*
- Documentation acceptable to the Italian Faculty of other previous work done in language or literature courses.

Minimal satisfactory reading competence is established by:

- Attaining a rating of Adequate on the Outreach Exam, *or*
- Achieving at least a grade of B in a fourth-semester language course (e.g. French 204 or its equivalent), *or*
- Taking a reading knowledge course offered by regular faculty in another language department and by receiving written certification as to proficiency and level, for example: German 391 (a grade of B) or Latin 391 (a grade of B), *or*
- Individual examinations administered by a faculty member with a signed *Language Competence Evaluation Form* returned to the Graduate Coordinator, *or*
- Documentation acceptable to the Italian Faculty of other previous work done in language or literature courses.

The Ph.D. Minor

The Graduate School approves two types of Ph.D. minors <https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/minors/>. Option A minors are completed in a single department/major field of study. Selection of this option requires the approval of the minor department. Students must complete the requirements of the minor department. Option B minors, or Distributed Minors, are completed in one or more departments and can include course work in the major department. Selection of this option requires the approval of the major department. Graduate students from Italian who select the Option B minor must take

a minimum of 12 credits. Graduate students from another program who want to minor in Italian must take a minimum of 12 credits.

Preliminary Examinations and Their Format

For formal admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree in Italian, students must pass the preliminary examinations offered twice a year, in August and January. The purpose of these examinations is to appraise the student's factual knowledge, and particularly his/her discrimination, critical judgment, and ability to organize and present ideas clearly. On these examinations, successful students will demonstrate:

- Familiarity with the development and present state of Italian literature, civilization, cinema, and language
- First-hand acquaintance with the works of writers and film directors, in their historical and social context
- Familiarity with literary journals and movements, as well as with principal reference works and periodicals
- Ability to present information and critical judgment in an orderly way

Articulation and sequencing of exams. Students choose three of the following five areas for examination, designating one as the area of specialization, for which there will be a separate Special Topic supplement (see below).

- Medieval: Duecento and Trecento
- Renaissance: Quattrocento and Cinquecento
- Early Modern: Seicento
- Mid Modern: Settecento to Ottocento
- Modern: Novecento to the Present

The exams are to be taken in subsequent sittings, i.e. August and the following January, or January and the following August. Students are strongly encouraged to take the exams for the two non-specialist areas in the first sitting, and the exams in their area of specialization in the subsequent sitting.

Reading lists. A list of recommended readings is available for each area. The lists serve as guides to preparation, not as limits to the range of material that may be examined.

Signing up for preliminary examinations. A sign-up period for the Ph.D. prelims is announced several weeks before the examination dates. Students who sign up for the preliminary exams will have until one week before the scheduled examination to remove their name from the sign-up list without penalty of technical failure.

Special Topic in Literature or Cinema. The Special Topic exam in Literature or Cinema consists of a three-hour written component, followed by a one-hour oral discussion with the examining faculty. Students may bring materials from their Special Topic reading list to the written exam. The oral component is normally scheduled within ten days of the written exam.

Consultation with faculty for Special Topic exam. Students must consult with the appropriate faculty member(s) at least three months before the Special Topic exam date, to establish the general focus of the exam and a reading list to aid in preparation.

Administration of preliminary examinations. The exams are administered in separate sessions with at least one free day between each session. Each written session lasts up to four hours. At least one section of one of the four preliminary examinations must be answered in Italian, and one in English. Students taking prelim exams may use a personal computer, department supplied computer, or exam booklets. If an exam contemplates subsets, the entire subset should be answered in Italian or English. Please refer to page 11 of the guidelines for University of Wisconsin-Madison academic misconduct policy.

Results. Students receive official announcement of examination results in writing. Only those examinations not passed will be repeated. Successful completion of all examinations is not to extend beyond a third consecutive exam session. Students will not be allowed to continue in the Italian Ph.D. program after a second failure of a prelim exam of the same topic. Termination will be effective at the end of the semester in which exams take place. Students will have the option to receive an MA if they did not receive an MA in Italian studies at UW-Madison – per Graduate School guidelines. Approval from the Associate Chair of Italian is necessary. Students will be allowed to continue for the semester after which they fail the second prelim if they are already registered and enrolled at UW-Madison, but not beyond. They will also be allowed to continue on as a Graduate Assistant during their final semester in the Italian MA/Ph.D. program.

Courses in lieu of examination. For the areas omitted from the preliminary examinations, students should normally present a minimum of two courses/seminars in that area for the approval of the Italian Instructional Committee. The two courses must be taken after the MA degree and during the Ph.D. Program. Courses taken during the MA program do not count towards such exoneration.

THE PH.D. DISSERTATION

Before beginning work on the dissertation, all Ph.D. candidates must familiarize themselves with the Graduate School rules regarding the period of time allowed for completion, format and presentation, deadlines for depositing, etc. See the Graduate School publication [Guide to Preparing Your Doctoral Dissertation](#), available on line using the hyperlink provided.

Dissertation Topic and Dissertation Director

Upon completing the requirements for the M.A., prospective candidates for the doctorate should begin to read intensively in their field of interest and to consider topics for the dissertation. They may ask any UW-Madison professor of Italian to act as dissertation director.

The Dissertation Proposal

After admission to Ph.D. candidacy, the student's first official step in the dissertation process is presentation of the dissertation proposal before the dissertation committee <https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=committees>. This is normally done in the semester immediately subsequent to completing the preliminary examinations successfully. The presentation and the ensuing discussion are the candidate's opportunity

to lay out initial findings and a plan for research and analysis before a panel of experienced scholars, and to receive their insight and advice regarding the project.

The Proposal. The proposal is a clear and concise document of normally from ten to fifteen double-spaced pages, accompanied by a bibliography of works that form the basis of the study. It must contain sufficient information for the committee to be able to evaluate the interest of the topic as a contribution to scholarship, and to gauge the candidate's capacity to carry out the necessary research and writing in a reasonable amount of time.

While there is no set format, the proposal will normally include a review of previous scholarship on the question at hand, commentary on the strengths and shortcomings of that work, a research plan, and a statement of the ways in which the proposed study promises to be an original and valuable contribution to scholarship. Given that different fields and different approaches call for different procedures in research and interpretation, methodology must be made clear in the proposal.

The proposal must be delivered to the members of the dissertation committee no less than two weeks before the presentation.

Presentation of the Proposal. With the dissertation director as moderator, the student will present the proposal formally before the dissertation committee. The student should not read a text, but, with notes and/or accompanied by a handout if desired, summarize the contents of the proposal, with any further commentary deemed necessary. The Dissertation Director informs the Graduate Coordinator once the proposal is approved by the committee, and record of approval is kept in the student's file.

The Defense Version of the Dissertation

The defense version must be a completed dissertation, intended as the final version. The committee is charged with evaluating the dissertation before them, and that they have had opportunity to examine with care. Thus the dissertation must be delivered in completed form to the members of the committee in a timely manner as indicated below. In content and format, they should receive what is intended as the final version to be deposited with the Graduate School.

Four weeks before defense: deliver to committee, deposit in Department, file FRIT Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form. The final version of the dissertation must be delivered to the members of the dissertation committee no later than four weeks before the defense. At the same time, the final version may be deposited in the department office for public consultation. The FRIT Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form, available from the Graduate Coordinator, must be filed at this point.

Two weeks before defense: public announcement. The defense is public. The time and place of the defense must be announced in the Department – and elsewhere as the candidate and director deem appropriate – no later than two weeks before the defense date.

The Oral Dissertation Defense

In addition to the director, at least two other qualified faculty members will read the dissertation. Upon its completion, the candidate will defend the dissertation before a committee consisting of the three readers and one other faculty member. One member of the committee must represent an area outside the fields of Italian literature and film,

preferably as the representative of the minor area. The Graduate School policy on Committees should be reviewed at <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201>.

Normally, candidates offer a brief (10-15 minutes) summary of the dissertation, focused primarily on the original contribution of the work. Handouts may be used if necessary. Following the candidate's opening statement, the director will coordinate the committee's questioning and discussion.

Depositing the Dissertation

After passing the oral defense, students are responsible for paying the dissertation deposit fee and the electronic deposit of the dissertation. Since no changes are allowed once the dissertation is approved by the Graduate School, all revisions and corrections must be completed before electronic deposit. Graduate School final reviews are optional and are scheduled by contacting the Graduate School. Please refer to the [Guide to Preparing Your Doctoral Dissertation](#) for more information.

Course Chair for Italian:

- 101, 102, 201, 203, 204 & 205 – Loren Eadie

Italian Program Grievances

If a student feels unfairly treated or aggrieved by faculty, staff, or another student, they should consider the following steps:

1. Students' concerns about unfair treatment are best handled directly with the individual(s) responsible for the objectionable action.
2. If the student is uncomfortable making direct contact with the individual(s) involved, he/she should contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) for Italian and/or the Department Chair.
3. If the student wishes to file an official complaint, s/he should consult with and send the following information to the Graduate Coordinator within 45 days from the date of the incident:
 - A detailed written statement on the events that resulted in the grievance and any efforts to resolve the matter prior to official complaint;
 - Copies of any relevant communications regarding the events that resulted in the grievance.

Upon receipt of all of the above materials:

- The Graduate Coordinator will forward the formal grievance to the DGS (if the complaint is about the DGS, the documents will be forwarded to the Chair).
- The student will be notified in writing, within 5 business days after the materials arrive in the Graduate Coordinator office, acknowledging receipt of the formal complaint and giving the student a time line for the review to be completed.
- If necessary, the DGS (or Chair) will request additional materials relevant to the issues raised in the student's grievance.
- The DGS (or Chair) will request and conduct formal interviews with the people named in the written statement.
- If necessary, the DGS (or Chair) will arrange a meeting with the student, his/her advisor and/or the Department Chair.
- If the student wishes, s/he may present his/her case at a meeting of the IIC.
- The DGS (or Chair) will inform the student in writing of the decision within 45 business days of the submission of the grievance by the student.

If a student believes that his/her grievance was not appropriately handled or resolved at the program/department level, the student may file an appeal with the Graduate School. Follow this link: <https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>

Academic Misconduct

The university holds graduate students to a high standard of academic integrity and believes that misconduct may warrant university discipline in addition to sanctions imposed by an instructor. Graduate students who have been found by their instructors to commit academic misconduct can expect that the Division of Student Life will consider whether to impose a further disciplinary sanction of university probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Chapter 14 of the University of Wisconsin Administrative Code defines academic misconduct as follows:

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- assists other students in any of these acts. UWS 14.03(1)

Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

- cutting and pasting text from the Web without quotation marks or proper citation;
- paraphrasing from the Web without crediting the source;
- using notes or a programmable calculator in an exam when such use is not allowed;
- using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own by not properly crediting the originator;
- stealing examinations or course materials;
- changing or creating data in a lab experiment;
- altering a transcript;
- signing another person's name to an attendance sheet;
- hiding a book knowing that another student needs it to prepare for an assignment;
- collaboration that is contrary to the stated rules of the course; or
- tampering with a lab experiment or computer program of another student.

The full text of the state statute governing academic misconduct, University of Wisconsin System (UWS) 14, Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures, as well as the UW-campus procedures for implementing the provisions of UWS 14 and general information about academic misconduct, are available at: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/> or from the Division of Student Life, 75 Bascom Hall 608-263-5700.

FACULTY AND ACADEMIC STAFF AND THEIR AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Stefania Buccini	17th, 18th, and early 19th-century Italian literature and culture; Baroque novel and poetry; libertine fiction and ideology; antique printed editions and early modern manuscripts.
Loren Eadie	Italian Language Director Course Chair ITA 101, ITA 102, ITA 201, ITA 203, ITA 204, ITA 205.
Ernesto Livorni	Professor of Italian Language and Literature, Comparative Literature and Religious Studies.
Graziella Menechella	20th- and 21-st century literature; women writers; history and culture of mafia; Italian food cultures.
Kristin Phillips-Court	Italian Renaissance literature and culture; drama, painting and Renaissance inter-media; aesthetics; patronage; Machiavelli, Vasari, Tasso, Bruno.
Patrick Rumble	Cinema and 20th-century literature, especially recent Italian filmmakers; the cinema of the fascist period.
Jelena Todorovic	Medieval Italian literature and culture; Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio.