

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, B.A.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

Designed for students who want to study literature with an interdisciplinary and global perspective, the major in Comparative Literature crosses the boundaries of geography, time, nationalities, languages, and cultures. The world of literature taught draws upon readings from the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and from many historical periods. The range includes recognized great books along with less-known works, timeless myths and up-to-date graphic novels and video games, gender studies, colonial and postcolonial literatures, indigenous literatures, testimonies, legends, banned books, literatures of the occult, detective fictions, virtual worlds, and cultural theory, and more. Students engage with different languages and cultures, develop the critical skills for literary and cultural analysis, and relate literature to other media, including film and digital media. The major also encourages students to explore the relationship between literature and ethics through course offerings focused on transnational identities, human rights, cultures of globalization, and the problem of violence. A senior seminar clarifies the mysteries of literary theory and provides opportunities for individual projects.

Students majoring in Comparative Literature take courses in the Department of Comparative Literature and in other departments. They also develop competence in a world language. Study abroad is encouraged: students may count up to 18 Education Abroad credits toward the major. The department endeavors to provide all Comparative Literature majors with opportunities for an individualized "engaged scholarship" experience, such as an undergraduate research project, an opportunity to assist faculty in research or teaching, an internship, an experience studying or working abroad, etc.

Graduates of the Department of Comparative Literature have undertaken careers in teaching, completed advanced degrees in literature, librarianship, law, and similar fields, entered the Peace Corps or other types of government service, and pursued careers in writing and communications.

The department offers a minor in World Literature, a major in Comparative Literature and an innovative integrated undergraduate-graduate degree through which students obtain both a B.A. and an M.A. in Comparative Literature.

What is Comparative Literature?

Comparative literature is a discipline of literary studies that explores exciting approaches to literature and culture in a global context. It also examines global media (print, visual, electronic), and engages with questions of ethics, human rights, and the real world contexts of literary and cultural production.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (<https://complit.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/>)

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are curious about other cultures beyond your own and want to learn to think critically and creatively about cultural difference and convergence in our interconnected world.
- You want to acquire important skills such as analytical writing, argumentation, and communication in an international context.
- You are interested in acquiring knowledge of a second language and/or culture, which is a key component to success in the global economy.