Learning Objectives

Since its early beginnings, the study of comparative literature has promoted an attention to literary and cultural relations that transcend national borders, regional divisions, and confines of conventional historical periodization. In and through its more recent history as an institutionalized discipline at the American university and in the context of a new wave of globalization, comparative literature has emerged as the primary site for reflecting on the exchanges and interactions between literature and other arts, as well as literature and other areas of human activity, and thus, also as the privileged interface for interdisciplinary reflection.

The Department of Comparative Literature at USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences is unique among its peers in realizing the potential of this legacy due to diverse linguistic and cultural commitments and innovative multidisciplinary engagements of the department’s faculty. The traditional strength of the department in literary theory and the newly enhanced non-Western focus of its faculty solidifies this exceptional position. Our learning objectives reflect the department’s commitment to humanistic study, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary inquiry.

The learning objectives for the Comparative Literature BA are:

- To attain a broad knowledge of various literary traditions both in their specificity and interrelation.
- To interpret a literary text or other cultural artifact in a non-native, target language and to develop advanced skills in order to compare texts from a variety of different traditions, movements, genres, periods, and areas.
• To cultivate a complex understanding and appreciation of literary texts, cultural artifacts, and artistic production in their wider political and social contexts.
• To think critically about the relations between literature and other modes of cultural production.
• To develop theoretical and practical skills for interdisciplinary work by engaging the complex interface between literature and other kinds of human activity.
• To think historically about the multiple ways in which globalization affects the creation, dissemination, and consumption of contemporary popular culture and to analyze literature and the arts as sites of resistance and rethinking of “globalization” and “international relations.”
• To develop the critical skills in order to write longer research papers, displaying clear knowledge of research protocols—including conventions of proper attribution and citation—on a topic of literary, cultural, and/or political relevance.
• To engage in research and present original work at academic conferences and symposia.