

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Medieval and Byzantine Studies Program**

**Master's Program in Medieval and Byzantine Studies
Doctoral Program in Medieval and Byzantine Studies
Certificate Program in Medieval Studies**

AY 2015-2016

Key Assessment Findings

Both M.A. and Ph.D. students in the Medieval and Byzantine Studies Program are required to take comprehensive exams. Due to revisions and changes in curricular requirements in both the master's and the doctoral program, the faculty of the Medieval and Byzantine Studies Program have updated the requirements and structure of the comprehensive exams starting AY 2010-11 to better reflect the goals of the revised graduate programs.

Master's degree candidates have to generate reading lists in one major field (area of specialization) and two minor areas under the guidance of faculty experts and advisors. On day one of the comprehensive exam, they are examined in their major fields, on day two in their two minor fields, based on the reading lists. The exam is evaluated by three faculty members. In addition, in order to graduate, M.A. students are also required to submit a master's thesis *or* two interdisciplinary research papers to be assessed by two faculty members who are chosen in accordance with their knowledge and expertise in the matters considered in the papers.

Similarly to the M.A. comps, Ph.D. comprehensive exams are created as part of a dynamic process in which the student and his major and minor concentration advisors devise and agree to a list of readings. The Ph.D. comprehensives are designed to assess the student's critical engagement with and mastery of the material presented in their content areas. On days one and two the student is examined in the major field, on day three in the minor field. The exam is evaluated by three readers.

Students in the certificate program are not required to sit for comprehensive exams or to submit research papers. The (non-degree) certificate is based entirely on successful completion of required course work.

In AY 2015-16 the Center administered two M.A. comprehensive exams, and no doctoral comprehensive exams. All candidates have ultimately passed the exams, although one on them had to retake the exam in Spring 2016. The small size of the data precludes further detailed numerical presentation here. Rubrics for assessing comprehensive exams have been developed and applied. The results will be aggregated over time and discussed in future years to preserve confidentiality of students.

Curricular Improvements

AY 2009-10 saw a vibrant discussion among MBS faculty about the structure of academic programs at all levels, which resulted in the revision of our graduate programs (M.A., Ph.D. and Certificate) effective Fall 2010. The revisions introduced greater flexibility into the curriculum and require more independence of the students in designing and managing their academic development and research. In accordance with the revised graduate programs, the faculty of MBS, with the approval of the Steering Committee, have also redesigned the comprehensive exams. The new system was implemented in AY 2010-11. Based on our assessment of the outcomes of the changes, the Steering Committee has initiated a second round of revisions, still under discussion.

The Center continues to put great emphasis on the professional development of graduate students beyond the academic curriculum. We offer a series of academic lectures, seminars, and workshops as well as meetings and workshops about professional development. By the former we hope to promote advanced research, by the latter better placement records of our graduates.

Submitted by Dr. Lilla Kopár, Director of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIEVAL AND BYZANTINE STUDIES
AY2010-2011 to AY2015-2016

Master's Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2011-2012		0.00%	1	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	1
AY2012-2013		0.00%	2	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2
AY2013-2014		0.00%	4	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	4
AY2014-2015		0.00%	0	0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0
AY2015-2016		0.00%	2	0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2
TOTAL	0	0.00%	9	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	9

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2011-2012		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0
AY2012-2013		0.00%	1	100.00%		67.00%		0.00%	1
AY2013-2014		0.00%	1	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	1
AY2014-2015		0.00%	0	0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0
AY2015-2016		0.00%	0	0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0
TOTAL	0	0.00%	2	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2

Note:

- 1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.
- 2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".
- 3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.
- 4) Level of the comps, i.e. Master's and doctoral, is based on the milestone activities; if there is no specification of the level in the record, students' degree level is used to determine the level.

**Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies
MA in Medieval and Byzantine Studies**

Written Comprehensive Exam Rubric

Trait	Exceeding Expectations (3pts, Pass with Distinction)	Meeting Expectations (2pts, Pass)	Below Expectations (1pt, No Pass)
Accuracy of content (For each of the essay questions answered)	Student displays superior mastery of content (literary, historical, theoretical and philosophical), arguments are illustrated with a wealth of relevant detail sustained throughout the exam and over a variety of topics	Student displays strong mastery of content (literary, historical, theoretical and philosophical), arguments are mostly sound but may be somewhat general; occasional detail and nuance but not on all questions. Factual matters are correct with only occasional minor errors.	Student displays little or insufficient mastery of content; arguments lack detail, may be confused or erroneous at times; Exam contains nontrivial factual errors.
Familiarity with secondary sources and documentation	Candidate reveals a strong familiarity with the relevant secondary literature. Appropriate mention of the most relevant works in such a way as to build an argument.	Candidate reveals some familiarity with the relevant secondary literature which has been integrated into the exam essays.	Candidate reveals weak or inconsistent familiarity with the relevant secondary literature. Selection of relevant works appears haphazard. Or overreliance on secondary works.
Consistency and clarity of argumentation	Writing in the exam is displays superior clarity and persuasive argumentation; writing is extremely well-organized, presents ideas in a logical fashion without digression.	Writing in the exam is displays clarity and persuasive argumentation; writing is generally well-organized, presents ideas in a logical fashion with only occasional digressions.	Writing in the exam is unclear or unpersuasive; poorly organized or illogical, writing contains digressions or passages which do not contribute to the overall argument.
Demonstrate ability to connect texts and sources to broader contexts	Student successfully connects and integrates texts (whether literary, religious, philosophical and other texts) and	Student attempts to connect and integrate texts (whether literary, religious, philosophical and other texts) and	Student either does not attempt to connect texts and sources to broader contexts or is unsuccessful in doing

	other sources to broader contexts. Connections made are powerful, clearly articulated and persuasive.	other sources to broader contexts. While grounded in fact, the attempts may be either overspeculative or not fully fleshed out.	so. Facts marshalled in such arguments are either incorrect, overbroad or inopportune for the argument being made.
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Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies
PhD in Medieval and Byzantine Studies

Written Comprehensive Exam Rubric

Trait	Exceeding Expectations (3pts, Pass with Distinction)	Meeting Expectations (2pts, Pass)	Below Expectations (1pt, No Pass)
Content Knowledge in Major Field	Student displays superior mastery of content in major field. Factual detail and analysis are superior. The quality of the exam demonstrates that the student is well-prepared to move on to the next step in his/her graduate career, original research in the major field and preparation of a dissertation prospectus.	Student displays a solid grasp of content in major field. Factual detail and analysis are good. The quality of the exam demonstrates that the student is prepared to move on to the next step in his/her graduate career, original research in the major field and preparation of a dissertation prospectus.	Student does not display adequate mastery of content in major field. There are errors of fact, lack of detail or inadequate analysis. The quality of the exam demonstrates that the student is not prepared to move on to the next step in his/her graduate career.
Content Knowledge in Minor Field	Student displays superior mastery of content (literary, historical, theoretical and philosophical), arguments are illustrated with a wealth of relevant detail sustained throughout the exam and over a variety of topics	Student displays strong mastery of content (literary, historical, theoretical and philosophical), arguments are mostly sound but may be somewhat general; occasional detail and nuance but not on all questions. Factual matters are correct with only occasional minor errors.	Student displays little or insufficient mastery of content; arguments lack detail, may be confused or erroneous at times; Exam contains nontrivial factual errors.
Familiarity with secondary sources and documentation	Candidate reveals a strong familiarity with the relevant secondary literature. Candidate not only cites these sources but can engage with them critically, as one would expect of a	Candidate reveals good familiarity with the relevant secondary literature which has been integrated into the exam essays. Knowledge of the secondary literature is	Candidate reveals weak or inconsistent familiarity with the relevant secondary literature. Selection of relevant works appears haphazard. Or there is an overreliance on

	student who is about to embark on the preparation of a dissertation.	appropriate to a student beginning original research in the major area.	secondary works suggesting a lack of critical acumen on the part of the candidate.
Consistency and clarity of argumentation	Writing in the exam is displays superior clarity and persuasive argumentation; writing is extremely well-organized, presents ideas in a logical fashion without digression.	Writing in the exam is displays clarity and persuasive argumentation; writing is generally well-organized, presents ideas in a logical fashion with only occasional digressions.	Writing in the exam is unclear or unpersuasive; poorly organized or illogical, writing contains digressions or passages which do not contribute to the overall argument.
Demonstrate ability to connect texts and sources to broader contexts	Student successfully connects and integrates texts (whether literary, religious, philosophical and other texts) and other sources to broader contexts. Connections made are powerful, clearly articulated and persuasive.	Student attempts to connect and integrate texts (whether literary, religious, philosophical and other texts) and other sources to broader contexts. While grounded in fact, the attempts may be either overspeculative or not fully fleshed out.	Student either does not attempt to connect texts and sources to broader contexts or is unsuccessful in doing so. Facts marshalled in such arguments are either incorrect, overbroad or inopportune for the argument being made.