

Major Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements

Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies

Master's Program in Medieval and Byzantine Studies Doctoral Program in Medieval and Byzantine Studies AY2008-09 through AY2012-13

Graduate students in Medieval and Byzantine Studies may follow three courses of study:

- Certificate in Medieval Studies (non-degree, graduate certificate);
- M.A. Degree in Medieval and Byzantine Studies;
- Ph.D. Degree in Medieval and Byzantine Studies.

Assessment Measures

The Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies uses the following measures to assess student learning outcomes (for degree programs):

Direct Measures:

- Pass rates of comprehensive exams
- Grades in course work
- Course and program completion rate
- Theses (if applicable)
- Conference presentations, publications
- Involvement in extracurricular academic activities (guest seminars, workshops, lectures, off-campus courses)
- Language proficiency
- Teaching and research assistantships (very limited at MBS)

Indirect measures:

- Grades, course evaluations, and enrollment in core courses (e.g. Medieval Latin)
- Graduate school placement results (for MA students entering other doctoral programs)
- Job placement
- Program review data (most recent review completed and submitted in December 2013)
- Student/alumni program evaluations (part of 2013 program review)

Assessment Findings

All data charts listed below have been provided by CUA's Institutional Research.

Course Data

Graduate programs in Medieval and Byzantine Studies offer students a wide variety of course options depending on their research fields and areas of interest, thus no core courses can be identified that would apply to all

students. In addition, because of the interdisciplinary nature of the programs and the unique structure of the Center (versus a regular department with its own faculty), MBS offers no courses on its own. Courses towards MBS degrees are listed by other academic units (school and departments) at CUA and taught by faculty affiliated with the Center.

Milestone Data
(Attachment 1: Graduate Comprehensive Examination Results)

Master's Program: Of the 11 M.A. student who took comprehensive exams between Fall 2008 and Spring 2013, 9 received the grade of Pass, and 2 received High Pass grades. 1 to 3 students have taken the exam each year.

Ph.D. Program: At the doctoral level the ratio of High Pass grades is even higher: Out of a total of 9 students, 4 received High Pass grades, the other 5 Pass grades. This speaks for the generally high quality of our doctoral students in the program.

Attachment 1:

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIEVAL AND BYZANTINE STUDIES
AY2008-2009 to AY2012-2013

Master's Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2008-2009		0.00%	2	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2
AY2009-2010		0.00%	3	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	3
AY2010-2011		0.00%	1	33.00%	2	67.00%		0.00%	3
AY2011-2012		0.00%	1	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	1
AY2012-2013		0.00%	2	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2
TOTAL	0	0.00%	9	81.82%	2	18.18%	0	0.00%	11

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Honors		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
AY2008-2009		0.00%	1	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	1
AY2009-2010		0.00%	2	100.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2
AY2010-2011		0.00%	1	33.00%	2	67.00%		0.00%	3
AY2011-2012		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	0
AY2012-2013		0.00%	1	33.00%	2	67.00%		0.00%	3
TOTAL	0	0.00%	5	55.56%	4	44.44%	0	0.00%	9

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.

Progression and Graduation Data (Attachment 2)

Certificate Program: The chart below contains no data about the non-degree, graduate certificate, but according to departmental data, MBS has awarded two Certificates during the period under review. These certificates were earned by graduate students enrolled in other graduate programs at CUA and usually took about two years to complete, parallel with their regular courses of study. In the previous assessment period (2000-2007) no Certificates were awarded at all. The Certificate program was revived and redesigned as part of our major curriculum review in 2009-10 (see below) and it continues to offer training in Medieval Studies to students of other graduate programs at CUA.

Master's Program: During the period under review, four students enrolled in the Master's program in MBS and all four graduated in a period of two years, which is the foreseen time period for graduation.

Ph.D. Program: The doctoral program enrolled a total of 11 students between Fall 2008 and Fall 2012, with 1 to 3 students enrolling each year. This, as admissions and internal department data suggests, is less than 20% of the admitted students. Students admitted for Fall 2010 and beyond are still active in the program, some have passed comps. The Fall 2008 and 2009 students have graduated or left the program with an M.A. or with no degree.

Analysis:

In average, it takes two years to complete a Master's degree in MBS, unless the student arrives with no languages skills, which may require an additional year of training. Doctoral course work usually requires three years of study depending on the candidate's previous training or degrees, followed by at least two, usually three years of dissertation writing. Unfortunately, MBS can only offer three years of tuition assistance and maximum two years of stipend for these minimum 5 years needed for a doctoral degree. Therefore, we are in danger of losing talented candidates for financial reasons in the critical period after finishing their course work but before submitting their dissertation. Due to the complete lack of funding for M.A. students, most students choose to enter the doctoral program, even if they wish to move on to other programs within CUA or to other universities after having completed their Master's degree in our program. We have recently lost a number of very strong doctoral students to TRS and History due to their better funding packages, not to mention our best students who, while admitted to our doctoral program, chose to move on to better funded universities after their M.A. degrees from CUA.

Attachment 2:

**GRADUATE PROGRESSION AND GRADUATION
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIEVAL AND BYZANTINE STUDIES
Graduate Cohort Fall 2008 through 2012
Master's Program**

	Graduate Cohort Size	Returned To CUA in Fall 2009		Returned To CUA in Fall 2010		Returned To CUA in Fall 2011		Returned To CUA in Fall 2012		Returned To CUA in Fall 2013		Graduated in One Year		Graduated in Two Years*		Graduated in Three Years*		Graduated in Four Years*		Graduated in Five Years*	
		No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Fall 2008	2	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%
Fall 2009	0			0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		
Fall 2010	2					2	100.0%	2	100.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%				
Fall 2011	0							0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%						
Fall 2012	0									0	0.0%	0	0.0%								

*Two to five years of graduation rates are cumulative.

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session or the fall semester. For example, cohort 2008 consists of students first enrolled in summer 2008 or fall 2008.

**GRADUATE PROGRESSION AND GRADUATION
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIEVAL AND BYZANTINE STUDIES
Graduate Cohort Fall 2008 through 2012
Doctoral Program**

	Graduate Cohort Size	Returned To CUA in Fall 2009		Returned To CUA in Fall 2010		Returned To CUA in Fall 2011		Returned To CUA in Fall 2012		Returned To CUA in Fall 2013		Graduated in One Year		Graduated in Two Years*		Graduated in Three Years*		Graduated in Four Years*		Graduated in Five Years*	
		No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Fall 2008	1	1	100.0%	1	100.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Fall 2009	2			2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		
Fall 2010	3					3	100.0%	3	100.0%	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%				
Fall 2011	2							2	100.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%						
Fall 2012	3									3	100.0%	0	0.0%								

*Two to five years of graduation rates are cumulative.

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session or the fall semester. For example, cohort 2008 consists of students first enrolled in summer 2008 or fall 2008.

Curricular Improvements

The 2008 review of the academic programs in Medieval and Byzantine studies called for the rethinking of the graduate curricula and the future of MDST 601, our graduate gateway course. In order to facilitate interdisciplinarity, to encourage cross-cultural study, and to better serve our student population, MBS has undertaken serious revisions to both the M.A. and Ph.D. curricula. Implementation began in 2010. The new curricula divide the student's course work at both the M.A. and Ph.D. level into three distinct fields, within the student's choice of geographical focus (West, East, or the Islamic world): "History and Social Structures," "Thought and Worship," and "Cultural and Artistic Expressions." The student must take at least one course from each of these divisions, ensuring interdisciplinarity in the degree program.

In addition to substantive language requirements in both modern and medieval languages, both M.A. and Ph.D. curricula require comprehensive exams. The comprehensive exam structure was also revised since the review to reflect the design of the new curriculum. The M.A. exam will receive further revision in the future so that by the end of their first year, M.A. students will identify their one major field and two minor fields of study and receive the requisite bibliographies for them. In the new system, Ph.D. students also take comprehensive exams, with extensive reading lists individually developed in consultation with their major and minor field advisors. Dissertation proposals are reviewed and approved by the MBS Steering Committee. Full descriptions of the current and previous curricula and of the exam structures are available online at the MBS website at <http://mbs.cua.edu/graduate/index.cfm>.

The 2008 review found that no student entered the MBS certificate program in the period under study (2002-2007). To remedy this situation and to respond to student interest, MBS revived its graduate certificate in Medieval Studies in 2010, the only such program in the DC area. As in the revised graduate curricula, the certificate emphasizes and provides training in the three aforementioned fields (History and Social Structures; Thought and Worship; Cultural and Artistic Expressions). The program is now available to any current CUA graduate student as an additional qualification and to those outside CUA who possess an undergraduate degree. In the past two years, MBS awarded two certificates, one non-degree certificate student switched to full-time graduate study in Medieval History, and three students are currently working on their certificates.

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

July 2, 2014