COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A guide by students for students
Comparative Literature is the laboratory... of literary studies, and through them, of the humanities. Comparative Literature compares literatures, not only as accumulations of primary works, but as the languages, cultures, histories, traditions, theories, and practices with which those works come.

All colleagues in the School of Modern Languages’ six Departments also teach on the programme, as do members of staff from other Schools such as Classics, English, and Art History.
Dr Elise Hugueny-Léger
Department of French

Doing an MA Dissertation in Comparative Literature allowed me to develop a transnational approach and to think about the interaction between writing practices and cultural environments. In the past few years, my teaching on Comparative Literature has included a session on various versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood', an introduction to the journal and paintings of Frida Kahlo, a lecture on Amélie Nothomb and a screening of Lost in Translation. This variety of material and perspectives makes Comparative Literature, in my mind, a truly engaging and enriching discipline.
The field of Comparative Literature creates a flexible framework which allows me to draw links and connections across national borders and between different genres. This composite artwork by Maud Sulter embodies the kind of *bricolage spirit* that inspires me. Cutting and pasting images of Jeanne Duval (Baudelaire’s mistress and muse) and a photo of the artist herself in Paris over Manet’s 1865 painting Olympia allows Sulter to reposition Black women at the centre of the European cultural stage whilst creating meaning through juxtaposition in a new, playful way.
Dr Silvia Caserta
Department of Italian

Researching and teaching Comparative Literature for me means paying specific attention to the nuances of similarities and differences among various languages and various cultures, and making them relevant. The above painting by the artist Michel Cheval, illustrates the human need for comparison as a fundamental strategy to get to know and understand the world around us. As explained by the artist, the juggler in the painting “juggles the objects of the same color, of the same texture, and possibly of the same flavor, but different in shape. What in the end will allow us to name all these objects orange and what will hinder it?”
A WORD FROM OUR STUDENTS
Carla van der Sluijs
MA Hons in Comparative Literature & Russian (2018)

In bookshops, I am drawn to works of international literature and their insights into an unfamiliar culture. Thanks to modules on the literary canon, translation and the origins of comparative literature, I feel I have an understanding of not only literature, but the literary landscape generally. In short, I’m so glad that first-year Carla took a risk and discovered a new passion that has changed the way I read for life.

Rebecca Montgomery
MA Hons in Ancient History & Comparative Literature (2018)

Comparative Literature offers the chance to explore brilliant texts students studying in English would ordinarily never encounter, and exposure to areas of academic study still relatively unexplored.

Viktória Szántó
MA Hons in Art History & Comparative Literature (2018)

I love Comparative Literature because, coming from an international background, studying only English Literature seemed alien to me from the start. Choosing to study Comparative Literature at St Andrews means that you will be part of a fast evolving discipline that does not have the sometimes restrictive conventions of English lit education, and you will be part of a small, but very close-knit community of students and teachers who think comparatively.
Tomasz Hollanek  
MA Hons in Comparative Literature & Film Studies (2017)  
The age of Internet creativity, data mining, and virtual reality has revealed the fluid nature of the humanities. Comparative Literature allows me to adopt this new transmedia approach to art production and use my knowledge and skills in unrelated fields – for example during my internship at a software development company.

Zoe Schodder  
MA Hons in Comparative Literature & Modern History (2019)  
With texts from a wide range of countries and a variety of genres (novels to movies to paintings), Comparative Literature is perfectly suited to an increasingly globalised and inter-medial world, and the focus on contemporary cultural discourses has proven very useful in my Modern History course, as well as helping me secure internships in museums and research institutes.
Rachel Gillespie  
MA Hons in Comparative Literature & English (2017)

Studying Comp Lit has definitely made me much more critical and interrogative of the texts we read, as we are always encouraged in seminars to engage with the difficult and contradictory aspects of literature. It has also introduced me to a much wider range of literature than I would have come across on my own, and given me the opportunity to study countries, languages and parts of history that I hadn’t touched on before.
SUB-HONOURS PROGRAMME

The programme’s starting point at sub-honours is to raise awareness of different genres and themes as they appear in a range of literatures (including Arabic, French, German, Italian, Latin American, Russian, Persian, Spanish, UK, USA) and to explore how to study literature comparatively. All lectures will be given by subject experts who will also establish seminar discussion topics.

CO1001 The Nineteenth-Century Novel
CO1002 Drama in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries
CO2001 Good and Evil
CO2002 Journeys

HONOURS PROGRAMME

In their junior honours year, students take one compulsory module per semester. This module situates and interrogates the discipline of Comparative Literature and explores a range of theories and practices. Key areas will typically be drawn from: influence and reception; world literature; translation studies; adaptation studies; digital humanities; and ways of reading. Comparative Literature will typically also be discussed in relation to fields such as postcolonialism, area studies, cultural studies and interdisciplinarity.

Semester 1: CO3001 Contours and Constellations I
Semester 2: CO3003 Contours and Constellations II

Students then take one (junior honours) or two (senior honours) optional modules. They can opt to replace some of these with a short or long dissertation (15 or 30 credits).

See overleaf for a list of optional honours modules. All modules are worth 15 credits unless otherwise stated, and please note that the list is subject to change according to staff research leave.
OPTIONAL HONOURS MODULES*

CO3020 Cultural Memory and Literature
CO3021 Crossing the Mediterranean
CO4002 The Literary Canon
CO4003 Issues in Cultural Studies
CO4020 Literature and the Bible
CO4021 Autobiography and the Visual Arts
CO4022 Illness and Literature
CO4024 Performing Early-Modern Sexualities
CO4026 Classicism in European Literature
CO4027 Folk and Fairy Tales
CO4028 Great Works and their Adaptation
CO4029 Science and Culture in European Modernisms

CO4098 Short Dissertation
CO4099 Long Dissertation (30 Credits)
ML4794 Joint Dissertation (30 Credits)

*This list is subject to change, and new modules are coming in 2019!
THE COMP LIT COMMUNITY

Keep yourself up-to-date by signing up to the Comparative Literature facebook page, and for more information visit the university’s SOML website.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/856236714399999/about/
https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/modlangs/

DO COMP LIT THEY SAID

IT’S EASIER THAN ENGLISH THEY SAID