



**UCSD DEPARTMENT OF  
LITERATURE PH.D.  
PROGRAM:**

**AN OVERVIEW**



## THE PH.D. PROGRAM AT UCSD LITERATURE

- The organization of the **Department of Literature** is unusual in that it is neither a department of English nor a department of Comparative Literature as either is traditionally construed
- Rather, from its beginning, the Literature Department at UCSD has aimed to be **a department of world literatures and cultures within a single unit committed to the multilingual historical study of the connections and conflicts between cultures and society**
- This commitment includes the ambitious project of **teaching and conducting research** in Chinese, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Italian, Korean, Latin, Russian, and Spanish, as well as **the study and practice of writing**

# ABOUT THE UCSD DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE



- At the graduate level we offer two distinct degree programs: a Ph.D. in Literature and an M.F.A. in Writing
- The Ph.D. in Literature stresses **the transnational outlook of our program** and emphasizes its stake in **theoretical, interdisciplinary, and cultural studies**
- The Department of Literature at UCSD offers an intriguing example of how the Humanities can renew their place in today's university by **reconfiguring literary and cultural studies in an era of unprecedented global exchange**
- The collective strengths of our diverse faculty suggest ways in which it might be possible to develop theoretical sophistication and **openness to various forms of cultural production while remaining sensitive to the nuances of the literary text**; to be up-to-date in the exploration of contemporary culture without losing sight of a **rich historical legacy** that extends back to antiquity; to offer fresh looks at familiar works while remaining attuned to new voices in contemporary culture and **receptive to those who have not been clearly heard in the past**; and to place local concerns in **global context**

## SECTIONS AND AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

- Prospective students apply to one of the department's four sections:
  - Comparative Literature
  - Cultural Studies
  - Literatures in English
  - Literatures in Spanish
- Each section differs slightly in its seminar distribution and language requirements, but all students throughout the department may take graduate seminars in any section, and may work with any faculty members who best fit their interests
- The department supports a wide range of specializations across multiple languages, fields, geographic regions, and historical periods of literary and cultural production
- Regardless of students' chosen specialization, we emphasize comparative, multilingual, and interdisciplinary approaches, and so our program is a particularly good fit for prospective students who wish to approach their field of study from this vantage point

## SPECIALIZATIONS AND METHODOLOGIES

- To learn more about the **specializations and methodologies represented by our faculty**, please see the list of [Faculty By Areas of Specialization](#) on the website
- There is also a **Critical Gender Studies PhD specialization (in Literature)** coordinated through the Critical Gender Studies Program. For more information, visit their website: <http://cgs.ucsd.edu/graduate-specialization/index.html> (accessible through Literature website)



# COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

- Students whose primary area of concentration lies within the Comparative Literature Section commit themselves to **the study of three languages and literatures in the original**
- The Comparative Literature Section also houses student and faculty groups that work in languages such as **Chinese, Classics (Greek and Latin), Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, and Russian,** which are not administered by autonomous sections
- **The Classics faculty** welcomes students with comparative interests who study classical Greek and Latin literature in conjunction with a focus in a modern literature





# CULTURAL STUDIES

- The **Cultural Studies and Critical Theory Section** offers graduate students the opportunity to study **various theoretical approaches** as well as "culture" from a materialist perspective within the **comparative context** of several traditions of language and literature
- A Cultural Studies project may locate its inquiry within a single national and historical context (e.g., nineteenth-century U.S. culture), or it may consider the forms and practices generated by the encounter between two or more cultural entities
- Culture, broadly defined, is approached as a set of historically specific practices that include **literary, aesthetic, visual, performative, juridical, and a variety of "popular" forms and articulations**



# LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

- While our focus remains on writing produced in Britain and the U.S., the **Literatures in English Section encourages study of Anglophone writing in a global and multicultural context**
- **UC San Diego's comparative emphasis** offers several advantages for the study of literatures in English. By actively studying in a second (and even a third) literature, students are in a unique position to **explore theoretical currents and critical modes within and beyond the English-speaking world**, and to evaluate claims for the uniqueness of its national literary traditions
- It is not uncommon, for example, for students working in early modern English drama to draw upon Spanish and French, as well as English exploration narratives in the New World, or for a student of American modernism to work with congruent developments in the Caribbean or the Indian subcontinent
- Traditionally, **faculty members in the Literatures in English Section have research and scholarly interests in several fields**, allowing the graduate student to work across national, linguistic, and methodological borders





# LITERATURES IN SPANISH

- The Spanish Section is committed to the **study of literature and culture in their material and political context**
- The faculty encourages the use of a **dialectical method** that combines formal analysis with a discussion of broader social issues
- Following in the footsteps of section founders such as Carlos Blanco-Aguinaga, the **Spanish Section continues its rich history of scholarship and teaching in all areas of Spanish peninsular cultures** ranging from medieval to the early modern and contemporary periods
- The section is especially strong in its coverage of **Latin American and U.S. Latino topics**
- It is recommended that students **conduct research across disciplines and national boundaries**, e.g. literatures of the Americas or transatlantic studies. All students in the section will gain a broad knowledge of a diverse range of Spanish-speaking traditions. Because of the unique structure of the graduate program, seminars will expose students to the latest trends **in Latin American and European cultural theory**

# APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications to the PhD program require the following elements:

Academic History & Transcripts

Letters of Recommendation

Resume/CV

Statement of Purpose

**Test scores**, if applicable. [English Language Proficiency](#) demonstration is required for international applicants whose first language is not English. NOTE: As of Fall 2021, we are suspending our requirement of the GRE General Test for applicants to the PhD program. The GRE is *not* currently required

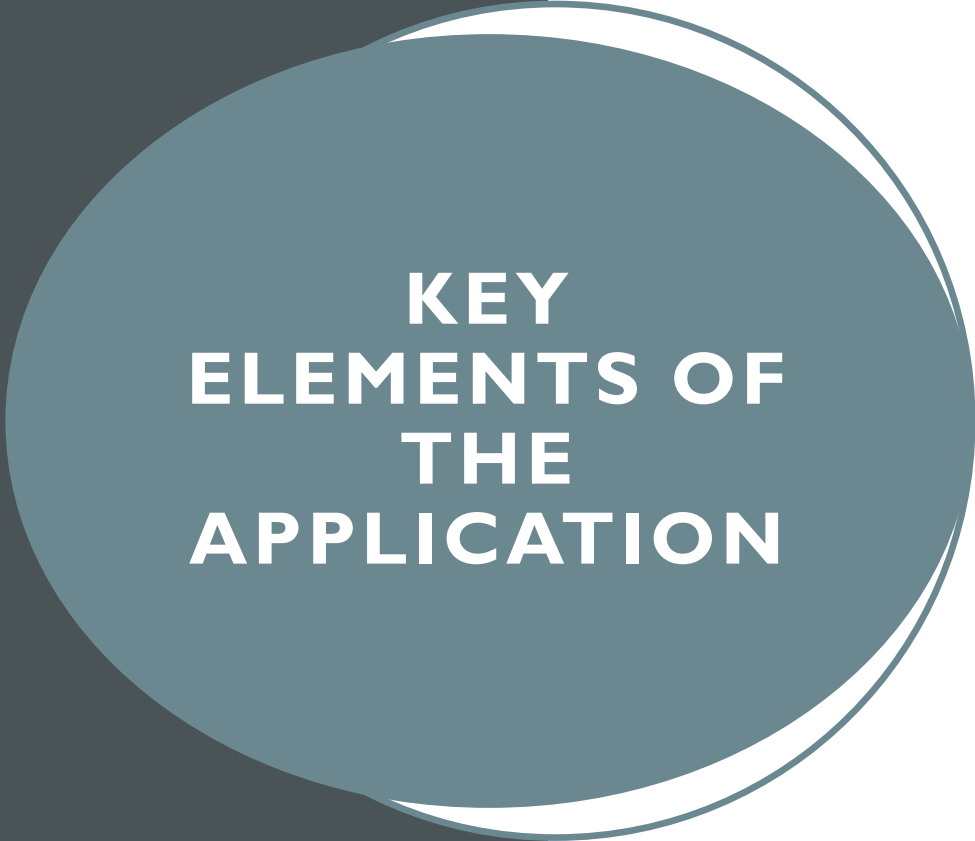
**Application Fee or Fee Waiver** (find more information, including eligibility for the fee waiver, on the website)





## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

- Overall, your application should **show your potential to succeed in graduate-level research and writing in a multilingual, interdisciplinary department**, as well as your interest and potential to effectively teach a diverse student body
- We also want to know **how your work will be supported by *this* particular department**: which faculty members are you interested in working with, and why? What are your research interests and anticipated fields of specialization?



## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE APPLICATION

### Letters of Recommendation

We require **three letters of recommendation from letter-writers who know you well** enough to be able to comment on your potential to do graduate-level work in literary/cultural studies. Usually, letter-writers will be faculty members who have taught you and who know your scholarly work well. It is generally expected that you ask any letter-writers well in advance of the deadline if they would be willing and able to write you a strong letter of recommendation for PhD programs. More general information on letters of recommendations is available

### Statement of Purpose

Your Statement of Purpose should, above all, **articulate your specific research interests in your proposed field(s) of specialization**. What areas of literary and/or theoretical inquiry do you want to pursue and why? How has your academic background prepared you for this specialization? What key intellectual/critical questions motivate your work in this particular field or fields? Why do you want to pursue these interests in the UCSD Literature Department specifically?

Your Statement of Purpose should also indicate **which faculty members you hope to work with** and how their research and teaching connects to your specific research interests. We want to make sure that, if admitted, your research interests could be supported by our department, and so it's particularly crucial for us to know what you want to study and which faculty members you anticipate working with

### Writing Sample

A 25-page writing sample is required. We strongly recommend submitting **a sample of your critical work in or related to the primary field(s) of specialization** you name in your Statement of Purpose. One substantive work of 25 pages is preferred, but multiple samples adding up to or exceeding 25 pages are also acceptable. The writing sample must be in English

## HOW DO I KNOW THIS PROGRAM IS THE RIGHT ONE FOR ME?

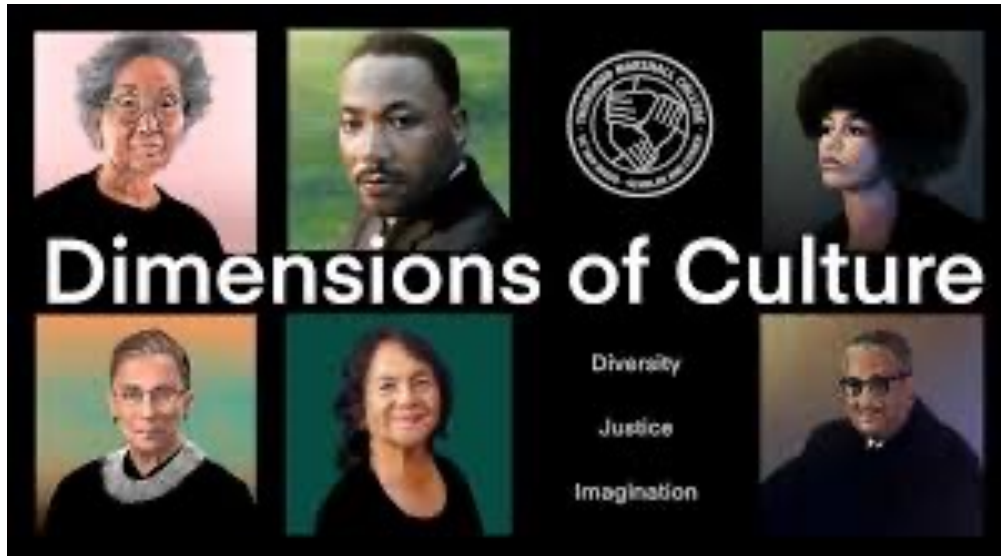
- Overall, this department is a particularly good fit for students hoping to pursue comparative, multilingual, and interdisciplinary approaches to literary and cultural studies. To find out more about how well the program fits your specific research interests, we strongly encourage you to visit our list of [Faculty by Section](#) on the website. On this list, you can click on the names of faculty members to learn more about their research interests, publications, and teaching.
- In your Statement of Purpose, explain why you see this program as a good fit for your specific interests, and be sure to name which faculty members you hope to work with and why.



## ABOUT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- All applicants who are admitted to the PhD Program (in FA21 and beyond) will be guaranteed five years of financial support, at least equivalent to \$30,000 per year (plus the cost of tuition & fees)
- The support may come in the form of guaranteed TA positions on campus, other forms of campus employment, fellowship/stipends, or any combination of the three
- The current nine-month salary of a 50% TA is \$23,246.51
- As the actual financial support package for each admitted student may vary, applicants should refer to the financial support package letter that they receive upon being admitted.

## BEING A TEACHING ASSISTANT AT UCSD



- As many financial support packages will include a guaranteed TA position for one or more years, please note the following policies regarding this guarantee:
- **Students will be required to submit on-time and complete applications to at least three departments offering Teaching Assistantships for the following academic year**
  - At least one of these departments must be the **College Writing Programs**, which is considered one application, and you must select at least three of the colleges as possibilities within your application.
  - Your other applications may be to any of the academic departments on campus (including the Literature Department).
- You will be required to accept the first year-long 50% TA position offer you receive