

# Literature

## Academic Learning Compact

Literature encourages enthusiasm for literatures across time, place and language; an appreciation of literature's continuing social and cultural importance; a strong value for the full range of cultural and linguistic work subsumed under "literature;" and a particular sensitivity to the nuances of language and linguistic expression. Engaging with literature in its original language is a goal, both for the enhancement of students' understanding of literatures and for the cultural awareness and mental flexibility that comes with multilingualism. Awareness of and engagement with cultural and historical variation are key. Students graduating in this area of concentration should have acquired 1) the critical thinking, communication skills and content knowledge that will allow them to interpret and express complex ideas, and 2) will serve as the basis for further study in Literature or related disciplines, or 3) prepare them for careers that demand strong communication skills together with creative and critical thinking.

### Academic Learning Compact Outcomes for the AOC:

The faculty of the program in Literature coordinate course offerings in order to ensure that students have access to courses covering a wide range of literary texts from the world canon and to a variety of approaches to the study of literature. Our course offerings must meet the needs of beginning and advanced students of literature, as well as those of students seeking to include literature as part of their liberal arts curriculum. We understand the study of literature to be both an important academic endeavor and a valuable and rewarding avocation. The primary goals of our program are:

1. To provide students with the opportunity to sharpen their oral and written expression and to strengthen their research and analytic skills.
2. To provide advanced courses and tutorials, and to sponsor Independent Study Projects (ISP) that allow students to pursue their interests in literature, preparing them both for the independent research required for the senior thesis and for graduate study.
3. To support the New College mission of providing a strong liberal arts education for our students by coordinating course offerings with faculty in literature and other disciplines and by encouraging students to enrich their studies through work in a variety of fields and through interdisciplinary projects.

### List of Academic Learning Compact Outcomes:

Concentrators demonstrate some familiarity with:

- 1 - literature from the classical, medieval and renaissance periods;
- 2 - literature from the 17th-18th centuries;
- 3 - literature from the 19th-21st centuries;
- 4 - literatures of different national or regional traditions, whether read in translation or in the original;
- 5 - diverse literary genres (long and short prose fiction, poetry, drama and expository writing).

Concentrators demonstrate a reading knowledge of a language other than English.

Concentrators demonstrate a command of a variety of critical approaches to the study of literature and are able to draw on this in the presentation of their original analyses. This goal is addressed in advanced courses in the discipline as well as in the senior thesis and baccalaureate exam.

## **I. EXPECTED OUTCOMES (bold indicates particular stress)**

1. Through formal and informal written work, students demonstrate a strong ability to analyze and evaluate literary texts in translation or in the original. Students write analytical essays that contain a clear and forceful argument and demonstrate good control of the mechanics of writing, including appropriate citational form (MLA, Chicago, etc.); [**Creative and Critical Thinking, Communication, Content**]

2. Students will be able to defend their analysis and explain why they chose the approach used as particularly effective. This goal is addressed in advanced courses in the discipline as well as in the senior thesis and baccalaureate exam.; [**Creative and Critical Thinking, Communication, Content**]

2. Students demonstrate a basic knowledge of literary periodization and movements within particular traditions or across traditions; [**Content**]

3. Students demonstrate some familiarity with diverse literary genres (long and short prose fiction, poetry, drama, and expository writing). [**Content**]

4. Students should demonstrate an absolute minimum ability to work in a language other than English, i.e. a reading knowledge of a language other than English. Ideally this represents both a core reading ability that might encourage truly comparative work at the level of linguistic nuance and an ability to function orally in the target language at a competent level. The base-line for this requirement is currently passing satisfactorily the equivalent of third-semester in study of a language. Both modern and ancient languages are eligible. [**Communication, Creative & Critical Thinking, Content**]

5. While students are not required to use “Theory” in their senior theses, they should show evidence of thoughtful use of secondary critical resources and be able to defend their choice of analytical approach or creative approach in both Thesis and Baccalaureate Examination. [**Content, Creative & Critical Thinking, Communication**]

6. Literature AOC students are expected to have studied works from at least three language traditions; [**Content**, Creative and Critical Thinking]

7. Students demonstrate a strong ability to engage productively in oral discussion of complex concepts, to contribute to group oral work, to construct arguments verbally, and to make effective formal presentations. For concentrators, this is one of the principal skills measured in the baccalaureate process; [**Communication**, Creative and Critical Thinking, Content]

8. Literature concentrators will demonstrate knowledge of the techniques of literary research and allied fields, and show an ability to define a substantial literary research project and carry it to successful completion. They should also demonstrate the ability to provide an appropriate and clear record of resources used and consulted in accordance with standard referencing forms (MLA, Chicago, etc.), and an understanding of principles of intellectual property and credit. [**Communication**, Content]

### **III. Track Your Progress**

1. Student progress is measured at every step at New College.

Each term or module course is evaluated on the “Term Evaluation” form and is available online. These evaluations give qualitative reviews of student work, identifying strengths and weaknesses in content knowledge, creative and critical thinking, and communication skills as pertinent.

Each semester’s work is planned in advance with the student’s advisor using the New College Contract form, which specifies work to be completed for a satisfactory semester. Each semester’s work is evaluated by the student’s academic advisor in the Contract Certification, which certifies that the student has met the requirements for that semester’s contracted plan of study and work.

All students must complete 3 Independent Study Projects (ISP), usually undertaken during January Interterm, and requiring the support of a faculty Project Sponsor and the Academic Advisor’s concurrence. Each of these is also evaluated on the ISP Evaluation Form, indicating the project’s purpose and goals, and identifying the content, communication, and/or creative/critical thinking or practical experience the student has achieved.

Each student must develop and complete a Senior Project with the support and direction of a Thesis Project Sponsor and two Readers. The Thesis Project Sponsor writes an evaluation of the completed project which usually highlights the project’s demonstration of appropriate content knowledge, critical and creative thinking, and written communication. The student’s ability to demonstrate good oral communication skills and appropriate library research skills in developing the project are also frequently noted here.

Each student must sit and pass an oral Baccalaureate Examination at the completion of the Senior Project, with an examining committee consisting of the Thesis Project Sponsor and the two Readers. The successful and satisfactory completion of the Baccalaureate Examination, which is

held publicly and advertised to the campus community, is required of all graduating students. An evaluation of the Baccalaureate Examination is also provided to the student and signed by all three members of the Baccalaureate Committee signifying their agreement that the Examination was a passing performance in terms of content knowledge, critical and creative thinking, and oral communication.

2. Students may track their progress also through the use of the “Proposal for a Concentration in Literature” form, available as PDF on the website. Students may download this form in their first year or before entering New College and track their progress in meeting the genre, period, and national coverage requirements as they progress. Students are expected to show more than one semester-length activity in each of the three periods and genres listed below. In addition, some work in theory/literary criticism is expected. Students should have completed substantial work in at least three literary traditions: Chinese, Classics, English, French, German, Russian, or Spanish. The baccalaureate committee will usually include at least two faculty representing different literatures.

LITERARY PERIOD:

- 1700
- 1700-1899
- 1900-present

LITERARY GENRE: Pre-

- Prose
- Poetry/Verse
- Drama

Students should note that admission to the AOC is by application; mere quantitative coursework is not in itself adequate for admission to the AOC. The quality of a student’s work needs to be strongly satisfactory for a student concentrating in Literature, not merely satisfactory for a student taking the course for breadth or personal interest. The study of Literature presumes a sensitivity to linguistic nuance and art, a working knowledge of literary forms, the ability to complete an extended project that is in most cases a written thesis of primarily solid literary analysis, although the method and critical approach may vary, and an interest in varieties of literary art and its function in producing and reproducing culture(s).

#### **IV. Specific Measures to Demonstrate Each Graduate’s Competence**

The thesis advisor and Baccalaureate committee will evaluate the Senior Thesis for mastery of content, appropriate research, critical analysis, writing clarity, and use of appropriate citation style. The Baccalaureate exam will evaluate skill in oral communication and critical thinking in relation to the senior thesis and the entire undergraduate academic career. The Baccalaureate committee will record their evaluation of this oral exam on the Baccalaureate evaluation form.