Comprehensive Examination Policy for Ph.D. Candidates
Department of East Asian Studies

Candidates for the doctoral degree in the Department of East Asian Studies ad-hoc Ph.D. program will be expected to pass a comprehensive examination in three fields.

The exam will generally be taken within one year after completing coursework, normally by the end of the second year in the program (end of Ph.D. 2 or Ph.D. 3). A candidate must complete the second research language requirement prior to taking the comprehensive examination. The candidate must also demonstrate competence in other languages essential for her/his research. The three fields must be chosen in consultation with the candidate’s supervisor as well as with the Graduate Program Director. The fields shall consist of one major and two minor areas of specialization. The two minor fields may be complementary to the major research area as well as preparatory for teaching areas in future employment. Preparation for the comprehensive examination should be done in consultation with the individual examiners. The candidate should prepare reading lists (approximately 20-25 sources for each minor field, and approximately 30-50 sources for the major field, depending on the areas of specialization) in consultation with each of the examiners. The reading lists must be finalized no later than 6 months prior to the examination. The candidate should always work closely with the examiners in preparation for the examination and the reading lists shall be shared among the examiners. The exam consists of both written and oral components.

Based on the reading lists in the three fields, the examiners will provide a set of questions to the candidate. Based on the examiners’ decision, the candidate will write either one unified paper (approximately 30-40 pages) or two/three separate papers (approximately 10-20 pages each) responding to these questions within 2 weeks after the receipt of the exam questions. Failure to submit the written exam(s) on time will result in failure. The completed written exam(s) must be read by all the examiners.

The written examination will be followed by the oral examination, which shall take place within 2-3 weeks after the submission of the paper(s). The oral exam will last for approximately 3 hours. The supervisor will have one hour to question the candidate on the main field, and the secondary field examiners will have approximately 30 minutes each to ask questions. The oral exam will cover the reading list in general and questions arising from the written exam. Time will be provided for examiners to ask questions in all three segments of the oral exam, if they wish. The examiners together with the candidate will establish the order of the fields to be examined. There will be a 15-minute break taken at the end of the first or second period of questioning, at the candidate’s discretion. No one else may be permitted in the examination. The proceedings may be recorded at the discretion of the candidate.

Grades for the Comprehensive Examination (50% oral exam and 50% written exam) are superior (85 and above), pass (70-84), and fail (below 70). The principal advisor’s assessment is set at 40%, and the secondary examiners’ assessments are 30% each. If the candidate fails the first comprehensive exam, s/he is entitled to a second examination not more than six months later. At that time, the candidate may also request that the second oral exam be recorded. If the candidate fails the second comprehensive examination, s/he will be required to leave the Ph.D. program.

Submitted by
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Re-typed by Lynda – April 15, 2014