

**The Graduate Program in Classics: Academic Procedure**

or: The Twelve Tables for all students entering from 2012-13 onwards  
Revised Version: October 2019

**A**— The Twelve Tables sets out the rationale and requirements of the five-year program leading to a Ph.D. in Classics. When in doubt about its provisions, consult the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

**B**— The Princeton Classics PhD program fully recognizes the importance of the diverse aspects of the discipline and aims to offer all students an opportunity to develop a comprehensive and varied course of study. The Department currently offers four curricular options:

**Literature and Philology**  
**Program in the Ancient World (History)**  
**Program in Classical Philosophy**  
**Classical and Hellenic Studies**

Students concentrating on History are normally members of the Program in the Ancient World (PAW), those concentrating on Philosophy, of the Program in Classical Philosophy (PCP), and those concentrating also on Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, of the joint program in Classical and Hellenic Studies (CHS). This document applies to all students. Provisions applying only to a specific curricular option are explicitly indicated below.

Students select their curricular option at the beginning of the program, though later changes are possible in consultation with the DGS and the Graduate Committee.

Depending on the funds available, the Department also assists students interested in pursuing supplementary coursework or academically relevant travel during the summer; application forms are provided, and the application deadline is announced, in the first half of Spring semester. Students are eligible for this summer funding in one of the two summers before they complete generals; post-generals students who have defended the dissertation proposal are also eligible to apply for funding to be used in one additional summer, for purposes that will contribute toward the completion of the dissertation.

**C — ADVISING**

The entire continuing faculty administers the Graduate Program through a Graduate Committee chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Students discuss their academic program and progress with the DGS at the beginning of every semester, and, at the discretion of the DGS, with the full Graduate Committee. Each student on entry will also be assigned a faculty member as mentor, on the basis of the department's best impression of their interests at that stage. The mentor and student will meet at least once a semester so that the mentor can monitor progress, give more direct guidance, and catch any developing problems as early as possible. Students will be able to change their mentor as their interests change during the course or as they develop a working relationship with another faculty member.

**D — GENERAL COURSEWORK AND PAPER REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements leading to the PhD in Classics include coursework, papers, examinations, teaching, and a dissertation.

Specific course requirements are few, apart from the distribution requirements specific to individual programs (see below): Students in all programs are required to take the Surveys in Greek and Latin Literature, offered in alternate years, which all students must take in their first two years. These survey courses must be taken for a letter grade. PAW and LP students are similarly required to take for a letter grade the Proseminars in Greek and Roman History in their first two years (these courses are again offered in alternate years).

The Department requires each student to take for letter grade or pass/fail a total of **12** graduate courses over three years; relevant courses in other Departments, selected in consultation with the DGS, may be substituted for Departmental courses. Previous graduate work at other institutions can be presented for credit to the Graduate Committee within certain limits.

Students are required to produce at least **6** research seminar papers, each normally of at least 5000 words in length, before they can be certified as having completed generals. Choosing to take a seminar for a letter grade (see above) commits the student to completing a seminar paper.<sup>1</sup> Students must inform the instructor by the end of the **first Monday after Fall or Spring Break** whether they have chosen the letter grade or pass/fail option and record their choice with the graduate administrator. It is expected that first-year students will complete at least **1** paper in **each** semester and **3** by the end of the academic year; that second-year students will complete at least **1** paper in **each** semester; that third-year students—if they have not already satisfied the requirement—will complete at least **1** paper by the end of the academic year. Students not current with their papers will not be allowed to use department funds to travel abroad in the summer. PCP students must take at least 1 of the 2 required non-classical Philosophy seminars (see section E below) for a letter grade and complete a seminar paper for it.

The Department may accept for credit, at its discretion, up to two post-baccalaureate papers written before the student's matriculation at Princeton; while at Princeton students may also write papers for credit independent of coursework. Students planning to offer a paper of either category should arrange to submit it to a member of faculty, who will read it, judge whether or not it meets the appropriate standard, and, where it does, notify the graduate administrator to that effect (a letter grade will not be given). In any case, students must follow the timetable below for taking graded seminars until the paper requirement has been completely satisfied.

# P R I N C E T O N \ C L A S S I C S

The following chart sets out the chronological distribution of seminar and papers requirements:

REQUIREMENTS		
YEAR	Seminars	Papers
I – Fall	3	3
I – Spring	3	
II – Fall	2	2
II – Spring	2	
III – Fall	1	1
III – Spring	1	

### Special Author or Area Requirement:

PAW students must demonstrate expertise in 2 special fields: material culture and methodology. This requirement may be satisfied by a) taking seminars with a significant material culture or methodological component, b) participation in summer courses devoted to archaeology, such as those at the ASCSA or AAR or work at an archaeological excavation, or c) independent study directed by a faculty member (which may, but need not, culminate in a paper).

For LP students, this requirement takes the form of an independent study project directed by a faculty member and culminating either in one of the six required papers or in the production of the dissertation prospectus. Though generally designed as preparation for the dissertation, this project may also be used to develop a research interest in a field different from that of the dissertation subject.

### E — CURRICULAR OPTIONS

The following course distribution patterns are recommended (required courses are marked with an asterisk):

	LP	PAW	PCP	CHS
1	Greek Lit. Survey*	Greek Lit. Survey*	Greek Lit. Survey*	Greek Lit. Survey*
2	Latin Lit. Survey*	Latin Lit. Survey*	Latin Lit. Survey*	Latin Lit. Survey*
3	Greek Hist. Proseminar*	Greek Hist. Proseminar*	Classical Philosophy	Greek Hist. Proseminar*
4	Roman Hist. Proseminar*	Roman Hist. Proseminar*	Classical Philosophy	Roman Hist. Proseminar
5	Greek Literature	PAW Seminar (1 <sup>st</sup> yr)*	Classical Philosophy	Topics in Hellenic Stud.
6	Latin Literature	History*	History or Literature	Greek Literature
7	History*	History*	Ling. / Prose Comp.	Latin Lit. / Roman Stud.
8	Linguistics or Philosophy	History*	Non-Classical Phil.*	Byz. / Mod. Greek
9	Prose Composition	Ling./Phil. /Prose Comp.	Non-Classical Phil.*	Byz. / Mod. Greek
10-12	Elective	Elect. (2 in other Depts.)	Elect.	Elect,

In accordance with the general aim of the Classics Graduate Program, students are strongly encouraged to take courses beyond the 12 required seminars and seriously consider taking courses in other Departments, especially closely related ones such as Anthropology, Art and Archaeology, Comparative Literature, History, Philosophy, and Religion (PAW students are required to take at least 2 such courses; PCP students must take two non-classical Philosophy seminars and write a paper for at least one of them). All students, particularly those in PAW or CHS, are strongly encouraged to pursue language study and/or field work or research in Greece or Italy, as appropriate, as well as to avail themselves of the opportunities under the Oxford-Princeton exchange.

<sup>1</sup> The only exceptions will be the survey courses, history proseminars, and composition courses, grading for which is independent of any paper requirement (although students may opt to write a paper for the proseminars). When students choose the graded option, they cannot be granted the grade of P if they do not complete their papers by the end of the semester. Instead, those students will have to apply for an incomplete, with the paper to be submitted not later than 3 weeks after the date on which the instructor must submit grades for the course. If the paper is not submitted by the due-date, the grade of INC becomes permanent and the student receives no credit for the course, which will then **not** count as one of the 12 seminars needed toward the degree. The Graduate School now converts all INC grades to F on Sept. 1 (for courses begun the previous Fall) and Feb. 1 (for courses begun the previous Spring).

**F — EXAMINATIONS**

All students take the following examinations, with the appropriate curricular variants as noted in the chart:

**Program Languages Examination:**

This is commonly known as “the sight examination” because the passages set are chosen with an eye to their representative character as prose or poetry and are the sort that a student well prepared in the ancient languages should be able to translate without prior acquaintance or preparation, that is, “at sight”: they are accompanied by such notes as the examiners think necessary, but no other aids are allowed. One hour is allotted for each component (Greek prose, Greek poetry, Latin prose, Latin poetry; for CHS students, also Byzantine or Modern Greek prose, Byzantine or Modern Greek poetry), to a total of four hours (six for CHS students). Grading is pass/fail. All the examinations must be attempted in September of the first year, and all must be passed by May of the second year. A student who passes the sight portion of the Greek or Latin survey final examination will be considered to have satisfied the program language examination requirement in that language.

**Modern Languages Examination:**

The modern European languages most important for work in Classics are German, Italian, and French: by the end of the Fall semester of their third year students must demonstrate a reading knowledge of the first of these and of one of the other two. The examinations for these languages are administered each Fall by the Department of German and the Department of French and Italian. CHS students must also pass a translation examination in Modern Greek, administered by the Program in Hellenic Studies.

**General Examinations:**

The general examinations are designed to test the candidates' professionally competent knowledge of the subject. Each of the general examinations includes a component based on (but not limited to) the appropriate reading list of ancient Greek and Latin texts and component in which students are given the opportunity to display their factual knowledge and their skills in the relevant modes of scholarly analysis. Copies of past examinations are available on the portion of the Department's SharePoint site accessible to graduate students (<https://sp.princeton.edu/classics/default.aspx>), who are strongly encouraged to review these examinations when preparing to write their generals. On the same SharePoint site students will find a copy of "Preparing for Literature Generals: A Guide," which contains more detailed advice on preparing for the literature examinations and extensive bibliographical suggestions.

**G — EXAM SESSIONS**

Examinations are administered three times a year:

**October**—mid-month (program language examinations are administered in September)  
**January**—mid-month  
**May**—week after classes  
 end

Modern language examinations are offered in the Fall by the relevant Department, German or French and Italian. General examinations may be attempted no more than twice. After a second failed attempt, Graduate School regulations require that degree candidacy be terminated

**H — SCHEDULE**

A firm schedule is essential for the timely completion of the degree requirements within the limits of funding provided; students who fall seriously behind schedule may be denied re-enrollment for the following academic year or may be re-enrolled only on condition that they make good certain deficiencies by a specific date.

The schedules for completing the requirements in the program languages and modern languages, in writing papers, and in completing seminars have been noted above. The schedules for completing the general examinations in each track are noted below: the normative schedules are slightly different for Classical Philosophy and Classical and Hellenic Studies, because students in those tracks sit an additional examination based on a reading list that is coordinated with the intended dissertation topic; but the goal in each track is for students to take general examinations according to a schedule that will allow them to complete and defend the dissertation proposal by May 31 of their third year.

**Literature and Philology:** the Greek and Latin literature generals should be written either serially (one in January or May of the second year, the other in October of the third year) or together (in October of the third year).

**Program in the Ancient World:** the Greek and Roman history generals should be written either serially (as

above) or together (in October of the third year).

**Program in Classical Philosophy:** either the Greek and Latin literature generals or the Greek and Roman history generals should be completed by October of the third year (written either serially, as above, or together in one examination period) and the classical philosophy examination should be written in January or May of the third year; if the option to write the examination in May is chosen, the student must also complete and defend the dissertation proposal by May 31 to be considered to be making satisfactory progress.

**Classical and Hellenic Studies:** the Greek and Latin literature generals should be completed by October of the third year (written either serially, as above, or together in one examination period) and the CHS examination should be written in January or May of the third year; if the option to write the examination in May is chosen, the student must also complete and defend the dissertation proposal by May 31 to be considered to be making satisfactory progress.

## I — TEACHING

Learning how to interact in the classroom with both undergraduates and graduate or faculty colleagues forms an important part of professional training, as does gaining first-hand knowledge of the range of subjects that can be offered under the rubric of Classics. Therefore, graduate students in the Department of Classics will participate in the teaching of at least two semester-long classes (= four "AI hours") at Princeton in the course of their graduate years.

Before considering a graduate student for teaching a course-section on their own, the Department normally requires at least one semester of service as a preceptor in a Departmental lecture course. There are two reasons for this: (1) it allows for support and supervision in what is often a graduate student's first exposure to the other side of the "teacher--student relationship"; and (2) the Department naturally wishes to bring the study of Classics to as many undergraduates as possible, but is able to do so only by relying to a certain extent on the skills of graduate students.

Teaching is assigned by the Chair in consultation with the DGS and the Departmental Representative. Every effort will be made to give students varied and profitable experience, including as far as possible the opportunity to teach the ancient languages. Teaching is normally scheduled after candidates have passed their general examinations. However, students are encouraged to precept for one of the four undergraduate history courses in preparation for their general examinations in history.

The Department expects students to fulfill the Departmental teaching requirement before accepting any appointment outside the Department. Even once this requirement has been met, students should be sure to discuss well in advance with the DGS any opportunities for external teaching. In general, the Department will strongly discourage students who are not up to date with their requirements from teaching elsewhere.

## J — DISSERTATION

The dissertation, which completes the requirements of the PhD Program, "must show that the candidate has technical mastery of the field and is capable of doing independent research" (*Graduate School Announcement*).

### Proposal

Immediately upon completing general exams, students will begin to attend the Dissertation Writers' Seminar and will meet individually with the DGS to review the steps leading to the dissertation proposal; they will also begin to plan and prepare a reading course on the prospective topic of the dissertation to be held the following semester (normatively, Spring semester of the third year) with the faculty member most likely to be the principal adviser and committee chair. This course, which will satisfy the "Special author/field" requirement (But which will not count as one of the required 12 seminars.), will culminate in the writing of the dissertation proposal that must be defended by May 31 of the third year. The DGS will provide advice on preparing the course, and the Graduate Administrator will provide the form needed to register the course and give directions on filling it out. In reasonable advance of the proposal defense the student, the DGS, and the prospective primary adviser should discuss the composition of the student's dissertation committee.

The proposal, normally of 25 to 35 pages, should include a clear statement of the purpose of the dissertation; the method or methods to be employed in it; a discussion, preferably chapter by chapter, of the subjects to be addressed, the manner in which they would be discussed, and the possible conclusions arising from them; a consideration of the problems which might arise and how they would be dealt with; and an honest estimate of the work's potential originality and importance. Appended to the text should be a substantial bibliography, with those items clearly marked which the student has already read or consulted.

The student's dissertation committee will read the proposal and meet to discuss it with the student and the DGS. The proposal must be submitted in writing at least one week prior to that meeting. (The proposal will also be circulated among the graduate committee, whose members may send comments or suggestions to the DGS but will not be present at the meeting.) After that interview the committee will recommend to the DGS that the proposal be accepted with revisions, referred back to the student for substantial revision, or rejected. In any of these events, the DGS will give the student further guidance on how to proceed.

**Elaboration**

Candidates should keep in close contact with the members of their committee, and regularly show them their work in progress. A minimum of one chapter of the dissertation must be approved by the student's committee by the end of the fourth year (i.e. May 31), at the latest.

There will be a Dissertation Workshop Seminar each year for fourth- and fifth-year dissertators. The Seminar will meet every two weeks throughout the year, providing a forum for dissertators to circulate drafts of work in progress for feedback, to discuss methodological or compositional issues, and to survey other topics relevant to the students' professional development as scholars and teachers.

As soon as (1) the candidate has in mind a specific timeframe for completing the dissertation, and (2) the dissertation committee in their judgment has evaluated enough of the dissertation to see what its final form should be, the student, the committee, and the DGS will meet to decide what work must be done before the student may submit the version to be defended at the Final Public Oral (FPO). The schedule for submitting that version and the date of the FPO will also be determined at this meeting. When the dissertation has been submitted in final form, the DGS and the graduate administrator should be consulted for the procedure to follow at that point: students, again, are responsible for informing themselves of the deadlines and general timeframe of these procedures.

The members of the committee will submit written reports on the dissertation and recommendations for acceptance or rejection. Each member of the departmental faculty receives a copy of the reports, has access to the dissertation, and votes for acceptance or rejection.

If the department accepts the dissertation, it is submitted to the Graduate School, which gives final permission for the FPO to be scheduled. By custom, the FPO has taken the form of a 30-minute talk by the candidate on the dissertation or some part of it, followed by an open question session. The departmental faculty takes a formal vote on whether to recommend to the Dean of the Graduate School that the degree of PhD. be conferred on the candidate. No 'with distinction' or 'cum laude' options are available.

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