

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR Group 2: Cycle 1 - Fall 2017 - Fall 2019

Mission Statement

Comparative Literature, as the transhistorical and cross-cultural study of literature and textuality, is at the center of liberal arts. It is the disciplinary juncture where the concepts of tradition, meaning, and value are articulated. Comparative Literature does not just study texts but asks what makes a text literary, how the literary relates to the historical and the philosophical and how different linguistic and literary traditions address these questions. Our mission is to prepare our students for an active professional life in the field as teachers, scholars, writers, and members of an international community.

Goal 1.

The department expects all graduates to be able to at once identify and question what makes a text literary, how the literary relates to the historical and the philosophical and how different linguistic and literary traditions address these questions. Our mission is to prepare our students for an active professional life in the field as teachers, scholars, writers, and members of an international community.

Curriculum

Students complete a core curriculum in the history of literary theory (CPLT 701, 702, 703) and undergo qualifying and comprehensive exams.

Students complete the 615 reading knowledge course in a foreign language or pass an equivalency exam.

Students complete elective courses in Comparative Literature combined with coursework in three literatures (or two plus an outside area) and comprehensive exams.

Learning Outcome 1.

Students will demonstrate basic mastery of the history of literary theory.

Measures and Criteria

Mastery of literary theory is attained by passing the core curriculum (CPLT 701, 702, 703) and the qualifying and comprehensive exams.

Students' performance will be evaluated based on the following aspects: 1. Their grades in each of the three core courses of CPLT 701, 702, and 703, in which students are evaluated according to their performance on the writing of research papers, on the preparation of presentations, and on informed discussion.; 2. whether they have demonstrated in the qualifying exam the required mastery of basic literary theory (classic, modern, and contemporary), which is reflected through how familiar they are with literary theories in general and how well they are able to apply various literary theories to literary texts. Specifically, the qualifying examination includes an essay question on literary theory, derived from the content of the three-course sequence in literary theory (CPLT 701/702/703).

Methods

Students' grades from the courses they take and their overall progress through this program are monitored each semester by the Comparative Literature Program's Graduate Advisor. Unsatisfying results will be reported to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for discussion and analysis.

Qualifying exams take place annually in the spring. Accordingly, results are collected each year in the spring by the Graduate Advisor and are reported to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for assessment. Whenever necessary, the Program Director and the Advisory Committee consult with the faculty who create and/or grade these exams.

Results

As mentioned in the "Measures and Criteria" section, the learning outcome of mastery of literary theory is met by passing the core curriculum (CPLT 701, 702, 703) and the qualifying and comprehensive exams.

1. Coursework:

During the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 assessment cycle, all PhD and MA/PhD concurrent program students who took the CPLT 701, 702, 703 core sequence passed with good to excellent grades (B or higher), with most students earning A's.

Specifically, 8 out of 8 passed 701, 7 out of 7 passed 702, and 12 out of 12 passed 703. Among the 12 students who took 703, which is a topics course, 4 were taking it for the second time as the topic of 703 is different each time it is offered.

2. Exam:

During the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 assessment cycle, all PhD students who took qualifying and comprehensive exams passed.

Specifically, in Spring 2018, 1 out of 1 student passed the qualifying exam, and 2 out of 2 students, the comprehensive exam. In Spring 2019, 3 out of 3 students passed the qualifying exam, and 3 out of 3 students, the comprehensive exam.

These good results indicate that students have achieved a good mastery of the history of literary theory, and this learning outcome was successfully met.

Use of Results

Students' qualifying and comprehensive exams are closely linked to CPLT 701, 702, and 703 literary theory sequence, which forms the core of the CPLT PhD curriculum. The good results linked to this learning outcome reaffirms our belief in the pedagogical benefits of this arrangement. We still need to continue to monitor and assess the results to see if adjustments are needed to deal with changing situations. In particular, we need to monitor to see how the covid-19 crisis and virtual classes impact students' performance and what measures we can take to address emerging issues in the situation.

Learning Outcome 2.

Students will develop advanced linguistic competence in at least one foreign language.

Measures and Criteria

Advanced linguistic competence is gained by successfully completing graduate coursework (at the 500-level or above) in the target language and by passing the qualifying and comprehensive exams.

Student competency in the foreign language is thus measured based on oral discussion of literary texts in the target language (both in classes and in the oral section of the comprehensive exam) and on written performance (both in student research papers written in the target language and in the written sections of the qualifying and comprehensive exams).

Methods

The Program's Graduate Advisor monitors and collects students's grades in their coursework each semester, and collects the results of students' qualifying and comprehensive exams each year in the spring. These grades and results will be reported to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for analysis to assess if this outcome has been met. In cases where there are signs of difficulty to meet the outcome, decisions will be made based on the assessment of results to help students improve language skills by advising them to take appropriate language courses.

Results

All coursework-stage students received good or excellent grades (mostly A's, and some B's and B+'s) from the literature classes in their first languages. Their academic records show that this learning outcome was met successfully.

Use of Results

We pointed out in the report for the 2016-2017 assessment cycle that students sometimes faced the problem of not having enough courses to take in their first languages, particularly Chinese and Russian. We are happy to report that the results from the 2016-2017 cycle were used to actively address the problem. For the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 period, more graduate-level courses in Chinese and Russian literatures were offered, and the inclusion of 500-level Chinese and Russian courses proved to be particularly effective in solving the problem. The good results observed in this cycle were clearly linked to the measures. We will continue to monitor the results linked to this learning outcome, and will continue to closely with with individual LLC programs to make sure we will continue to be able to offer a good variety of courses for our students to take.

Learning Outcome 3.

Students will demonstrate reading competence in a second foreign language.

Measures and Criteria

Students will successfully complete the 615 reading knowledge course in a foreign language or successfully pass an equivalent examination, which consists of a translation of a five-hundred word passage from the target language into English.

Methods

As mentioned in the "Measures and Criteria" section, to achieve this outcome, students will either successfully complete the 615 course (i.e., reading knowledge in a foreign language) or successfully pass the equivalent foreign-language exam. Students' grades from the 615 course and results of the exam are monitored and collected each semester by the Comparative Literature Program's Graduate Advisor, who reports them to Program Director and the Program Advisory Committee for discussion and assessment. The assessment result will be used by Graduate Advisor in advisement in helping students better determine when to take the 615 class/language exam in their career in the program and whether they need additional preparation before taking the course or the language exam.

Results

No student took the 615 class during the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 cycle. However, among current students, several already proved their proficiency in a second foreign language by successfully completing graduate-level courses in the language, For instance, student Carol Fruit Diouf, whose first language is Russian, has taken several graduate-level Spanish literature courses in the language. In addition, four students took FREN 615 in Spring 2020, and passed. In conclusion, overall our students have or are on track toward meeting the second foreign language requirement, and we consider this learning outcome met.

Use of Results

As was mentioned in the report for the 2016-2017 cycle, it is important that we schedule enough 615 courses so that students can progress to graduation without delay. This goal is not always easy to meet because several language programs have been understaffed. We should continue to communicate with program directors, with the Graduate Committee of the department, and with scheduling staff to convey our hope that there are more opportunities for students to take the 615 class.

Learning Outcome 4.

Students will demonstrate a mastery of three literatures, or two literatures and one outside area.

Measures and Criteria

Mastery of three literatures (or two and an outside area) is indicated by passing graduate level courses in them (six in the first literature, four in the second, two in the third or outside area) and by passing the comprehensive exams.

Students will be evaluated on the following aspects: 1. Their grades in the coursework related to these three literature/two literatures and one outside area; 2. Whether their performance in the comprehensive exams demonstrate adequate mastery of these literatures and areas; both their grades in these exams and their advisors' and exam committees' evaluation of their overall performance will be taken into consideration.

Methods

Students' overall progress through this program is monitored by the Comparative Literature Program's Graduate Advisor, who also collects each semester students grades in their coursework.

In addition, the Graduate Advisory also collects the results of students' comprehensive exam results and report them to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for assessment. The Graduate Advisor also collects students' exam committee chairs' overall evaluation. Based on the assessment, concerns will be addressed by involving students' exam committees, particularly exam chairs, to ensure students will stay on track toward achieve this outcome. Students in question will be advised individually by the Graduate Advisor on which areas(s) to improve and what measures to take. The assessment results will also be used in helping junior students to determine as early as possible which third literature/field to take, as this will help students achieve this outcome more efficiently.

Results

1. Coursework:

During this assessment cycle, all students passed their courses in their first, second, and third literatures/areas, earning A's, B+'s and B's. We observed an improvement when comparing these results with those from the 2016-2017 cycle, during which one student received a C in one of their courses.

2. Exams:

As mentioned in the "Results" section of the first learning outcome, during this assessment cycle, a total of 10 students took qualifying or comprehensive exams, and 100 % of them passed.

Based on the good results from both students' coursework and exams, we assess that this learning outcome was met.

Use of Results

Successfully meeting this learning outcome means that students stay on track towards completing their degree requirements. Even though we have achieved good results during this cycle, the Comparative Literature Graduate Advisor and the Advisory Committee will continue to monitor students' performance in coursework and exams to prevent potential issues.

Learning Outcome 5.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of a broad literary culture.

Measures and Criteria

Students will successfully complete elective courses in Comparative Literature combined with course work in the three literatures (or two plus an outside area) and by passing the comprehensive exam.

The following aspects will be given particularly emphasis in the evaluation of students' performance: 1. How their performance in the comprehensive exams reflects their overall mastery of a broad literary culture; 2. how their knowledge of a broad literary culture helps them better situate their respective projects.

Methods

Students' grades and progress through this program are monitored each semester by the Comparative Literature Program's Graduate Advisor. The results of comprehensive exams are collected each spring by the Graduate Advisor and then reported to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for analysis. Based on the data, the Advisory Committee, including the Graduate Advisor and Program Director, will evaluate the program's overall curriculum as well as the course offerings of the past year to see if students have a good variety of courses to take to meet this outcome. In other words, the data will be used in evaluating and enhancing the variety of courses the program offers. The Graduate Advisor will also use the data in advisement in helping students achieve this outcome by choosing elective courses in areas not already covered in their three fields.

Results

1. Coursework:

In addition to courses in three literatures, during the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 cycle, students also took elective courses in Comparative Literature, and these courses usually cover a broad literary culture. Here we would like to offer two examples: The Fall 2017 course CPLT 740, which was cross-listed with GERM 730, was on

the topic of “the German Enlightenment and its Counter-Currents.” In the same semester, students also had the option to take CPLT 750, on the topic of “Asian Culture in Transnational Context.” Both classes encouraged students to go beyond the narrow confines of national boundaries and explore literary trends and movements cross-culturally and transnationally. All students who took these electives passed.

In addition, it should be noted that CPLT 703, a topics class that can be taken multiple times, also has been a good venue for students to get exposure to broader literary and cultural trends. The topic of the 703 offered in Fall 2019, for instance, was on the topic of “China India studies,” which as an emerging field deliberately challenges approaches that limit literary studies within the confines of narrowly defined national traditions.

2. Comprehensive Exams:

As mentioned in an earlier “results” sections, two students took the comprehensive exam in Spring 2018, and four in Spring 2019. They all passed. Each of these students were tested on three areas. One of the students who took the exam in Spring 2018, for example, was test on the following: 1) “Representations of City, Country, and Social Class in the Spanish Realist and Naturalist Novel ”; 2) “Theories of European Realism and Naturalism”; 3) affect in literature and theory. This unique combination of areas points to the student’s deliberate effort to examine the Spanish Realist and Naturalist novel against the broad backdrop of European literary developments on the one hand and on the other to study it in connection with affect, which has been a subject of interdisciplinary inquiry. Let’s look at another example. A student who took the exam in Spring 2019 was tested on the following three areas: 1) “A Comparative study of The Sino-French and Franco-Vietnamese Novel”; 2) “Post-Colonial & Cultural Studies within French and East Asian Contexts”; and 3) “Modern Chinese Literature and Culture.” Covering a wide geographic scope that includes France, China, and colonial-era Vietnam and the related literary traditions, this project is marked by a serious effort to achieve a good understanding of a broad literary culture. These are just two of the many examples. The same approach can be observed in the other students’ exams, which study topics range from Black film, a comparative study of Gabriel García Márquez and Ernest Hemingway, to the Diasporic Black Imaginary in the United States and Brazil. All projects embraced the idea of examining literary and cultural products against the backdrop of a broad literary culture.

In conclusion, through coursework and comprehensive exams, students clearly have achieved a good mastery of a broad literary culture. We consider this learning outcome well met.

Use of Results

We are proud of our students’ willingness to embrace a broad literary culture when taking classes or designing their exam reading lists. CPLT has a diverse faculty body. To be able to offer more diverse courses for our students, we should get more faculty involved in graduate teaching and encourage them to create more innovative courses for our students. Our comprehensive exam is also designed to encourage students to explore multiple fields, and efforts should be made to help student further understand the purpose of such a design as well as the emphasis on the importance of expanding one’s scholarly scope.

Goal 2.

The department expects all graduates to develop critical thought and to be able to use critical thinking in the interpretation and analysis of literary texts.

Curriculum

Students write a dissertation by complete 12 credit hours of CPLT 899 "Dissertation Preparation."

Learning Outcome 1.

Students will comprehensively evaluate previous scholarship in their field.

Measures and Criteria

Students will successfully complete the comprehensive exam, which is based on three reading lists consisting of primary materials and previous scholarship. They will be evaluated on: 1. how comprehensive their reading lists are; 2. whether they exhibit in their exams a solid mastery of the items included in the reading lists; 3. whether they demonstrate in the exams a good understanding of the "state of the field" and how they are going to make their own contribution to the field.

In addition, students will also successfully complete and defend their dissertations, which are built upon a good mastery of previous scholarship in their fields.

Methods

The Program's Graduate Advisor collects students' comprehensive exam results each year in the spring; in addition, he/she also monitors students' progress with their dissertations. The data--exam results and results of students' prospectus and dissertation defenses--will be conveyed to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for assessment in consultation with students' exam committee chairs/dissertation directors. If issues are observed in the comprehensive exams, the assessment results will be shared with students' exam and committees members, who will be entrusted with the task to help students achieve a better mastery of previous scholarship. Issues observed in the prospectus defenses will also be used toward dissertation writing. Any remaining issues will be discussed and used toward reflection on overall program requirements.

Results

1. Comprehensive Exams:

A total of six students took the comprehensive exam during the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 assessment cycle (two in Spring 2018, and four in Spring 2019). For the exam, each student is tested on three areas, for each of which they compile a reading list. The first is their dissertation list, which consisted of primary materials and previous scholarship in their field. The second and third are related but distinct lists of theoretical works. That all these students successfully passed their exams means their exam committees deemed their mastery of previous scholarship adequate.

2. Defenses:

During the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 assessment cycle, a total of seven students (i.e., Baarendse, Cruz, Mooney, Oniwe, Patterson, Sadek, and Shabouk) defended and completed their degree requirements. As mastery of previous scholarship is a basic requirement of any dissertation, that these students successfully defended their work indicates that this learning outcome was met.

Based on the satisfactory results observed in students' exams and dissertation defenses, we conclude this learning outcome was met.

Use of Results

The results from this cycle were better than those from the 2016-2017 cycle, during which one student failed one part of her exam on the first attempt. This time all students succeeded in all parts on the first try. These students should be encouraged to share their experience with pre-exam and/or pre-defense students. The success stories would greatly enhance overall morale among students.

Learning Outcome 2.

Students will produce a piece of original research and write at a professional level.

Measures and Criteria

Students will produce an extended piece of original research and write at a professional level by successfully completing and defending a dissertation.

The successful completion of the work is based partly on students' critical engagement with previous scholarship in their field in consultation with a faculty advisor and three committee members. Under the supervision of the dissertation committee, particularly the dissertation director, the student produces and defends their project prospectus. Upon the successful defense of the prospectus, the student writes a thesis in a series of drafts which are shaped with the input and advice of the dissertation director and faculty committee members.

Methods

The Program's Graduate Advisor monitors students' progress with their dissertations in close consultation with their dissertation directors. The Graduate Advisor collects dissertation directors' evaluation, the results of students' prospectus and dissertation defenses, and reports the data to the Program Director and Advisory Committee for analysis and assessment. Issues observed in prospectus defenses will be immediately

addressed to ensure that they will successfully completing their dissertations. In addition of getting feedback form the Program's Graduate Advisor, students in quesiton will above all closely work with their disseration directors in improving their work based on feedback.

Results

1. Dissertation

As was mentioned, during the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 cycle, a total of seven students successfully defended their dissertations. This spoke volumes about their ability to produce original research work and write professionally.

2. Conference papers

Conferences are another important venue where our students exhibit their ability to write professionally and produce original work based on research. During the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 cycle, a great number of students presented at different conference venues. Here are some of the examples:

2018:

Brendan Mooney, "A Translator's Dilemma: Translating Darwin's natural 'selection' into Russian," 3rd Annual Cultural Carolina Conference, USC, Columbia, March 3, 2018

David Beek, "Cinema and Historical Memory in France and Mexico," *1968 in Global Perspectives*, 20th Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Guillaume Coly, "Fictional History: A Look Back at May '68," *1968 in Global Perspectives*, 20th Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Jeffrey Vesel, "A Look at 1966-67 Cinematic Imaginings of Impending Revolution," *1968 in Global Perspectives*, 20th Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Jeffrey Vesel, "*Midnight's Children*: A Critique of Western Imperialism with Subversive But Marketable Panache," 3rd Annual Cultural Carolina Conference, USC, Columbia, March 3, 2018

Jingsheng Zhang, "On the Razor's Edge: The Anti-Vietnam War Movement and the Fall of the New Left?," *1968 in Global Perspectives*, 20th Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Paul McElhinny, "The Radicalism of the Global Sixties," *1968 in Global Perspectives*, 20th Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia

Zhou Feng, "Tasting the Chinese Cultural Revolution: Ironic Counter-Revolutionary Discourse in *The Gourmet*," *1968 in Global Perspectives*, 20th Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia

2019:

Paul McElhinny, "Boundaries, Hierarchies, and Environments in Marguerite Duras's *The Lover*," *Borders and Borderlands*, 21st Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, March 2019

Shuying Chen, "Lingering at the Border: Women in Wartime China in Zhao Qingge's Adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*," *Borders and Borderlands*, 21st Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, March 2019

Dan Luo, "The Making and Unmaking of Identity Boundaries in Yan Geling's Immigrant Stories," *Borders and Borderlands*, 21st Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, March 2019

Yuzhu Sun, ““Our Mistress’s Living Room”: Reading the Public Sphere in a Privatized World,” *Borders and Borderlands*, 21st Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, March 2019

David Beek, “Sovereignty, Anti-Racism, and Print Culture in Carmen Boullosa’s *Texas: The Great Theft*: Liminal Citizenship in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands” *Borders and Borderlands*, 21st Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, March 2019

Jinsheng Zhang, “Literary Reform from the Borderland: *Tibetan Literature* and Avant-garde Fiction in 1980s China,” *Borders and Borderlands*, 21st Annual Comparative Literature Conference, University of South Carolina, Columbia, March 2019

We conclude that during this assessment cycle, our students were very productive as writers of scholarly works (including dissertations and conference papers). This learning outcome was met.

Use of Results

As shown in the list of conference papers above, the annual comparative literature conference our program organize has been an important venue where our graduate students present their papers. Specifically, the 21st conference, held in March 2019, was co-sponsored by three universities: UofSC, National Taiwan University (Taipei, Taiwan), and Ewha Womans University (Seoul, South Korea). As an international conference with participants from multiple countries, this event offered students the opportunity to directly interact with a larger, international scholarly community. The CPLT annual conference is tied closely with CPLT 703 and is affiliated with the journal *Intertexts*. In the past our students have published articles in the journal. The results collected during the cycle show that the conference indeed has been a good opportunity for students to enhance skills necessary for professional-level writing and presentation. This has confirmed our belief in the pedagogical benefits of the annual conference, which we will continue to organize and make effort to get students actively involved.

Learning Outcome 3.

Students will analyze texts.

Measures and Criteria

Students will successfully complete and defend their dissertations, in which they are supposed to examine a set of literary texts using a particular critical framework, and will expose a particular set of literary texts to new readings.

Methods

The Program's Graduate Advisor will monitor students' progress with their dissertations. He/she will collect the results of students' prospectus and dissertation defenses, and will collect from students' dissertation directors evaluations on students' performance on textual analysis in their dissertations. The data will be shared with the Program Director and Advisory Committee for analysis and assessment. Issues observed in prospectus results will be immediately addressed to ensure students in question will be able to adjust/correct in time for dissertation writing. Remaining issues will be discussed among graduate faculty in the program and the lessons learned will be implemented to improve overall graduate advisement.

Results

To meet this learning outcome, “students will analyze texts.” As mentioned earlier, seven students successfully completed their dissertations during the cycle. All these dissertations involve textual analysis. Here we would like to offer two examples: 1. Manar Shabouk’s dissertation “Narrating Pain and Freedom: Place and Identity in Modern Syrian Poetry (1970s-1990s)” offers close analysis of poetry from 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s Syria; 2. Rima Sadek’s dissertation “The Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Arab Women’s Literature: Elements of Subversion and Resignification” involves analysis of Arabic literary texts by women.

In sum, we assess this learning outcome has been met.

Use of Results

Even though this outcome was successfully met, we will continue to make effort not only to help students understand the fundamental importance of literary texts as primary materials to their dissertation projects, but also to help them achieve this understanding as early as possible in their career in the program. In addition, dissertation directors should offer help and advice on how to collect primary texts through library and archival research.

Goal 3.

3. Students will complete the PhD program in a timely manner, and will pursue tenure-track job placement as appropriate.

Curriculum

Students complete their degree requirements including coursework, qualifying and comprehensive examinations, and, ultimately, dissertation. The program offers the following courses:

CPLT 597 - Special Topics in Comparative Studies in Film and Media

CPLT 700 - Introduction to Graduate Studies in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

CPLT 701 - Classics of Western Literary Theory

CPLT 702 - Modern Literary Theory

CPLT 703 - Topics in Contemporary Literary Theory

CPLT 720 - The Periods of Literature

CPLT 730 - The Literary Genre

CPLT 740 - Themes in Literature

CPLT 750 - Cross-Cultural Literary Relations

CPLT 760 - Literature and Translation: Theory and Practice

CPLT 765 - Advanced Film Study

CPLT 777 - Supervised Instruction in Teaching Foreign Languages in College

CPLT 799 - Thesis Preparation

CPLT 850 - The Teaching of Comparative Literature

CPLT 880 - Seminar in Comparative Literature

CPLT 881 - Seminar in Comparative Literature

CPLT 882 - Seminar in Comparative Literature

CPLT 883 - Seminar in Comparative Literature

CPLT 895 - Research

CPLT 896 - Research

CPLT 899 - Dissertation Preparation

Among these offerings, CPLT 701, CPLT 702, and CPLT 703, which forms a sequence on the history of literary history, are required of all students. In addition, students are also required to take two more graduate level CPLT courses from the list above.

To meet the requirements in primary, second, and third literatures, students, under the guidance of CPLT Graduate

Advisor, take a total of 12 courses (6 in primary, 4 in second, and 2 in third) in the appropriate departments/programs, including: Arabic, Chinese, Classics, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

Finally, students are also required to take FORL 776 "The Teaching of Foreign Languages in College," and 12 credit hours of CPLT 899 "Dissertation Preparation."

Learning Outcome 1.

Students will complete the PhD program in a timely manner, and will pursue tenure-track job placement as appropriate.

Measures and Criteria

Normally, PhD students are expected to graduate in four or five years, and are generally expected to land tenure-track and other academic and non-academic jobs.

Methods

Four- and five-year graduation rates will be calculated for each cohort of entering PhD students each year within the program, along with data on placement in tenure-track and other academic and non-academic jobs. These data will be shared among members of the Program Advisory Committee for discussion and assessment. The committee will take into consideration unforeseeable factors (e.g., economic crisis) that impact the job market, and will reflect on measures that may enhance graduate rates and placement record. Successful graduates and alumni may be invited to share experiences with current students. A survey may be designed for recent graduates to take as a way to help the program understand how to help students graduate in time.

Results

We are happy to report that among the seven students that completed their dissertations during the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 cycle, several are currently holding teaching positions:

Steve Baarendse, Professor of English, Columbia International University (was already teaching there during his PhD study)

Brendan Mooney, Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian at Miami University

Jeremy Patterson, Chair of Division of World Literatures and Cultures, Bob Jones University (was already teaching there during his PhD study)

Rima Sadek, Visiting Assistant Professor of Arabic, Kenyon College

In addition, Juan Cruz was adjunct lecturer at Presbyterian College for a year.

Moreover, during the Fall 2017-Fall 2019 cycle, one student who graduated before the cycle landed an faculty job: Marc Démont-Devlin, who graduated in Spring 2017, has been Visiting Assistant Professor of French and Humanities at Centre College since 2018.

Given the fact that it has been challenging to obtain academic positions, the achievement of our students was remarkable. At the same time, it should be noted that 4-5 graduation rates turned out to be difficult to keep. Among the graduates mentioned above, only Mooney was able to graduate 4 years after obtaining his MA in our program. Some of the students (Baarendse and Patterson) took longer to finish because they did their PhD studies part-time.

In sum, while the results were mixed, the fact that so many of our students held or are currently holding academic positions represents a major achievement of the program.

Use of Results

The success stories should be shared with current students to improve morale. At the same time, we need to come up with strategies to help students speed up their progress in order to graduate on time. We should also continue to help students sharpen their job-searching skills by offering them the opportunity to do mock interviews and mock talks.