



DEPARTMENT OF
**GENDER, SEXUALITY,
AND WOMEN'S STUDIES**

Doctoral Comprehensives Requirements
Doctoral Program

COMPREHENSIVES

Fields of study

Comprehensive exams shall correspond to three major scholarly fields of study, set in consultation between the student and the supervisory committee, and are expected to coincide with areas of expertise of the supervisory committee. Comprehensive exams are intended to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge in recognized fields of feminist scholarship, prepare the student for the development of the thesis proposal, and aid in the writing of the dissertation. Comprehensives are an important part of the process of professional training and skill development.

To reflect these aims, fields should normally be in the areas of theory, methodology and the student's research subject. The theory field must incorporate a substantial body of literature from a master reading list on Feminist Theory developed by the Women's Studies Department. The theory lists are appended to this brochure.

It is the responsibility of the supervisory committee to ensure that the student chooses a range of fields. Suggested fields include, but are not limited to:

Feminist theory	Literary criticism/theory
Cultural studies	Art criticism/theory
Women and Science	Social policy
Women, technology and social change	Labour studies
Health and the body	Audience/reception studies
Economic theory	Art/cultural practice
Women's History	Development studies
Literature	

Tasks

The comprehensive exams shall consist of three tasks, one task in each of the three fields. These tasks shall be decided upon by the student and the supervisory committee, and approved by the Women's Studies Graduate Committee. Each of the tasks shall be supervised by a member of the student's supervisory committee. At least two of these tasks must be in the form of an exam or a literature review. Options include:

i) Literature review

This task comprises a 35-40 page paper based on the reading list of approximately 45 books. (see "Reading Lists" below) The student and the field supervisor shall set the parameters of the paper.

ii) Exam

This task consists of a take home examination. The exam questions shall be based on the reading list for the field. (See "Reading Lists" below.) The student shall be given four potential questions one month in advance, and shall write the exam during a two-week period on two questions chosen by the field supervisor. The responses shall be 20-25 pages each in length. The timeframe for the exam shall be satisfactory to the student, the field supervisor, and the second reader. (See page 5 "Oral Critique".)

iii) Developing a Course outline

This task shall consist of designing a detailed course outline based on a thirteen-week term. The outline shall be approximately 15-20 pages long and must include a rationale for the course (statement of the learning objectives and goals of the course, its intended audience, and comments on pedagogical activities and approach) [2-3 pages], a course description as would be seen by the student that outlines major themes, a list of topics and lecture schedule, assigned and recommended readings in full bibliographic detail and annotated, and assignment descriptions, including methods for evaluation.

iv) Preparing a Research Paper for Publication

The book or journal to which the paper will be submitted must be considered appropriate for the field of study. The format of this paper shall be determined in consultation between the student and the supervisor, but the end result must be a piece of substantive, original scholarship ready to submit for

consideration for publication. Review articles, for example, would not be considered an appropriate task, nor would articles of shared authorship.

v) Developing a non-print media project, such as a video documentary or art work

This task shall consist of preparing and exhibiting an artwork, or an audio-video or other similar production, and must be planned in consultation between the student and the field supervisor. It should be accompanied by an approximately 20-page written document describing the process of creating the project, including a discussion of the philosophical and practical conception of the piece, the relation of the piece to the student's previous work and to other work in that field (e.g. social documentaries, public installations, web resource, etc.), and a reflection on the reception of the piece.

Reading Lists

Literature reviews and take home exams shall be based on reading lists consisting of 45 books/articles. (Four articles are assumed to be the equivalent of one book.) The student shall establish these lists in consultation with her/his supervisory committee.

Timelines for Completion of the Comprehensives

The following establishes a timeline for completion of the comprehensives within the Department of Women's Studies. Timelines may be adjusted for students who do not attend continuous full-time studies beginning in September. Students who fail to complete tasks within the normal time frame shall be reviewed by the Women's Studies Graduate Program Committee.

Note that S.F.U. Graduate General Regulations require the completion of all requirements for a Doctoral Degree within eight calendar years of initial enrollment, including on-leave semesters other than medical leaves. **During these 24 semesters, a Ph.D. candidate shall register in courses in no more than 18 semesters. While preparing for and writing comprehensive examinations, students are required to register in WS 997.**

i) Supervisory Committee – Fields and Tasks

Normally, students shall have established a supervisory committee by the end of their second term at S.F.U. Students shall submit to the committee an initial plan for their comprehensives by September 1 of their second year. By no later than September 30 of their second year, in consultation with their

supervisory committee, students shall have agreed upon a plan which states their choice of fields, the tasks to be undertaken in each field, and the timeline for completing each task. Students shall submit the approved plan and description of tasks to the Women's Studies Graduate Committee for its approval. The approved plan shall be signed by all members of the Supervisory Committee.

ii) Reading Lists

The student submits preliminary reading lists to the supervisory committee by September 30th of the second year of studies. The student and the field supervisor shall agree on the final constitution of the book lists by no later than January 31st. Lists shall each consist of a minimum of 45 books (or equivalent) and shall be signed by the student and the senior supervisor and submitted to the graduate secretary.

iii) Exams/tasks

Comprehensive tasks are normally completed between November 15 and March 15th of the student's second year. All tasks, including the marking and re-examination if necessary and the oral critique must normally be completed by the end of April of the student's second year.

iv) Marking

Each task shall be marked by two readers, the main supervisor of the field, and one other person on the supervisory committee. All comprehensives, both written and oral, shall be graded on a pass/fail basis, where pass indicates performance equivalent to at least a grade of 3.00. Criteria for a pass is evidence of wide reading and critical and interpretive engagement with the material. Each task may be attempted only twice. If a student fails a comprehensive, the second attempt shall be made within four weeks of notifying the student of the failure. The second attempt should respond to the comments and criticisms provided by the markers. A second failure of any comprehensive shall require withdrawal from the program. If two readers disagree on whether a student should pass or fail a comprehensive, a third reader from the supervisory committee shall be asked to read the paper and make a decision.

v) Oral critique

An oral critique encompassing all three comprehensives shall take place after the written components are marked as "passed," and shall address the work done in all three fields. The oral critique shall normally take place no later than three weeks after the completion of the final task, and shall be attended by the students' supervisory committee and chaired by the Women's Studies Graduate Chair or her designate. The oral critique is an opportunity to review the student's knowledge of the field and

its debates before she/he embarks on the thesis process and her/his own research focus. The committee may ask questions about any aspect of the three comprehensives, but the goal of the critique is a discussion of issues rather than a review of performance. The Senior Supervisor shall summarize the discussion for the student's file. Normally, the critique shall be completed by end of April of the student's second year in the program.