

OPTION 2: COMPREHENSIVE WRITTEN EXAM

For the comprehensive written examination, students will examine substantive theoretical and methodological issues related to their areas of concentration. Students will respond to a question or set of questions posed by committee members based on three different but related topics. The committee will evaluate your comps based on the following four categories: High Pass, Pass, Low Pass and Fail.

Expected length: 30-50 pages

1

During the first semester, begin defining your major intellectual interests/issues/subject areas, working closely with your faculty advisor.

2

During the second semester, select an MA project and establish a thesis committee. Work closely with each member of the committee to focus your intellectual interests and elaborate a reading list for each of the three major subject areas. For example, if you have a broad interest in environmental politics in Latin America, you might work with one committee member to make up a reading list on recent works in political ecology, another committee member to elaborate a reading list on environmental movements in Latin America, and a third committee member for a reading list on a specific topic of interest, such as water rights or free trade. By March 15, submit a 4-5 page statement on your potential MA project to the thesis committee chair and LAS Graduate Advisor Colin Deeds.

3

During the third semester, submit **preliminary reading lists + statement by October 15**. You will submit three reading lists (one per theme) and a 5-10-page statement of interest to your committee. The length and content of the reading lists will be determined in consultation with the student's committee members. As a general guideline, each of the three lists should contain approximately 25 sources. The reading lists should be constructed around a set of theoretical or methodological questions. The statement should explain the substantive issues you intend to explore in your comps and provide the intellectual framework for exam preparation.

4

During the fourth semester, submit the final reading list for approval by the committee and finalize the dates for the comprehensive exam deadline and the oral defense by March 15. Two weeks prior to the exam deadline, each committee member will submit one or two written questions based on the reading lists. The student will have two weeks to answer the questions.

5

Defend your comprehensive exam. During the defense, you will meet with your committee. Committee members will ask you to elaborate on your written answers and comment on one or more of the specific readings.