

## MA PROJECT 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 and subject areas.** Discuss potential exam topics and committee members in consultation with your faculty advisor.

2

During the second semester, establish a comprehensive exam committee and work with each of them to identify three different topics. By March 15, submit a 1-page, double-spaced MA Project statement to Colin Deeds and your committee chair in which you provide the names of the committee members and the roles they will fulfill on the committee and briefly explain each exam topic.

3

During the third semester, submit a PRELIMINARY exam reading list to your committee by October 15. You should work with your committee members to establish the length and content of the reading list. As a general guideline, for each of the three exam topics, list approximately 25 relevant sources. Write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) explanation of your three topical areas and how they relate to each other. Identify the main intellectual frameworks, substantive issues, and methodologies you will explore for your comprehensive exam.

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.

4

During the fourth semester, submit the FINAL exam 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. After the defense, collect signatures from your committee members on the Report of Exam Defense Form.