

**MEDIEVAL AND BYZANTINE STUDIES
MA COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS STRUCTURE**

Setting up the exam:

- (a) The general framework of the exam is determined by the student's regional and civilizational focus (i.e. The Medieval West; Byzantine and Orthodox Studies; The Islamic World). The area of specialization and the minor fields are specified within this larger scholarly framework/focus of study.
- (b) Most of the burden is placed on the student to form an exam committee and generate reading lists with the committee members.
- (c) Each student has two advisers, the MBS director and a faculty adviser. Reading lists have to be submitted to and approved by the faculty advisor and the director of MBS by the end of the semester prior to the one in which the student intends to sit for comps.

Fields: One major field (= student's area of specialization) and two minor areas.

Structure: Two days, 8 hours total, as follows:

Day 1: 4 hours in the student's major field, or *area of specialization* (i.e. Thought and Worship, History and Social Structures, and Cultural and Artistic Expressions, or their equivalents in the Byzantine focus) based on a substantial reading list generated by the student and approved by the faculty advisor and the director of MBS by the end of the semester prior to the one in which the student intends to sit for comps. The reading list for the exam will be connected to specific course work in the field and assume the readings from given course syllabi, but it is expected to go beyond individual course requirements and augment course contents to form baseline knowledge for the larger scholarly field.

Suggested structure: Answer three questions out of four.

Day 2: 2 hours in each of 2 *minor areas* (4 hours total), to be defined by the student and faculty members (committee members) on the basis of course work. The minor areas should only have limited overlap with the area of specialization (major field) and should demonstrate the student's competence in multiple disciplines.

Suggested structure: Answer two questions out of three in each minor area (4 questions total).

Examiners: 1 examiner in the major field (student's faculty advisor); 1 in each of the 2 minor areas. All three examiners are expected to read the entire exam, comment on their specific segments, and suggest an overall grade for the exam.

Coordinators of the exam: Director of MBS and the student's faculty advisor (in area of specialization). (Duties: gather all questions, oversee the exam, gather evaluations, and submit results to graduate school.)

Note on reading lists: Due to the interdisciplinary nature of Medieval Studies, requirements for particular fields will differ. Accordingly, the Center does not set exact requirements for the numbers of books, primary sources or other materials which should be covered by examinations. Each student will develop reading lists for both MA and PhD exams in consultation with their advisers. In order to assure parity throughout the program, these lists must be approved by the director of MBS at least one semester before the student intends to sit for the exams.