THE REQUIREMENT

Prior to taking his/her qualifying examinations, every student in the doctoral program must certify a reading competence in scholarship drawn from one modern foreign language relevant to his/her literary study. French, German, and Spanish are the modern languages in which the University has been able to provide regular support and instruction, but other relevant languages are equally acceptable.

Additional language competence is required of students working in Medieval or Early Modern British Literature, who must demonstrate their ability to read literature written in Latin, classical Greek, or, upon special request, Hebrew.

WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE ONE’S READING COMPETENCE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. A student may meet the foreign language requirement by documenting that s/he demonstrated reading competence as an M.A. student. Documentation of this proficiency is subject to the review and approval of the Graduate Director and Department Chair.

2. A student may also meet the requirement by performing satisfactorily in an accelerated reading course in the language designed for SLU graduate students by the Department of Modern & Classical Languages, which can provide information as to when these courses are offered. Students with tuition scholarship hours may apply the hours to these designated 500-level classes.

3. A third way to demonstrate one’s language competence is to successfully complete a 400-level course in the Modern & Classical Languages department with a heavy concentration of reading in the original language. Those interested in pursuing this path must petition the Graduate Director in writing and provide a course syllabus and course grade. The Director’s decision is subject to review by the Department Chair.

4. Students can also elect to demonstrate language proficiency through a two-hour examination administered by the English department and graded by courtesy of the Department of Modern & Classical Languages. Typically, the student chooses a scholarly monograph, chapter from a scholarly book, or substantial scholarly article (at least 25 printed pages) in the relevant

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1 This timing is not a precondition for those on the “old” (pre-2010) Ph.D. program.
modern language and presents it, several weeks in advance of the proposed examination time, to the Graduate Director for approval. In most cases, the Director will consult with a member of the English department who is fluent in the language of the text before making a determination of the text’s utility for competency-testing purposes. Alternatively, the student may inform the Graduate Director of his/her intention to be examined in a particular modern language and leave it to the English department to select a suitable scholarly text. Students opting to demonstrate reading proficiency in Latin or Greek may either negotiate approval of a text they have selected themselves or work from a set text announced by the English department at the beginning of each calendar year. Students opting for Hebrew must make their intention known at least four weeks prior to the desired date of the translation examination, and a suitable text will be negotiated.

On the day scheduled for the examination, the student is given a passage of approximately 80-100 lines from the designated text to translate and is expected to prepare a grammatically accurate, idiomatically sensible translation in two hours with the aid of no materials other than a dictionary. A student choosing the examination option may elect either to write the translation longhand or to produce it electronically, but must indicate in advance which writing medium s/he will use.

**NOTE:** Any student choosing the examination option must arrange an examination date at least one full month in advance of the date on which s/he would prefer to take his/her doctoral exams. The English department relies upon the Department of Modern & Classical Languages to grade the examination, and ample time must be allowed for the receipt, grading, and return of the translation.