

Department/Program: CLT

Director: Janie Vanpée, 2007-08

Retreat Date: May 6, 2008

Departmental/program faculty in attendance: Annie Jones, Katwiwa Mule, Anna Botta, Sabina Knight, Janie Vanpée, Justin Cammy, Thalia Pandiri, Betsey Harries, Maria Banerjee, Luc Gilleman, Craig Davis, Ambreen Hai, Dawn Fulton, Nicolas Russell, Margaret Bruzelius, Joel Westerdale

Outside guest(s)/speaker(s) in attendance: N/A

Goals for the retreat:

1. Discuss and redefine core curriculum in light of this year's staffing changes (the move of a regularly contributing board member's administrative FTE to CLT, though with at least half of her courses still listed under EALL) and future changes (the reduction of a full FTE; the potential reduction of contributions from the Russian Department, the English Department, and the French Department).
2. Develop strategies for making the CLT major more flexible and attractive to more students.
3. Identify potential curricular collaborations with other programs and departments.
4. Review how the CLT major serves the goals set out in the Design for Learning.

Outcomes:

1. We launched discussions for the first three goals and named three subcommittees that will bring specific proposals to the CLT board in 2008-09. The first committee will explore the pre-requisites of the major in light of our reduced staffing. The second committee will review the introductory sequence. A third committee will review how theory and methodology is integrated in the major from the intermediate level to the advanced capstone courses.
2. We set up a projected staffing plan for four years to anticipate staffing for the core courses and for directing the program.
3. We plan to organize a meeting with representatives of other language and literature departments this fall to explore together ways that we might collaborate on some common curricular goals.
4. We will make more explicit how the CLT major and its core courses serve the Design for Learning.
5. We began a discussion on the place of CLT 150: *The Art of Translation* in the CLT curriculum.

Plans to achieve outcomes:

1. The subcommittee on revisions to the major will bring a proposal for changes to the core requirements to the CLT board in Fall 2008 and revise our existing "pathway" through the major form. [Annie Jones, Katwiwa Mule, Janie Vanpée]
2. The subcommittee on the introductory sequence [CLT 202 + CLT 204] will explore alternative models, adapted to our staffing restrictions. [Annie Jones, Sabina Knight, Katwiwa Mule, Margaret Bruzelius, Luc Gilleman]

3. The subcommittee on the integration of theory and methodology will review the senior year sequence, how to best introduce theory and methodology in the sequence of courses leading up to the senior year, and how to take coordinate “theory” courses offered in other departments (English, Film Studies) with CLT’s own offerings. [Anna Botta, Ambreen Hai, Janie Vanpée]
4. We will confirm future staffing and directing of the program in light of staffing changes.
5. Establish literacy goals. [Anna Botta]
6. Organize meeting with representatives of other language and literature departments in Fall 2008 to explore ways that we might collaborate on some common curricular goals. Plan follow-up retreat.
7. Revise website to reflect changes.
8. Make more explicit how courses in the CLT major develop research skills that lead up to the capstone experiences of the senior seminar (CLT 340) and the Honors thesis.
9. Review goals of CLT 150: *The Art of Translation*: Is it serving the CLT program? Is it drawing students to the major? Is it serving the major well? Can we continue to rely so much on outside lecturers without remunerating them? Can we realistically continue to mount the course given the staffing challenges we face staffing in light of the proposed faculty reductions.

How do your plans advance departmental goals as outlined in mid-term or decennial reports?

We are dealing with a new staffing situation that takes precedence over our last decennial review.

How does the departmental/program plan to integrate the list of intellectual capacities into the major? For instance, are specific capacities such as writing, speaking or quantitative skills developed in particular courses, or a series of courses?

Of the specific curricular goals identified by the faculty which would be furthered within the major? (see page 8 of the Smith catalog for further examples)

- **Develop the ability to think critically and analytically and to convey knowledge and understanding**
- **Develop historical and comparative perspectives**
- **Become an informed global citizen**

The discipline and methodology of comparative literature focuses specifically on the intellectual capacities that develop the ability to think critically and analytically, that is, writing clearly, speaking articulately, reading closely, evaluating and presenting evidence accurately, engaging with artistic expression and working both independently and

collaboratively. By definition, the study of comparative literature helps student develop historical and comparative perspectives, including the learning of at least one other, most often two, foreign languages, studying the development of texts and cultures in their historical contexts, and integrating multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to the interpretation of cultural and textual artifacts. Our major is designed to help students explore, through in-depth analysis and comparison, texts and artistic productions from different traditions, epochs and cultures, thereby enabling our students to become informed global citizens. The majority of comparative literature majors studies abroad and thus engage in communities beyond Smith. Through study abroad and through the in-depth study of texts from other cultures, they learn to appreciate the diversity of cultural expression. Reading the classics as well as texts from minority cultures and the most recent literary works of emerging traditions, many of which forefront political and ethical problems, comparative literature students learn to identify, analyze and think through such problems with subtlety and historical and cultural perspective.

Has the department integrated the development of student research abilities in the structure of the major? For instance, is there an information literacy program in place for students who major in the department? Is there a research methods course recommended for your majors (either in your department or another one)? If so, when in the student's career does she take this course?

Many CLT courses include a research paper as part of the course work; some of these courses incorporate a session with a reference librarian into the syllabus. Research and research papers in the intermediate CLT courses prepare majors for the sequence of the senior capstone, CLT 300, which examines contemporary literary theory and guides students to write analytic papers applying some of these theoretical approaches, and CLT 340, which is organized to allow students to develop an in-depth comparative study and do research on a topic of the student's choosing. A high percentage of CLT majors (1/5 to 1/3) choose to pursue additional research through an honors thesis or special studies project.

Are the pathways through the major clear for prospective majors? Is the department satisfied with the level of advanced work accomplished by its majors? (It may be useful to review the transcripts of graduating majors, or to examine the course taken patterns of several recent groups of senior majors.)

We recognize the complexity of the major as an issue to be addressed this fall. In addition to learning literary criticism and methodology, students undertaking the CLT major have to master at least two languages and cultures well enough to understand literature written in that language. The pathway through the major is clear but its demands may be impractically excessive.

What are the culminating or capstone experiences for students in your major?

CLT 300: Foundations of Contemporary Literary Theory

CLT 340: The senior seminar in which students collectively choose a topic of common interest and develop a research project/paper on an aspect of the topic.

A fifth to a third of our majors also choose to pursue an Honors thesis or a special studies.

Please attach a summary of any proposed changes to be considered by the department and any associated timeline for changes to be submitted to CAP.

Proposed changes will be submitted this fall to CAP, after the CLT board reviews the subcommittees' proposals.