



Department of French and Italian

200 Hagerty Hall
1775 College Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1340

Phone (614) 292-4938
Fax (614) 292-7403

January 27, 2016

Dear Meg,

The Arts and Humanities panel met on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 and discussed the proposed revisions to the graduate program in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC), which needs to change its requirements to meet the changing realities of funding patterns, student admissions, and the faculty roster. Through departure and retirement, they have lost seven faculty members (almost half of the faculty), but have recruited five new faculty members in areas not covered before. One problem is that the only remaining “language tracks” available with regular graduate courses are in Arabic and Hebrew, but the focus on just Hebrew or Arabic for the PhD does not support the students and faculty in NELC who have broader and more interdisciplinary interests.

The program originally required course work in a primary area (24 units of graduate credit in one language at an advanced level), as well as a secondary and minor area, but in practice the boundaries between these areas became blurred. Another problem is the changing demographic of the student population, a number of which are native speakers of the languages in which they are pursuing research. These students do not always benefit from 24 units of graduate study in their own language as much as by courses in theory and method. Other students are not native speakers but are not able to find 24 units in their primary research language because the changing faculty roster has not facilitated their offering. Still others are pursuing ancient languages which tend to be learned intensively in one or two semesters each, making it difficult to pursue any one of them for 24 units of credit.

Their solution is to dissolve the grouping of requirements by *area* and to emphasize *final qualifications* instead, something to be ensured by close monitoring by faculty advisors and by language translation examinations. This will encourage multidisciplinary graduate studies and scholarship, match student interests to faculty offerings, and create flexibility in the curriculum. In the new program, students take an introductory course, two theory/research methods courses, at least eighteen (18) units with the prefixes NELC, ARABIC, HEBREW, PERSIAN, and TURKISH, and at least fifteen (15) units of credit at the 7000- or 8000-level among the courses beyond the MA. Beyond these 42 hours and 12 dissertation hours, courses are chosen in consultation with the student's Advisory Committee. (I have not listed the other language requirements that do not count toward these hours.) They have an informal plan of ongoing assessment and they have a transition plan for students in place.

The only point of discussion among the members of the Arts and Humanities panel was the fact that students who are native speakers only have to demonstrate ability in one Near Eastern research language instead of two. This requirement appears to vary by language program. These changes were unanimously approved by the Arts and Humanities panel

Respectfully,
Janice M. Aski
Janice M. Aski