

## **LAWS 6095 Comprehensive Exam**

### **Guidelines**

#### General Description

The comprehensive examination is aimed at allowing Phd candidates to enhance the foundational knowledge relevant to their professional career. Every department and university has different formats and expectations. The Legal Studies comprehensive allows students, in consultation with their comprehensive exam committee (the supervisor and two other faculty members), to focus more specifically on their topic areas and encourages them to be the architects of their own program.

The comprehensive examination is an integral part of the process of doctoral study, located between coursework and the preparation of the thesis proposal. It is a period of consolidation, reflection and a link to the dissertation area. In the process of satisfying the comprehensive requirements, you must be able to demonstrate to your Comprehensive Exam committee your command of a particular field. At the end of the process, you should be positioned to move directly into your dissertation proposal.

#### Process and Formats for Satisfying the Comprehensives

Registration in the comprehensive examination (LAWS 6095) takes place after completion of the coursework requirements. However, preliminary planning for the comprehensive can begin in the first year of the program, notably in the field course. Normally, the comprehensive examination must be completed no later than two years (6 terms) after initial full-time registration, and four years (12 terms) after initial part-time registration. Missed deadlines with respect to the comprehensive may lead to a review of your standing in the program.

The comprehensive examination includes a written and oral component. The written proposal, developed in discussion with your committee, should be about five pages long and include:

- a statement of how you wish to be examined (that is, which written format you intend to follow),
- a core bibliography of at least 25 items representative of the field and approved by your committee;
- a short proposal indicating the topic(s) for the written component, and

- if you write a research or review paper for your comprehensive, you will also produce a second, more specialized bibliography related to the topic of the paper.

The department recognizes a variety of formats for satisfying the comprehensive examination. Each format is accompanied by an oral examination with the committee where the student is expected to address issues contained in their written work and to answer questions based on the core bibliography. In all cases the format, topic and core bibliography must be approved by the Ph.D. committee.

### Committee Membership

The committee for your comprehensive exam is normally made up of three members: a supervisor, and two additional committee members. The committee members will be determined in consultation with your supervisor. The committee used for your comprehensive exam may be different from the committee established for your dissertation work.

### Fields of the Comprehensive Examination

The Legal Studies doctoral program at Carleton University has three fields listed in the Graduate Calendar and reproduced below (along with their descriptions). These fields reflect the strength of the department at both the master's and doctoral levels. Your comprehensive exam will be based in one of these fields:

#### *1. Crime, Law and Security*

This field explores historical and contemporary debates around the social, political, economic and cultural contingencies of crime and security as mediated through law. Both the state and civil society's responses are analyzed in the context of discourses and representations of crime and its control, governmental rationalities and crime control strategies, regulatory regimes, public and private surveillance, and both state and non-state acts of violence and coercion.

#### *2. Human Rights, Citizenship and Global Justice*

This field focuses on the ways law has been implicated in the social, political and economic transformations wrought by globalization, and the constitutive relation between these processes and human rights, citizenship, and global justice. It questions citizenship as traditionally conceptualized as the rights and obligations attached to membership in the nation-state in relation to the changing contours of law, sovereignty and democracy under globalizing conditions and the "War on Terror".

### 3. Law, Regulation and Governance

This field focuses on the historical and contemporary place of law and regulation in the processes, discourses, knowledges and practices of governance. Emphasis is placed on investigating law and state as distinct sources of regulation, while examining wider forms of domestic and global governance. Particular focus is placed on the diversity of law-governance relationships both within and between regulatory regimes.

#### Examination formats

1) *Course Outline*: Normally the proposed course is set at the third or fourth year, undergraduate- level. This format requires a complete course outline with readings. You may be challenged about perspectives and issues excluded from the outline.

The comprehensive should include:

- an annotated course outline of 15 to 20 pages;
- an introductory lecture specifying the logic of the course, its boundaries, prerequisites and expectations;
- lecture synopses for at least two other topics in the course; and
- learning objectives for each lecture.

In some cases, students may be asked to deliver a lecture from this course outline to an appropriate class under the supervision of one of the Committee members.

2) *Research Paper*: Normally 30-40, but no more than 45 pages in length involving original research on a specified topic. This paper may be based on research done for another purpose, such as an academic publication. Such a paper is expected to be prepared in a format that would qualify for academic publication.

3) *Review Paper*: Normally 30-40, but no more than 45 pages in length, reviewing and accessing a body of literature within a field. This paper focuses on key issues and debates in the area. You need to give your position and locate yourself within the literature as well as assess 'what is at stake' in the area rather than simply summarizing the materials.

4) *Written Examination*: Either as a take-home or a sit-down format (the take-home is the usual format), written examinations involve some choice (e.g., 5 out of 7) between questions prepared by the committee in response to a written statement from the student specifying their perceptions of the key issues in the field and a core

bibliography. The take-home exam is normally 30-40 but no more than 45 pages in length. The oral examination may also cover unanswered questions.

### Comprehensive Feedback and Defense

Depending on the format of the exam, feedback from the supervisor and committee should normally be given within four weeks following submission of the written work for a comprehensive. When the committee deems the work done for the comprehensive ready, an oral defense date will be set. The defense date should be as soon as possible following the approval of the supervisor and the committee members. Normally all members of the committee will attend the comprehensive oral examination. In the event that a member must be absent, that committee member should provide written comments and questions that will be presented at the oral defense.

At the end of each comprehensive examination, a grade of Pass/Fail will normally be awarded. The committee, however, may require specific revisions to the written work in light of the oral defense before a grade is awarded.

A designation of "With Distinction" may be awarded; the designation is recommended only in cases where the student has demonstrated, in both oral and written components, an exceptional and extraordinary command of the material covered by the comprehensive.

Copies of the comprehensive proposal and the final written document associated with the defense must be filed with the departmental Graduate Administrator and kept in the student's file; this is done after the defense and after any necessary revisions have been made.