

# LLD Comprehensive Exam

## Basic Exam Outline

### M.A. Linguistics

- Part I Phonetics/Phonology
- Part II Syntax/Semantics
- Part III Psycholinguistics or Sociolinguistics or Historical Linguistics or Computational Linguistics or Morphology or Second Language Acquisition

### M.A. TESOL

- Part I Analysis of Language Structure and Language Development
- Part II Social and Psychological Contexts of Language Learning and Teaching
- Part II Pedagogical Issues

## Exam Administration

Friday, 10 A.M. (Date TBA)

- Go to the pick-up room (TBA)
- Attend a brief orientation regarding the exam (about 30 minutes)
- Pick up the exam questions.

Monday, 5:00 P.M. (Date TBA)

- Turn in the completed exam questions to the LLD Office (CL 473).
- Submit three (3) copies of each of the three questions.
- For those who have asked for test accommodation, the deadline will be different as determined by the Disabilities Resource Center (DRC).

## Exam Policies

### University Policies

- The Department would like to emphasize that we adhere strictly to the rules against plagiarism as set forth in the SJSU Catalog (<http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>). Should a student plagiarize on the Comprehensive exam, the Department will take disciplinary action, including granting the student an “F” in the exam and referring the student to the University’s Judicial Affairs Officer. In addition, students must write their answers without any informational help from any person at all, and without any help (either informational or editorial) from other students in or graduates of LLD.
- Students needing test accommodation should obtain documentation from the Disabilities Resource Center and notify the

appropriate coordinator at least two weeks before the exam date. They should note that under no circumstances will the extended deadline be extended any further.

## Department Policies

- Students fill out the “Petition to take the Comprehensive Examination” at the beginning of the semester they are planning to take the exam. Students must have completed or are currently completing the core courses in the semester they are taking the comprehensive exam.
- The 5:00 P.M. deadline for submission of the answers is VERY STRICT.
- Exams are graded *anonymously* and by two readers per question.
- In case of *failure*: Students occasionally fail one or more parts of the Comprehensive Examination, generally because they have: a) misunderstood some course content, b) misread the question, c) presented their answer in an unclear manner, d) failed to adopt a suitably academic tone and mode of presentation, applying theory and citing the literature where appropriate, e) devoted little time in exploring a question, f) plagiarism, g) failed to turn in answers to all three questions, or h) missed the 5:00 P.M. deadline.

In case of failure, a student will receive a written notice. He or she should see the appropriate coordinator to get verbal feedback. If a student fails one part of the exam, he or she should petition the faculty to retake that part only. If a student fails more than one part of the exam, he or she should petition the faculty to retake all three parts.

- A student who has failed a part or the whole exam may retake the exam as many times as the exam is offered within the university-mandated time limit on coursework.

## Grading

### Criteria

Students often ask what the grading criteria are. The following are the main points that are considered in evaluating a student’s work:

- **Accuracy** – Is what you say *accurate*?
- **Completeness** – Have you addressed *all parts of the question*?
- **Authoritativeness** – Can you support your claims with reference to the literature? (*If you can, you should.*)
- **Elegance** – Is your response *well composed, organized, edited, and proofread*?

## Grading Scale

4 = High Pass      3 = Pass    2 = Low Pass  
Below 2 = Fail

Each question will be read by two readers. Original scores may be given in increments of .5. An average is taken for the final score.

## Results

Grades are generally available on the second Monday after the exam is submitted, unless special arrangements have been made for some students, in which case the announcement of results may be delayed. Written feedback is given ONLY if a part or parts of the exam is failed. If you would like verbal feedback on your exam, see the appropriate coordinator. The grades you receive on the exam do not appear on your transcript. The coordinators simply notify Graduate Studies and Research on your fulfillment of the Culminating Experience.

## Preparing for the exam

### Before the exam date

- Make arrangements for accommodation.
- Review class material.
- Make index of topics with articles/chapters covering each topic.
- Be familiar with bibliography distributed in each class.
- Form study groups to help each other with review.
- You may review previous exam questions but only for style.

### The week before the exam

- Take care of your living space.
- Make arrangements for family and roommates to be away during your important weekend.
- Plan meals ahead of time.
- Make sure a back-up computer system and supplies are available.
- Relax the day before the exam and get a good night's sleep.

- (Call the LLD office if you decide not to take the Comps at the last minute.)

## After you pick up the exam

- Read each question very carefully. Make a decision on which you are going to answer.
- Budget your time wisely! Avoid spending too much time on one question and neglecting another.
- Apply and synthesize all the information from your MA work.
- Support all your claims with references from the literature. If you cite someone specifically, give the reference in the text and in a reference list at the end.
- If you have a counter position other than what is advocated by the present field, make sure you argue your position well.
- Make sure that you have answered all parts of each question. Failure to answer any part of a question can result in a failing score.

## Exam Format

- Do not identify yourself by name or anything unique to you on any portion of your essays.
- Use normal 1-inch margins.
- Double space.
- Use a 12-point font.
- On every page, give your identification number (the number you will be given when you pick up the exam), page number (e.g. page 2 of 5), and the number of the exam part and subpart being addressed (e.g. PART II, Question 2). Be sure to follow the numbering of the exam itself.
- Unless otherwise specified, a reasonable length for answers should be between four (4) and (6) typed pages.
- Make three copies of each question, each copy collated and stapled.
- Paper clip each set of questions. You should have three sets, each consisting of three copies of the same essay.

## Important Contact Information

LLD Office	408/924-4413
Dr. Stefan Frazier	408/924-4443
Dr. Roula Svorou	408/924-1379