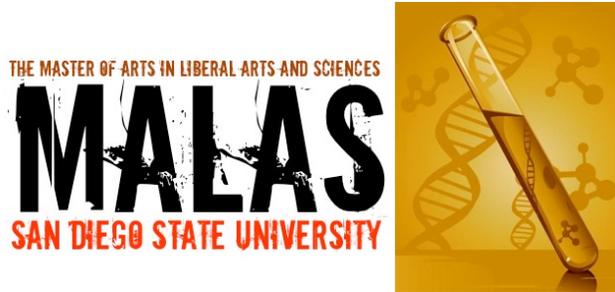


## The Master of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences



MALAS MA Comprehensive Exam | November 22, 2013

*The MALAS Comprehensive MA Exam questions allow students to demonstrate their familiarity with specific works on interdisciplinary reading lists they have developed in conjunction with their faculty field advisors. As MALAS is an interdisciplinary studies program, graduate students should respond to the selected prompts/questions in ways that demonstrate their mastery of ideas, theories, methods, and conventions associated with more than one field. Although students preparing for the exam will be encouraged to read as much of the relevant criticism as is feasible, they will not be held specifically responsible for knowing any particular criticism of individual works; that said, showing familiarity in the responses with dominant critical debates in and across fields is welcome.*

### Grading Guidelines

#### 1. Distinction: A superior exam

- is a clearly focused response to the topic in fluent, dynamic prose
- is well-organized and well-developed
- has unified and coherent paragraphs
- incorporates specific and appropriate references to texts that were part of the graduate students' MA exam list.
- demonstrates the graduate students' command with the subject matter in more than one specific discipline—in other words, the student shows strong familiarity with the material in ways that demonstrate a distinctive command of interdisciplinary studies and/or cultural studies protocols, practices, and traditions.

#### 2. Pass: An adequate exam

- demonstrates a thoughtful response to the topic within an overall plan, even if the treatment of some points is only perfunctory
- logically develops ideas in ordered paragraphs
- may have lapses in providing transitions
- may occasionally rely on unsupported assertions and generalizations.
- demonstrates the graduate students' familiarity with the subject matter in more than one specific discipline.

#### 3. Fail: An inadequate exam

- discusses the topic only generally or does not directly respond to the topic
- does not follow a reasonable or appropriate pattern of development
- lacks specific textual support for assertions and generalizations
- fails to develop appropriate examples
- demonstrates no command of the subject matter in more than one specific discipline.

Comprehensive Exam Reading List | Master of Arts  
MALAS MA Comprehensive Exam | November 22, 2013

Area I

**Disability Theory and Experience**

Supervisory Faculty: John R. Johnson

*Nothing about Us without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment*  
James I. Charlton

*Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation*  
Eli Clare

*The Sessions (2012)*  
Ben Lewin, director

*Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity*  
Simi Linton

*My Body Politic: A Memoir*  
Simi Linton

*Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*  
Paul K. Longmore

*Missing Pieces: A Chronicle of Living with a Disability*  
Irving Kenneth Zola

Area II

**Culturally Responsive Teaching in Special Education**

Supervisory Faculty: Regina Brandon

*Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth—and Their Allies*  
Ellen Bass and Kate Kaufman

*Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*  
Lisa Delpit

*There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*  
Alex Kotlowitz

*No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement*  
Joseph P. Shapiro

*A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*  
Ronald Takaki

*First to Worst (2004)*  
documentary

Area III

**Deviance and Sanity in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Literature**

Supervisory Faculty: Jonathan Ewell

*Tracks*  
Louise Erdrich

*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*  
Michel Foucault

*Beloved*  
Toni Morrison

*Lolita*  
Vladimir Nabokov

*Mrs. Dalloway*  
Virginia Woolf

*Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*  
Lisa Zunshine

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM  
MALAS | Master of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Friday, November 22, 2013

Exam Question I: **Disability Theory and Experience**, 8:10am to 10:00 am

You MAY, if you wish, use a laptop today, however, all connections to wi-fi **MUST BE DISABLED**--I have a thumb-drive to ferry your finished responses to my own workstation for printing. If your laptop does not have a USB-compatible port, you will be allowed to log-on to SDSU wi-fi at the end of each session to zap your responses to me (memo@sdsu.edu) for printing. You are also welcome to bring a blue book and several pens/markers. This is a closed-book, no notes examination—do not consult any other files on your laptop or in your possession during the exam.

RESPOND TO **ONE** OF THE THREE FOLLOWING PROMPTS:

**Question #1:** Describe your understanding and knowledge of “disability” as a socially constructed phenomenon and how this perspective of disability deviates from traditional academic, educational, legal (specifically definitions of disability provided in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004) and intellectual presentations of disability. In your description, include a discussion of the tension between an understanding of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon and clinical or medical views of disability as an impairment or defect requiring remediation and how this may impact how educators are taught to work with children with disabilities.

**Question #2:** Discuss what you believe may be potential implications based on your readings about disability from the disability studies literature for informing education and teaching and or professional practice of a discipline of your choice for youth and/or adults with disabilities. Of particular emphasis, discuss how the lived experience may afford deeper and more defensible understandings of disabilities that may improve or increase opportunities for youth with disabilities to come to accept disability status as an asset rather than as a stigma to be hidden. When addressing this comment please explore how the lived personal experience of disability may provide unique understandings that may or may not be afforded by individuals with limited personal experience.

**Question #3:** Agree or disagree with the following statement with support from your readings and a logically defensible argument: *“The disability and deaf experience are shared cultural experiences that intersects with and shares common experiences with other culturally and linguistically diverse communities.”* Provide examples from your readings and personal experience about how persons with disabilities and who are deaf may share the same or similar cultural experiences with members of other cultural and linguistically diverse communities. Please draw on your work, knowledge and study of culturally and linguistic communities (e.g., Africana Studies, Chicano Studies, Women Studies, LGBTQ Studies). You may consider addressing common micro-aggressions and how the construct of “other” may apply. You may also wish to include positive and negative examples of how persons who are members of the Disability or Deaf communities are marginalized in ways that are similar to or different from other culturally marginalized communities.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM  
MALAS | Master of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Friday, November 22, 2013

Exam Question II **Culturally Responsive Teaching in Special Education**, 10:10 am to 12noon

You MAY, if you wish, use a laptop today, however, all connections to wi-fi **MUST BE DISABLED** --I have a thumb-drive to ferry your finished responses to my own workstation for printing. If your laptop does not have a USB-compatible port, you will be allowed to log-on to SDSU wi-fi at the end of each session to zap your responses to me (memo@sdsu.edu) for printing. You are also welcome to bring a blue book and several pens/markers. This is a closed-book, no notes examination—do not consult any other files on your laptop or in your possession during the exam.

RESPOND TO **ONE** OF THE FOLLOWING TWO PROMPTS:

1. School districts nationally are experiencing rapid growth in the number of students of color, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. A growing number of Latino students continue to fill classrooms in the early grades and many speak little or no English. These changing demographics have profound implications for all levels and functions of the public school system. Discuss in detail the following:

- a. How must school systems create welcoming and equitable learning environments for diverse students and their families?
- b. What challenges are involved with the changing demographics that all of our public schools are facing?
- c. How can teachers make good use of demographics in their daily practice?

2. Overrepresentation occurs when the percentage of students with specific characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language background, gender, etc.) is higher than their proportion in the general population. For more than four decades, the overrepresentation of African American students in special education classes has been evident especially as it relates to African American boys. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 documented alarming statistics: although African Americans represented only 16% of elementary and secondary students in the U.S., they constituted 21% of total enrollments in special education. African American children are more likely to be identified by their teacher as having an emotional and behavior disorders and intellectual disabilities than their White counterparts. African American student are overrepresented in all categories of special education. Discuss in detail the following:

- a. What are the major factors contributing to the overrepresentation of African American students receiving special education services?
- b. What role does culture play on the overrepresentation of African American children receiving special education services?
- c. How must school districts address the disproportionality of African American students receiving special education services?

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM  
MALAS | Master of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Friday, November 22, 2013

Exam Question III: **Deviance and Sanity in 20th-Century Literature**, 12:10pm to 2pm

You MAY, if you wish, use a laptop today, however, all connections to wi-fi **MUST BE DISABLED** --I have a thumb-drive to ferry your finished responses to my own workstation for printing. If your laptop does not have a USB-compatible port, you will be allowed to log-on to SDSU wi-fi at the end of each session to zap your responses to me (memo@sdsu.edu) for printing. You are also welcome to bring a blue book and several pens/markers. This is a closed-book, no notes examination—do not consult any other files on your laptop or in your possession during the exam.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE TWO FOLLOWING PROMPTS:

Choose one of the two following prompts:

(1) Using examples from Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, write an essay that considers the relationship between mental "otherness" and social/culture/racial "otherness." Explain how an author's portrayals of deviance and sanity coincide with, derive from, or represent the state of being "other." You may utilize other texts from your list, as you see fit.

(2) Lisa Zunshine argues in *Why We Read Fiction* that reading novels can be thought of as an exercise in cognitive identification with other minds. How is this process complicated when it involves characters who display deviant mental states? Using Zunshine's concepts of mind reading, layers of intentionality, and metarepresentation, write an essay that considers the significance of such complicated cognitive identifications in Nabokov's *Lolita* and another novel of your choice.

(3) Michel Foucault concludes *Madness and Civilization* with the suggestion that madness is paradoxically both incompatible with and essential to the work of art. "Where there is a work of art," he claims, "there is no madness; and yet madness is contemporary with the work of art, since it inaugurates the time of its truth." Using Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* and two novels of your choice, write an essay that considers the relationship between madness and the 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel. How is the novel similar to the other social institutions Foucault describes that at once seek to confine madness and turn it into a spectacle? How is it different?