

LANGUAGE EXAMINATION

You may elect any language in which to be examined, but you must demonstrate to the faculty that this language is relevant to your area of anthropological interest.

No student may use English as a “foreign” language. On the other hand, foreign students who are not native speakers of English may use their native language to meet Departmental requirements if that language meets the criteria for relevance set forth above. Neither coursework taken prior to your entry into our programs nor exams other than those listed below will be considered as a waiver for this requirement.

You have five options for passing the language examination requirement:

OPTION 1. You may elect to be examined by an examiner from the Department of Anthropology. Examiners will be faculty members named by the Chair, and will hold office for the length of time specified by the Chair. An examiner may refuse to give an examination. The examination, as given within the Department, will consist of two parts, given sequentially.

A. Written Translation. You will be given a passage of approximately 1,000 words (about four double-spaced, typed pages), from one or more articles or publications in your area of interest, to translate into good English. Dictionaries or other books and reference works may be used, but personal assistance is not allowed. This written translation must be completed within two hours and turned in promptly to the examiner.

B. Sight Translation. Within a few days, the examiner will report to you the results of the written translation part of the exam. If you have passed this part of the exam, you will then be given two passages, each of approximately 75 words, and will be required to give an oral “sight translation” in the presence of the examiner. You will be given five minutes to study each passage before beginning. No aids of any kind may be used during this portion of the examination.

In all cases, the materials used for the language examination will be chosen by the examiner to fit with your major topical/regional interests, and an effort will be made to be as specific as possible. You may work with the examiner to pre-select appropriate material consisting of at least 200 pages. Once settled on, exam material can be selected from this source. All translations must be in acceptable, fluent written English. Within the time limits imposed, you must translate the required passages, interpreting accurately such details as genders, tenses, idiomatic expressions, and similar linguistic features, which may not always have literal English equivalents, so as to furnish evidence that you are familiar with the language chosen.

OPTION 2. If available, you may take an examination given by the Education Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey. Check the ETS website (<http://www.ets.org>) for up-to-date information regarding type of exam, dates and places of administration, required fee, etc. The percentile score deemed passing by the Department of Anthropology may differ from that accepted by other departments, as long as it is consistent with overall University policy. Be sure to discuss the test you plan to take with your Advisor before you sign up for the test and pay the fee.

OPTION 3. You may elect to be examined by the Foreign Languages Department at SMU. In this case, you should consult both with the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Anthropology, as well as with the Department of Foreign Languages, to ascertain their exam fees. The Director of Graduate Studies in Anthropology must approve the material to serve as the basis for the exam submitted to the Foreign Language Department. In case of failure, the Foreign Language Department will not reexamine before 30 days have elapsed.

OPTION 4. If you complete a language evaluation for a Fulbright or SSRC fellowship application, you may submit the results of this evaluation to fulfill the departmental language exam requirement. Examiners must be either language professionals affiliated with the University or native speakers holding professional and/or business positions in the community. You must provide a brief profile of the non-language professionals to either the DGS or Chair to have this examiner approved (in writing) prior to undertaking the actual exam. You must surpass a minimally acceptable score on the Fulbright or SSRC exams in order to fulfill the requirement.

OPTION 5. General Examination by Native Speaker in the Community. If you need to fulfill your language requirement in a non-Western language (e.g., Navajo, Laotian) not spoken by members of our departmental or University community, you are encouraged to identify a native speaker who holds a professional or business position in the broader community to administer the exam. You must provide a brief profile of the examiner to either the DGS or the Chair to have this examiner approved (in writing) prior to undertaking the actual exam. This exam should follow the format provided in a Fulbright language examination, and you must achieve minimally acceptable scores in order for this exam to fulfill the requirement. You can obtain a copy of the Fulbright Foreign Language Report form from the Administrative Assistant to the Department Chair.

Minimally Acceptable Scores (exceptions permitted with consent of the Department Chair and members of the doctoral committee).

Fulbright: Aural Comprehension: understands simple conversation.

Speaking Ability: Uses structural patterns, but not with consistent accuracy. Adequate to handle conversational subjects.

Reading ability: Understands conventional topics and non-technical subjects.

Writing ability: Writes simple sentences on conventional topics.

Overall: Should be able to manage adequately after a short period of adjustment abroad.

SSRC: Comprehension: Adequate comprehension for normal daily needs.

Speaking: Able to speak adequately for normal daily needs.

Reading: Able to read general material in own and related fields with the aid of a dictionary.

Writing: Able to draft academic materials in field of specialization, with major editing by a native speaker.

You may attempt the language exam as many times as needed in order to pass it. You also may try different options, different languages, and even different examiners. Once you have passed the language exam, notify the Department Chair in writing to place the results in your file.