

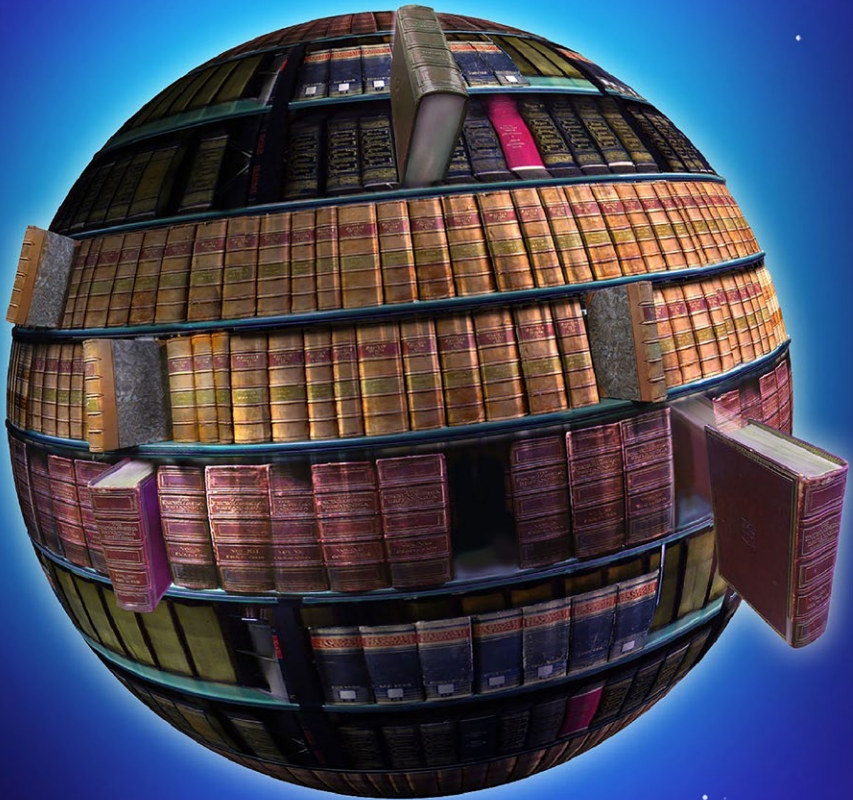
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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES

MASTER'S DEGREE IN WORLD LITERATURE

www.cgs.unibe.ch



Readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else.

– Michel de Certeau

MASTER'S DEGREE IN WORLD LITERATURE

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CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES
University of Bern

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What is world literature?

In an ever more globalized and interconnected world, this question cannot be answered conclusively because it varies according to the approach taken. World literature can refer to canonized works, to questions of distribution, sales figures, or 'influence'. Thus Dante's *Divina Commedia* or Shakespeare's dramas might qualify, as well as Mao's *Collected Poems*, Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan*, or John Le Carré's *The Constant Gardener*, depending on the yardstick applied.

The Master program in World Literature at the Center for Global Studies (CGS) starts from the premise that this open question constitutes a virtue, not a vice. It is designed to familiarize students with the discussions, arguments and approaches surrounding this debate, providing them with a sound theoretical basis, but also with an atmosphere of intellectual openness that leaves room to pursue this question in a very individual way. It encourages them to substitute definitional dogma with dialogic initiative, and to encounter (the) world (of) literature with an open, but at the same time critically aware attitude.

In order to do this, the program offers survey lectures in literary theory, in theories of cosmopolitanism and world literature, and in the history of world literature, which are designed to give students an overview of the historical variety of world literature and its genres, but also to provide them with the theoretical depth to develop their own arguments and approaches. These approaches are by no means exclusively confined to literature: seminars and lectures also include other fields such as film, film theory, ethics and values, and other media.

In addition, students can complement the obligatory seminars and lectures with a wide range of seminars offered by different institutes and departments affiliated or connected to the CGS, in order to pursue their own interests, competences, and predilections. A regular Master workshop offers the opportunity to present work in progress or ideas in the making to peers and supervisors.

Content

- How should world literature be defined, and which texts can be attributed to it?
- Which criteria are decisive for the definition of world literature, and how relevant are these?
- What has historically been considered world literature? Why and how does that change?
- What are the theoretical and/or ideological assumptions underlying these discussions?
- Does world literature address 'universal' topics?

Focal points

- Processes of canon formation
- Literatures between orality and writing
- Media and intermediality
- Processes of cultural contact, conflict, transfer, and exchange
- Cultural memory and forms of tradition and value transfer
- Symbolic forms and their reference to the material world
- Interchange between regional and global contexts

Interdisciplinary variety

The many distinguishing qualities of the MA program World Literature comprise, amongst others:

- a comprehensive integration of all literary study programs offered within the faculty and beyond
- an interdisciplinary cooperation in teaching and research with adjacent disciplines such as national literatures, art history, theatre studies, and musicology
- a comprehensive introduction to cultural and literary theories
- the acquisition of interdisciplinary methods and skills
- a large variety of themes and topics
- the freedom to pursue individual studies and research projects

Career

Students learn to take an informed and critical approach to the analysis of literature and culture that is relevant for jobs in cultural intermediation, journalism, cultural administration and politics, culture industries, and academia.

Study programs

- Mono Master World Literature (120 ECTS)
- Major Master World Literature (90 ECTS)
- Minor Master World Literature (30 ECTS)

Institute for World Literature Summer School

The CGS is a sponsor of the Institute for World Literature (IWL), a summer school that takes place alternatingly at Harvard University and at different universities across the globe. This cooperation offers two students per year the opportunity to attend the IWL at half the tuition fees (currently USD 900.-). MA and doctoral students who are interested in World Literature, English or other literatures in a global context are encouraged to send in their applications to Prof. Thomas Claviez.

For more information about the IWL summer school see:

www.iwl.fas.harvard.edu and

http://www.cgs.unibe.ch/studies/iwl_summer_school/index_eng.html.

Admission

Students with a Bachelor's degree in philological fields of study and in many other fields of the humanities are eligible for admission to the Master program World Literature. Students with a BA degree from other fields of study are also welcome to study World Literature but they may be asked to fulfill additional requirements (usually during the first semesters of their studies) which will be specified during a study counseling session obligatory for all prospective students. A good to excellent knowledge of English and German is a further requirement for admission. In addition, students need to have a sufficient command of all other instructional languages of the courses they choose to attend.

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