MA Exam Preparation Guidelines
Do's and Don’ts

Do:
- Complete the MA Checklist to make sure you have completed all the program requirements. Meet with the Director of Graduate Studies if you are unsure if you’ve completed all program requirements.
- Submit the Notification of Areas form to the Director of Graduate Studies by the second week of the semester you plan to take the exams.
- Prior to taking the examination, students should consult with the faculty to discuss the area they’ve chosen and request further critical and bibliographical guidance.
- Start to study for the Comprehensive well in advance. Select your authors/works and review all your class notes, exams, term papers, and oral reports. Make notes on texts from the reading list. Know what authors go with which texts, know directors of films, know which pedagogical and linguistic theories belong to which authors, know the time periods along with social context and/or literary/cultural movement. You must know how that time, space and culture influenced the artist’s style and themes.
- Request permission from a professor to attend a class session devoted to any specific text, author or topic in which you feel deficient.
- Look at the online exam bank for questions from previous years to have an idea of the kinds of questions you can expect.
- For the Oral Exam:
  - Get a good night’s sleep
  - Dress professionally.
  - Review your answers from your written exam. If you were unsure of anything on the written exam, find out the answers for the oral exam.
  - If you are giving a presentation, practice giving it (find a fellow student who can give you feedback, check the time, make eye contact, look for grammar/spelling errors if you have a powerpoint/prezi, etc.)
  - Try to attain mastery over any particular text(s) and/or author(s) you are emphasizing.
  - Anticipate questions and practice answering them.
  - During the oral exam, avoid long, awkward moments of silence. Think of the oral exam as a conversation, not a test. The Comprehensive Oral Examination not only tests your knowledge of specific content, but also your oral proficiency in the language. Improve your conversational ability and skill at circumlocution by speaking as much possible.

Don’t:
- Do not look for professors every day to fish for what he/she might ask on the exam. Go to them when you have specific, legitimate questions or concerns about the general context or format of the exam.
- Do not wait until the semester of your exams to begin reading the texts from your reading list.
- Do not assume that because you’ve passed your classes you will automatically pass the comprehensive exams.