



University of Toronto
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Ph. D. Comprehensive Examination
in the Candidate's Special Field

This examination consists of three questions (with choices for questions B and C). The examination is to be written in one three-hour session (1:00 PM – 4:00 PM).

Question A (one hour)

Theories of “the other” and “othering” come in a variety of shapes and sizes. There are anthropological approaches (Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich), ontological approaches (Paul Ricoeur), psychoanalytic approaches (Julia Kristeva) and many others. Give a brief overview of at least three different approaches to otherness/alterity and discuss how these ideas can be applied to literary interpretation.

Question B (one hour)

Select ONE of the following questions and write an insightful essay on the topic.

B1. Examine the literature of the 1990s from the perspective of genre. What genres are apparent? Dominant? In ascendance? In decline? Have new genres or new permutations of genres appeared? How does the map of genres in contemporary Ukrainian literature compare to what came immediately before it? How does it compare to the modernist period?

B2. Who reads Ukrainian literature and why? How do contemporary Ukrainian writers adapt to their perceived audience? Do they take active measures to appeal to a particular audience? What measures do they take to reach their audience? Which audience? What impact do the specifics of the contemporary audience and literary market have on the position and role of the contemporary Ukrainian writer?

B3. After Ukrainian independence, avante-garde writers, like the BU-BA-BU threesome, achieved very considerable prominence. Recently, however, they have been losing their pre-eminent position in the literary marketplace. Examine the role of avante-gardism in the development of post-independence Ukrainian literature.

Question C is on the next page.

Question C (one hour)

Select ONE of the following questions and write an intelligent essay on the topic.

C1. A key ingredient in much of the recent literature in Ukraine is the image of “the West” (Western Europe, North America). Examine how “the West” is presented in a few specific works. What trends do you observe in these representations over the last twenty years? Select a few specific representative works for detailed discussion and also examine (briefly) the comparable situation in Polish and Russian literature.

C2. Examine Ukrainian literature of the last twenty years from the perspective of women’s issues. How do women’s issues appear in contemporary literature? What are the key issues? Who are the heroes and villains? Select a few specific representative works for detailed discussion and also examine (briefly) the comparable situation in Polish and Russian literature.