

Guidelines for the M.A. Candidate in Spanish

Department of Spanish and Portuguese

The course of studies leading to the Master of Arts degree in Spanish in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a flexible one designed to introduce the candidate to Spanish and Spanish-American literatures, literary criticism and linguistics. The program is for students who complete their academic career at the M.A. as well as for those who decide to pursue the Ph.D. Its general, non-specialized approach is beneficial to both types. To the M.A. student it affords the breadth of knowledge required for teaching Spanish in secondary schools, community and junior colleges. To the doctoral candidate it provides the general foundation necessary for subsequent specialization. The Master's program offers a panorama of selected works, a general view of literary and linguistic currents, and an introduction to literary and linguistic research.

I. Admission and Advising

- 1) Applicants with a B.A. in Spanish or Portuguese must have an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, and a GPA in Spanish or Portuguese courses of at least 3.25. Exceptions to these requirements may be made by the Admissions Committee.
- 2) During the registration period, the student will be asked to supply supplementary information regarding courses taken previously, experience abroad, scope of readings in Spanish and Spanish-American literatures, and preparation in linguistics.
- 3) All candidates will take an examination for written proficiency. An unsatisfactory performance, as determined by the examiners, on that written examination will require the student to take Spanish 323 (Advanced Language Practice with Emphasis on Expository Writing). Only those so required to take Spanish 323 will receive graduate credit for it, though it will not count toward any of the seven curriculum areas. Candidates who are not native speakers of Spanish will take an examination for oral proficiency. An unsatisfactory performance on the oral examination will require the student to take Spanish 320 (Spanish Phonetics). However, Spanish 320 will not count as graduate credit.
- 4) Each candidate will choose one of six general advisers. The student and the adviser will plan a program that takes into account the candidate's interest, strengths and deficiencies. If, for example, the student has a strong undergraduate background in a particular period of literature, the adviser will not recommend further exposure to the same field. The core courses (see below) are designed specifically to provide a sound, basic introduction to a particular field. Likewise, a student with extensive experience abroad and/or undergraduate preparation in composition or conversation may not need further study in these areas.

- 5) Candidates who expect to go on to the Doctorate are urged to acquire the basic reading knowledge of a second foreign language before taking the M.A. examination. It should be another Romance Language, Latin, Arabic, or German. Other languages may be considered, with the approval of the department.

II. Area Distribution and Course Requirements

The M.A. course work in Spanish consists of a minimum of 32 credits, or 30 provided students can demonstrate equivalency for Spanish 545. Course work in another department of the University of Wisconsin–Madison can be counted toward the minimum 32-credit requirement if it has been approved by the Chair in consultation with the Departmental Committee, except if the adviser approves taking up to six credits in another language (see 1 and 2 below).

The Master’s Degree program in Spanish in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese is based on seven curriculum areas: Medieval Literature, Golden Age Literature, Modern Peninsular Literature, Spanish-American Literature I (Colonial through Modernismo), Spanish-American Literature II (From Modernismo to the present), and Descriptive Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. Specific course requirements for the M.A. are as follows:

- 1) M.A. with concentration in literature. Candidates will take one course in each of five of the seven areas; one of the five must be a linguistics course (either descriptive or applied). Students with a concentration in literature must take a course in the literary area in which they choose not be examined on the MA-PhD Qualifying exam. (For required number of areas on the examination, see below IV. EXAMINATION.) With the adviser’s consent, the remaining fifteen credits are electives which may be taken in any of the areas, or in literary theory (Spanish 627 or Spanish 628); up to six of these fifteen credits may also be taken in the study of another language other than English and Spanish. Students intending to continue on to the PhD program are encouraged to take courses that will fulfill PhD requirements. (899 Directed study may only satisfy elective credits. Spanish 323 and Spanish 545 do not count toward any of the seven areas.) The department plans to offer the following sequence of survey courses in literature on a two-year rotating basis:

Year 1		Year 2	
Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Spanish 503 (Medieval Lit. Part 1) Spanish 505 (Golden Age Lit.)	Spanish 504 (Medieval Lit. Part 2) Spanish 506 (Modern Peninsular Lit.)	Spanish 501 (Spanish American Lit.—Discovery to Modernismo)	Spanish 502 (Spanish American Lit.—Modernismo to the Present)

- 2) M.A. with concentration in linguistics. Candidates will take one course in descriptive linguistics, one course in applied linguistics, and two further courses in linguistics which may be descriptive or applied, or a combination. One course each must be taken from two of the five literary areas. With the adviser's consent, the remaining twelve credits may be taken in any area, or in literary theory; up to six of these fifteen credits may also be taken in the study of another language other than English and Spanish. Students intending to continue on to the PhD program are encouraged to take courses that will fulfill PhD requirements. (899 Directed study may only satisfy elective credits. Spanish 323 and Spanish 545 do not count toward any of the seven areas.)
- 3) Both literature and linguistics M.A. students must take at least 6 credits in advanced courses. Literature M.A. students are strongly encouraged to take survey courses (Spanish 501-506). All of the Department's graduate courses that are not survey courses (Spanish 501-506) will be considered advanced courses. First-year M.A. students who wish to take a seminar need the permission of the advisor and consent of the instructor.
- 4) Spanish 545 (two credits), College Teaching of Spanish, is required of all new Teaching Assistants. Exemptions are made on an individual basis with prior written consent of the instructor of Spanish 545, in consultation with the chair.
- 5) Literary theory courses (Spanish 627 and 628) count only as electives in the M.A. program and satisfy the Ph.D. literary theory requirement.
- 6) All graduate students who are candidates for an M.A. degree in this department must take a minimum of two graduate-level courses in Spanish and/or Portuguese for credit each semester, exclusive of Independent Reading courses and audited courses. A student who is not in compliance with this requirement is not making good progress toward the degree, and will therefore be deemed not in good academic standing. Advisers should be aware that **only** the Departmental Committee, on the favorable recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, may grant exemptions.

III. Reading List

The M.A. Reading List constitutes a corpus of primary works which form the basic component of the formally designated core courses and the M.A. examination. MA candidates in Spanish are encouraged to begin their coverage of the list as soon as possible.

IV. M.A./Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

- 1) The M.A.-Ph.D. Qualifying Examination covers the seven curriculum areas, of which the candidate must take four. Students with a concentration in literature must take a course in the literary area in which they choose not to be examined. Each of the areas is tested by a 1.5-hour exam, consisting of some combination of the following: short questions

(definitions, terminology, key concepts, etc.), specific questions on key works, and/or general essay questions (dealing with textual analysis, literary history, contrastive studies, etc.). (The precise format of each section of the M.A. examination is appended to the Reading List.) If scheduling permits, the M.A.-Ph.D. Qualifying Examination, scheduled for the third weeks of November and April, will be given in 4 segments over 7 days: Tuesday, two areas; Thursday, two areas; Saturday, two areas; the following Tuesday, two areas. Students are expected to take the exam during their fourth semester of MA coursework. Failure to do so in the fourth semester does not satisfy normal criteria for good academic standing. The student must indicate in writing to the Chair of the Examination Committee at least one week prior to the final examination which of the seven areas he/she will take. At least one part of each area of the M.A.-Ph.D. Qualifying Examination must be written in Spanish.

- 2) There are two examiners (specialists) in each of the seven areas. Each area of the M.A.-Ph.D. Qualifying Examination has three possible grades:
- a. Pass with recommendation -- M.A. granted and candidate admitted to the doctoral program.
 - b. Pass -- M.A. granted but the candidate is not admitted to the doctoral program.
 - c. Fail. The candidate must receive a Pass or Pass with Recommendation in all four areas in order to be granted the M.A. A Fail in one or two areas may be removed, and the M.A. granted, if the failed exam(s) is/are taken in successive semesters – with no time limit but without missing any – and passed. If there are more than two Fails the first time the examination is taken, the M.A. is deemed failed and no area may be retaken.

Exam results which include three or four Passes with Recommendation and no Fails are designated as Outstanding.

The candidate is deemed to have passed the Qualifier and is admitted to the doctoral program if there are at least two grades of Pass with Recommendation and no Fails the first time the examination is taken. Admission to the Ph. D. program cannot be obtained by retaking an area.

- 3) In the event a student does not meet the requirements set forth in (2) above, there will be thorough discussion and subsequent ratification of the case by the Departmental Committee. If the candidate has no Fails on any area of the exam and two professors are willing to defend the candidate and state that they support his/her entrance into the Ph.D. program, both professors being willing to direct his/her dissertation, the candidate shall be admitted to the Department's doctoral program in literature or linguistics, depending on the M.A. concentration. Both professors must be specialists in either literature or linguistics, and in literature must represent one or two of the four areas the candidate chose for the M.A. examination. The student will be obliged to complete his/her dissertation under the supervision of one of the two professors who defended the candidate at the Departmental meeting. Students wishing to continue to

the Ph. D. are advised to approach professors whom they believe they may want to work with before the MA exam. The student should be aware of the possibility that the two professors may work in different fields. Any student who is not admitted to the Ph.D. program through successful completion of the Qualifier or through the process described here will not be eligible for admission to the Ph.D. Students on academic probation will not be allowed to take the M.A./Ph.D. Qualifying Examination.

- 4) Students who enter the Ph.D. in Literature by the requirements set out in (2) or (3) above must select their major field and two supporting fields from the four fields in which they chose to be examined for the M.A.-Ph.D. Qualifying Examination. Students who enter the Ph.D. in Linguistics by these same requirements must have taken the linguistic concentration in the M.A.
- 5) Principles that shall govern the composition of M.A. examinations:
 - a. that M.A. questions be *answerable* from the reading list and that no single question be tied to a specific class (i.e., students not enrolled in that class should also have reasonable expectations of answering the question with success; any particular theoretical formulation should remain implicit in the question),
 - b. that members of a specialization work together in devising exam questions,
 - c. that at least one member of each area of specialization (responsible for composing the questions) be on the exam committee.

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These are some general guidelines about what is expected for a Pass and a High Pass on the MA exams:

For a Pass on the MA exam we look for evidence that the candidate has read the material on the list in that field and that the information can be given in a manner that is well-organized and clearly presented. The answer should be formally correct in its representation, and include pertinent data, define terms, and respond to the question asked. The response should be analytical rather than summarize plot (in literature) and show that the candidate can do more than repeat memorized facts in every area. In Linguistics, the existence of clear lacunae in the description of the major historical processes or synchronic analysis of the language is an indication that the coverage of the material is not sufficient.

For a High Pass (a.k.a. Pass with Recommendation), we look particularly, but not exclusively, at the longer sections because it is there that the candidates can offer insights and demonstrate more clearly how the data or problem may be approached from an analytical perspective. In general, we consider the student’s ability to develop a persuasive argument and evidence of some original thought. Candidates also might show the ability to exemplify theoretical

statements while demonstrating their familiarity with pertinent data. Linguists expect to see that diachronic synchronic analysis is not just a series of piecemeal phenomena, but that there exists some relationship between processes studied, and that the candidate's analytic talent is of Ph.D. caliber.

Adopted 2/1990
Revised 10/31/1990
Revised 3/13/1991
Revised 5/7/1993
Revised 12/8/1993
Revised 10/13/1993
Revised 4/23/1997
Revised 11/10/1993
Revised 9/01/1996
Revised 4/22/1998
Revised 8/2000
Revised 10/25/2000
Revised 11/29/2000
Revised 12/8/2001
Revised 8/2/2002
Revised 2/19/2003
Revised 5/5/2004
Revised 5/2/2007
Revised 5/1/2009
Revised 5/5/2010
Revised 12/7/2011
Revised 2/13/2013
Revised 5/10/2014