

# 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 familiarize the candidate to the variety and depth of Spanish and Spanish-American literatures, literary criticism, cultural studies 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 and 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 critical foundation necessary for subsequent specialization. All courses in the department include both M.A. and Ph.D. students and from the beginning students choose their own sequence of coursework, under the guidance of faculty advisors. Courses are designed with various levels of interdisciplinarity and varied approaches to literary, cultural and linguistic topics, disciplinary trends, and theoretical designs.

### **I. Admission and Advising**

1. Applicants with a B.A. in Spanish or Portuguese should 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 new MA students will write a sample essay during the orientation week of their first semester of study. If the department determines that a student needs to improve his/her written Spanish, the student will be asked to meet several times during the semester with his/her selected advisor to work on composition skills.
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 and strengths.
5. Candidates who expect to go on to the Doctorate are urged to acquire the basic reading knowledge of a second foreign language before entering into the Ph.D. program (see "Fulfilling Language Requirements" section in the Policy Handbook).

### **II. Area Distribution and Course Requirements**

The M.A. course work in Spanish consists of a minimum of 32 credits. 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 with a concentration in Literature in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese offers study on five curriculum areas: Medieval Literature, Golden Age Literature, Modern Peninsular Literature, Spanish-American Literature I (Colonial through Modernismo), and Spanish-American Literature II (From Modernismo to the present).

The Master’s Degree program in Spanish with a concentration in Linguistics in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese offers study on four curriculum areas: (i) Phonetics & Phonology, (ii) Syntax, (iii) Language Variation & Change, and (iv) Applied Linguistics & Second Language Acquisition.

1. Spanish 700 (three credits), Introduction to the Profession, is required of all new Teaching Assistants.
2. 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 adequate 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.

Students pursuing the Linguistics track are exempt from the two graduate-level courses in Spanish and/or Portuguese in the semesters when the department does not offer two courses in Spanish linguistics.

### III. **M.A./Ph.D. Portfolio**

#### Portfolio Review

Students in Spanish literature and linguistics M.A. program shall submit a research portfolio consisting of three term papers from graduate courses in this program. Students who entered the M.A. program in the fall 2018 semester shall have the option of taking the M.A. / Ph.D. qualifying examination rather than submitting a portfolio. Guidelines and reading lists for the qualifying examination are provided in the previous version of this appendix and subsequent handbook appendices and are available upon request from the graduate coordinator. Students submitting portfolios shall be allowed,

but not required, to include in their portfolio a brief statement (approximately 1000 words) explaining their anticipated doctoral research agenda. Each term paper included in the portfolio shall represent a different curricular area. Before submitting their portfolio pieces, students shall revise them in accordance with the corrections and comments provided by their course professors during the initial evaluation of those materials. Students shall submit their portfolio by March 1, and the portfolio review committee shall bring their recommendations to the Departmental Committee for discussion and final decision at the committee's March meeting.

To maintain the curricular breadth of our M.A. program, students who opt for portfolio review shall be required to take at least three credits in each of the curricular fields within their concentration that are not represented by their portfolio selections. Thus, students concentrating in literature shall be required to take three credits in each of the two literary fields (of five total) not represented in their portfolios, while students concentrating in linguistics shall be required to take three credits in the one linguistic field (of four total) not represented in their portfolios. If not course is offered in a given area during a student's four semester of M.A. coursework, that student shall be granted an exemption from that requirement.

Each portfolio shall be reviewed and evaluated by a committee composed of the three faculty members for whose courses the portfolio pieces were initially submitted. The committee shall thus include one faculty member from each of the three curricular areas represented in the portfolio. The review committee shall assess each portfolio to confirm that the student has achieved the applicable M.A. learning goals as enumerated in the department's Graduate Assessment Plan, and the review committee's recommendation shall then be subject to revision and final decision by the Departmental Committee, as described further below. The assessment criteria relating to written scholarship read as follows:

1. Articulates, critiques, and elaborates the theories, methods, terminology and approaches to inquiry in Hispanic literary studies and/or Spanish linguistics.
2. Identifies and pursues promising avenues of inquiry, finds and makes use of appropriate bibliography, analyzes literary/cultural works or linguistic evidence, and develops speaking and writing skills.
3. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of Hispanic literatures and/or Spanish linguistics in a historical, socio-cultural and global context.
4. Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
5. Communicates fluently and clearly in Spanish in ways appropriate to the field of study .

A grade of Pass on the portfolio shall certify adequate achievement of those goals, and it will qualify the student to receive the M.A. degree pending completion of all other

requirements. It will disqualify the student, however, from admission to the Spanish Ph.D. program. A grade of High Pass will indicate that the student has met and exceeded standard expectations in these respects by demonstrating a distinct capacity for original analytical, critical and theoretical thought and strong potential for success as a doctoral-level researcher. A grade of High Pass will qualify the student to receive the M.A. degree pending completion of all other requirements, and it will also grant him or her admission to the Spanish Ph.D. program. A student who receives a failing grade on the M.A. portfolio will be required to revise his or her portfolio pieces on the basis of the review committee's feedback before resubmitting them for reevaluation by October 31 of the following semester. He or she must obtain at least a passing grade on the revised portfolio in order to complete the requirements for the M.A. degree.]

Admission to the Ph.D. program shall also require a minimum grade point average of 3.4 in the M.A. program. In general, the objective of the portfolio review shall be to evaluate each student's capacity to design, research and write a doctoral dissertation in the near future. Therefore, portfolio pieces shall not be evaluated primarily in relation to individual course content. Rather, they shall be evaluated jointly, along with the statement on future research (if submitted), as evidence of the student's capacity to present persuasive and fully articulated arguments and to use primary and secondary sources in a way that shows both responsible research and original thinking.

If the three members of the portfolio review committee do not agree unanimously on a portfolio grade, the grade recommended by the majority of committee members shall prevail. Before reaching a final judgment, the committee may consult with other faculty members in the curricular area of the student's primary interest to solicit additional advice regarding the student's potential for doctoral study.

In the event a student does not obtain a High Pass from the portfolio review committee, there will be a thorough discussion and subsequent ratification of the case by the Departmental Committee. If the candidate receives a Pass but two professors are willing to defend the candidate and state that they support his or her entrance into the Ph.D. program, both professors being willing to direct his or 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 must represent one or two of the three areas represented in the portfolio. The student will be obliged to complete his or 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 with whom they believe they may want to work before the M.A. exam. The student should be aware of the possibility that the two professors may work in different fields.

Following the meeting at which the Executive Committee finalizes the portfolio review results, the students' advisors or, in their absence, the chair of the Graduate Studies Committee will inform the students promptly of the committee's decision. Any student who is not admitted to the Ph.D. program through the process described here will not be eligible for admission to the Ph.D. Students on academic probation will not be allowed to participate in the portfolio review process.

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