

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

Department of Hispanic Studies

M.A. Student Handbook

**College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
University of Houston
Houston, Texas**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Hispanic Studies seeks:

- To foster understanding and communication through the study of Spanish languages, literatures, linguistics, and cultures in the age of globalization.
- To provide education and training for students seeking careers drawing on or enhanced by such study.
- To develop established and innovative programs contributing to local, regional, national and international knowledge.

THIS MANUAL A MUST READ GUIDE FOR ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Welcome to the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Houston. We want to assure you start our program with all the information required to make your graduate experience the most successful possible. In this manual you will find both administrative and academic information that will be crucial to start your process at UH. It is **your responsibility** to familiarize yourself with all the steps and procedures required to obtain and maintain good standing in our department, as well as within UH at large. Therefore, we encourage all Graduate Students in the Hispanic Studies Department to go on-line to [the University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies catalogue](#) and read all pertinent sections as soon as possible. *You are responsible for knowing the content of this source.* You should also visit with some frequency the site of the [Graduate Advising in CLASS](#) and explore [Financial Assistant Opportunities](#).

If you are a student who has been admitted **conditionally**, it is your responsibility file a petition for unconditional admission as soon as you have completed whatever the conditional status stipulates (e.g., you have been required to complete certain prerequisites, or to complete a stipulated number of hours with a grade of not less than B, or to post official TOEFL scores).

MASTER OF ARTS IN SPANISH

TIME FRAME

There is a **five-year limit** on M.A. work from the time of the first course counted toward M.A. credit. It is the student's responsibility not to exceed this limit.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

In general, graduate students are expected to be enrolled in **consecutive** long semesters (i.e., at least three hours during fall and spring semesters) until the degree program is completed and the degree is awarded. Students who cannot enroll in each semester **must apply for a leave of absence** to remain in good standing (fill out a general petition form and turn it in to the Graduate Director).

Students must be enrolled for at least 3 hours of credit during the semester they expect to take the M.A. examination, even if they have completed all the course work (see the Graduate Director for the appropriate form).

To be considered a candidate for a degree, students must submit an application for graduation to the Office of Registration and Academic Records, 108 E. Cullen Building. Applications should be filed during the semester in which they plan to graduate. Deadlines for filing the application for graduation are listed in the academic calendar and in the Departmental one. Any student who expects to graduate in each semester must be enrolled for that semester.

Students who entered before Fall 2007 are under the old guidelines unless they elect to follow the new ones and state the intention of doing so immediately. These students should see the Graduate Director regarding correct procedure.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

International students and all types of Graduate Assistants (TA/TF, RA, etc.) must maintain full-time enrollment of at least 9 hours of credit during the semesters in which they are contracted. International students and Graduate Assistants may petition to take only 3 hours during the semester in which they graduate.

Students who receive a Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) may not accept paid positions off campus during the long semesters. Working off campus may result in loss of GTF.

CREDIT TRANSFER

Students may petition to count a maximum of 12 hours of postbaccalaureate credit taken at the University of Houston toward the M.A. provided:

- None of these hours formed part of the prerequisites for admission.
- All of them were taken at the 5000 level or above. The student may petition to transfer a maximum of 9 hours of (only) graduate level coursework from another university. If the student's petition in either case is approved, the beginning of the five-year limit automatically moves backward to the date of the earliest course counted.

CONCENTRATIONS

Before entering the M.A. Program, or as soon as possible thereafter, the student should decide on a particular concentration for the M.A. in Spanish. Concentrations are:

- **Literature** (includes Peninsular, Spanish American, US Hispanic)
- **Spanish linguistics** (includes Sociolinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Formal Linguistics)
- **Spanish linguistics and literature.**

Students will take courses in four areas according to the concentration selected:

- 3 areas in literature and 1 in linguistics (if the student's concentration is literature)
- 3 areas in linguistics and 1 in literature (if the student's concentration is linguistics)
- 2 areas in literature and 2 areas in linguistics (if the student's concentration is literature/linguistics).

Courses' syllabi will indicate the area or areas in which the course can be counted.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

No course with a grade below 2.67 (B-) may be applied toward the degree. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B) for all graduate courses attempted is required for a graduate

degree; failure to maintain this average may result in a warning, probation, or suspension.

A total of 36 hours is required for the M.A. in Spanish, all at the 6000 level or above. Students may elect to write a thesis; if they do so, a maximum of 6 hours of thesis credit may count as part of the 36. A maximum of 6 hours, as well, may be taken in a complementary field if the student first obtains written permission in advance from the Graduate Director.

Students must take the following required hours at the 6000 or 7000 levels in accord with his/her selected concentration:

- Concentration in Literature:
 - Literature (Peninsular, Spanish American, Hispanic Literature of the US): 30
 - Spanish Linguistics: 6
 - Thesis option: 6 hours may be substituted by M.A. Thesis.

- Concentration in Linguistics:
 - Spanish Linguistics (Sociolinguistics, Heritage Lang. Educ, Syntax, etc.): 30
 - Literature: 6
 - Thesis option: 6 hours may be substituted by M.A. Thesis.

- Concentration in Literature and Linguistics:
 - Literature: 18
 - Linguistics: 18
 - Thesis option: 6 hours may be substituted by M.A. Thesis.

REGISTRATION

The Department will offer at least 8 different graduate courses every long semester to allow the student to complete course work in four semesters (three if they decide to develop an M.A. Thesis). However, only full-time students will be able to finish within this span.

RESTRICTED ENROLLMENT COURSES

Special Problem courses (6198, 6298, and 6398) allow the student to develop readings in a specific field of interest under the direction of a faculty member. The student and the faculty member will be required to complete a special form describing the course (see Graduate Director

to obtain this form), which must then be approved by the Chair or Graduate Director. Since the department of Hispanic Studies offers eight or more graduate courses every semester, only academic justifications to conduct a Special Problem course will be approved (schedule problems of students are not considered *academic justifications*). Students will be allowed to take a maximum of six Special Problem hours; three of these may count toward the degree.

Reading and Research hours (7198, 7298, and 7398) allow the student to develop readings and research in a specific field of interest under the direction of a faculty member. The grade option for these courses is S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory). The student and the faculty member will be required to complete a special form describing the course (see Graduate Director to obtain form), which must then be approved by the Chair or Graduate Director. Since the department of Hispanic Studies offers eight or more graduate courses every semester, only academic justifications to conduct a Reading and Research course will be approved (schedule problems of students are not considered *academic justifications*). Students will be allowed to take a maximum of six Reading and Research hours; three of these may count toward the degree.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

By the beginning of the third semester, the student will select a chairperson for their examination committee in accord with the chosen concentration. The student and chairperson together will then select three more members so that one of the following combinations is achieved:

- 3 professors of literature and 1 professor of linguistics (if the student's concentration is literature).
- 3 professors of linguistics and 1 professor of literature (if the student's concentration is linguistics).
- 2 professors of literature and 2 professors of linguistics (if the student's concentration is literature/linguistics).

This committee will oversee the students' written and oral examinations.

EVALUATIONS

PERFORMANCE

Screening Procedure. At the end of each student's first year of coursework at the graduate level, a routine screening procedure will be conducted by the faculty members with whom the student has studied to determine whether the individual is progressing satisfactorily toward the degree objective. The result of this procedure will be communicated in writing to the student.

M.A. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

By the beginning of the semester in which the student wishes to take the M.A. exam (usually the same semester they complete at least 36 hours or, if they have selected the thesis option, 30 hours), they should communicate this intention to both the chairperson of their committee and to the Graduate Director. **Students with incomplete grade(s) will not be allowed to take the M.A. Exam.** The five-hour written exam will be as follows, depending on the concentration selected:

- **Concentration in Literature:**
 - Peninsular Literature: 75 minutes
 - Latin American Literature: 75 minutes
 - Hispanic Literature of the U.S.: 75 minutes
 - 1 area of Spanish Linguistics: 75 minutes
- **Concentration in Linguistics:**
 - Sociolinguistics: 75 minutes
 - Applied Linguistics: 75 minutes
 - Formal Linguistics: 75 minutes
 - 1 area of Literature: 75 minutes
- **Concentration in Literature and Linguistics:**
 - 2 areas of Literature: 150 minutes
 - 2 areas of Spanish Linguistics: 150 minutes
- **Oral Exam** (all students): 1 hour

Students who have participated in the Salamanca Program will take a three-hour comprehensive exam in three different areas of literature or linguistics, or in a combination of lit./ling. (2/1, 1/2).

Students who select the thesis option will take a three-hour comprehensive exam in three different areas of literature or linguistics, or in a combination of lit./ling. (2/1, 1/2).

If the student fails up to two areas of the M.A. Exam, they will have no more than one additional opportunity to retake the whole exam (if they fail only one part, they will have one opportunity to retake just that part).

EXAMINATION DATES

M.A. written exams are usually scheduled in late November and late April; the oral component is scheduled the following week. The student will be examined according to the topic lists of the four areas s/he has selected (see lists below).

M.A. THESIS

The M.A. thesis is optional, but the Department recommends it as a valuable experience for all students intending to proceed to the Ph.D. level. If the student is interested in writing a thesis, they should begin to develop the subject with a faculty member. A thesis committee will be selected by the student immediately after taking the M.A. Examination and will be formed by two Dept. members within the field (one of them to be the thesis director), and one member outside the Dept. Before beginning the thesis, they will be required to write and turn in to their thesis committee chair (with a copy to the Graduate Director) a proposal describing the subject and the sort of research to be undertaken. The student will defend the thesis before the committee no sooner than the end of the first semester of thesis work. (The Department has had some exceptionally fine theses in the Department of which we are very proud, some of which are available in the office of the Department of Hispanic Studies.) **SPAN 6399 and 7399 courses will be equivalent to the 6 hours of master's Thesis required.**

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

The Department conducts summer programs abroad in both Mexico and Spain. Graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of them. The Department is proud to announce a **special program conducted with the University of Salamanca**, Spain, in which the student takes courses at that university during two consecutive summers, and may transfer (only if enrolled in this program) fifteen hours of course work to be counted toward the M.A.

There is a graduate bulletin board just outside the AH 432 where timely information is posted regularly.

APPLYING TO THE PH.D.

Admission to the Ph.D. Program upon completion of the M.A. is not automatic or guaranteed. Students admitted to the M.A. program who wish to continue their studies must apply to the Ph.D. program. For more information on application requirements and deadlines, visit <http://www.uh.edu/class/spanish/graduate/>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Essential information of various kinds is routinely relayed to enrolled graduate students by e-mail. At the time of enrollment, if not before, be sure to turn in an e-mail address to the Graduate Director so that we may add you to the list.

If you have further questions, please contact:

Dr. Paola Arboleda, Graduate Director at parboeda@uh.edu

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