Hispanic Languages and Literature

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Degrees Awarded
M.A. in Hispanic Languages and Literature; M.A. in Teaching Spanish; M.A. in Romance Languages and Literature (Spanish); Ph.D. in Hispanic Languages and Literature

Web Site
http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/hispanic/

Application
https://graduateadmissions.stonybrook.edu/apply/

Description of Hispanic Languages and Literature Program
The Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature, in the College of Arts and Sciences, offers different curricula leading to the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy, and Master of Arts. A candidate for the Ph.D. degree engages in research leading to a dissertation. Part-time study is permitted with graduate courses usually offered during the late afternoon.

Teaching Assistantships (TAs)
The Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature has a yearly allocation of teaching assistantships for its graduate students. Each year, the assistantships are awarded to the most promising applicants.

Teaching assistants are assigned to teach one section of a course each semester. During the first semester of their assistantship, they are required to attend an orientation session and a practicum given by the department in order to provide instruction in the methodology of language teaching. In the performance of their teaching duties, teaching assistants must conform to the program and University regulations regarding examinations, class attendance, textbooks, office hours, grading systems, and syllabi.

Meetings with a supervisor and a coordinator of language courses are regularly scheduled and attendance is mandatory. Written evaluations of each TA’s teaching performance are done periodically by the department. Renewal of assistantships will depend upon compliance with the regulations listed above.

Teaching assistantships are renewable for a total of four years. Students who are ABD (all but dissertation) may be eligible for a fifth year assistantship. Renewal is subject to passing the qualifying examination and satisfactory course grades and teaching. There is a limited opportunity for summer teaching at an appropriate stipend. Other fellowships, loans, and work-study programs are available.

Several W. Burghardt Turner fellowships are awarded each year to promising minority students who hold American citizenship.

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Hispanic Languages and Literature
Besides filing the official graduate application forms, the prospective student must provide transcripts covering all previous college-level studies. This usually includes a bachelor’s degree with a major in Spanish, three letters of reference, and a sample of written work (an essay or term paper). GRE scores, while not required, are taken into consideration. The department encourages students to take it, but all applicants with strong academic records will be considered for admission.

International applicants must score at least 90 on the Internet-Based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL IBT) with a minimum score of 22 on each of the four subsections (Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing) and must show that they have the necessary funds to finance their education (living expenses plus tuition). It is strongly recommended that applicants take the TOEFL exam in their country of origin. An applicant whose qualifications seem deficient may be admitted on a part-time basis as a Graduate School special student (GSP) through the School of Professional Development.

All doctoral students and students with a TA/GA stipend whose native language is not English must also demonstrate a sufficient level of English-speaking proficiency. For information on the minimum scores required on the spoken English portion of the TOEFL and IELTS please see the following information at the Graduate School website: http://grad.stonybrook.edu/ProspectiveStudents/faq.shtml#scores”.

Requirements for Hispanic Languages and Literature Program
Before registering for each semester, students should consult with the graduate program director to schedule an approved combination of courses. All new M.A. or Ph.D. students are required to meet with the graduate program director during the first week of classes in order to fill out information sheets. Normally, for the M.A., three or four semesters of full-time study are required. For the Ph.D., the number of semesters necessary before advancement to candidacy varies (see below). A minimum of two consecutive semesters of full-time graduate study in residence
is required for the Ph.D. It is recommended that the number of Independent Studies not exceed two. However, this is determined on an individual level.

Undergraduate courses may also be considered as part of a full-time course load, but do not count toward a graduate degree. Since a tuition waiver does not cover undergraduate courses, students must pay for such courses. Graduate reading proficiency courses (FRN 500, ITL 500, POR 500) fulfill the language requirement and count toward a full-time course load but not toward a graduate degree. According to University requirements, a minimum of a B average must be maintained in all graduate coursework. After taking the practicum (SPN 691), students may choose to enroll in SPN 693 as part of a required 12-credit load until they reach the point where their full-time credit load is nine credits. Equivalent courses taken at other universities may be certified as fulfilling specific required courses in this department, but only six graduate course credits of any kind may be transferred.

M.A. in Hispanic Languages and Literature

Offering courses in Spanish on the languages and cultures of Latin America, Spain, and the Latinx US, the Hispanic Languages and Literature MA broadens students’ opportunities for professional and academic success. In our increasingly global and multicultural society, many career opportunities exist for people with advanced Spanish language skills and cultural competence. Students can choose to take classes full-time or part-time and to take online classes in Summer and Winter.

Fall Deadlines: Domestic Applicants - July 1st; International Applicants - April 15th

Spring Deadlines: Domestic and International Applicants: November 15th

The curriculum leading to the Master of Arts degree may be terminal or may be combined with the PhD program. There is a general requirement of 30 graduate credit hours.

Students must take a minimum of 4 courses in Spanish and Latin American Literature and Culture at the 500 level and up to 5 courses among the remaining SPN 500 level courses. Students interested in taking SPN 600 level courses or a graduate course from another department may do so with permission from the director of graduate studies.

After completion of 27 graduate credit hours, a student must complete a thesis project equivalent to 3 graduate credit hours (SPN 588). The M.A. thesis is written under the supervision of a member of the graduate faculty with the advice of a second reader. The M.A. thesis does not require an oral defense. Regulations regarding the writing of the M.A. thesis are the same as those applicable to the Ph.D. dissertation. These regulations are contained in the Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations, available on the Graduate School Web site.

Students working on a part-time basis should complete all requirements within five years after their first regular graduate registration.

M.A. in Hispanic Languages and Literature with a Concentration in Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition

Students seeking specific tools to improve their command of the language, their teaching strategies in the classroom, and pedagogical expertise to advise schools about second language acquisition, heritage speakers and Spanish-English bilingual contexts, can choose the Concentration in Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition. There is a general requirement of 30 graduate credit hours.

Required courses:

1. a minimum of two courses in Spanish or Latin American Literature and Culture at the 500 level
2. SPN 506: Bilingualism
3. SPN 513: Spanish as Second Language Acquisition
4. SPN 691 Practicum in the Teaching of Spanish Language
5. 4 courses among the remaining SPN 500 level

After completion of 27 graduate credit hours, a student must complete a thesis project equivalent to 3 graduate credit hours (SPN 588). Students working on a part-time basis should complete all requirements within five years after their first regular graduate registration.

M.A. in Romance Languages

The M.A. in Romance Languages is offered for students who wish to follow a traditional M.A. Program with the intention of possibly proceeding toward further study on the Ph.D. level. Its flexibility allows students to design a curriculum that includes studies in literature, linguistics, or cultural studies in a combination of two Romance languages. This M.A. gives the students a choice of writing a Master’s Thesis or passing a Comprehensive Examination to qualify for the degree. For further information contact the Department of European Languages.

M.A. in Teaching Spanish

The Master of Arts in Teaching Spanish is offered in conjunction with the School of Professional Development (SPD), and the Professional Education Program (PEP). This degree is designed as a course of study leading to New York State certification for teaching Spanish in secondary schools, grades 7-12. The M.A.T. normally entails a minimum of three semesters of study including courses on literature, linguistics and culture, professional education courses, and a supervised student teaching experience. In order to be eligible for admission to the M.A.T. in Spanish program, students must have completed an academic major in Spanish or its equivalent with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 overall in a bachelor’s degree program.
The program consists of 44 required credits of course work: a minimum of 29 credits of education course work and 15 credits in the Spanish content area. Students select their five Spanish content area courses in consultation with the Graduate Director. Teacher candidates are also required to participate in 100 hours of field experience prior to their student teaching placement. A full description of the education courses and field experience may be found in this bulletin under the School of Professional Development.

Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. degree is the highest teaching and research degree offered by the University. The Ph.D. prepares the recipient for an academic career at the level of the four-year College and/or research university, or for other careers in humanistic study, research, and writing. The entering graduate student who is considering working toward a Ph.D. should immediately consult with the graduate director to plan a broad program of reading and coursework in all areas offered by the department.

The total number of required credits for the Ph.D. degree is usually 48 (16 courses). These 16 courses include the 12 general requirements specified below and 4 courses of the student’s choosing. Each student is also required to take at least one graduate-level course outside of the department (this course may, upon consultation with the graduate program director, be used to satisfy one of the general requirements). While this sets a general standard for Ph.D. coursework, each student’s actual plan of study will continue to be developed on an individual basis. The exact number and type of required courses will be determined based on the student’s transcript and performance during his or her first semester(s) at Stony Brook. For example, exemptions from particular subareas may be granted depending on the student’s prior study, while in cases of less-than-adequate preparation in any period of Peninsular or Latin American literature (which will vary in the cases of students coming from Spanish, Latin American, or North American universities) the student will be required to take additional coursework.

Required Courses

A. Unless exempted, teaching assistants are required to take SPN 691, Practicum in the Teaching of Spanish Language.

B. Theory/Applied Theory (a minimum of three courses), SPN 609 Literary Theory, Applied Theory (two courses)

Note: Courses qualify as applied theory if approximately 50 percent of the course material is drawn from critical and/or theoretical texts.

C. General Literary Corpus (6 courses)

Note: A minimum of one course from each subarea to be tested in the comprehensive examination. Courses from area B (above) may be included, depending on content, but no one course may be used to satisfy both requirements B and C.

D. Special Field (2 seminars)

These courses may be taken as independent studies, but generally only after the student has fulfilled requirements A, B, and C. The goal of these courses is to prepare papers for presentation and publication that may also serve as the basis for part of the thesis.

Sample of a four-year study plan for the Ph.D.:

1st year: Fall, 12 credits (including SPN 691); Spring, 12 credits (including SPN 693)

2nd year: Fall, 9 credits; Spring, 9 credits

3rd year: Fall, 6 credits; Spring, comprehensive exam

4th year: Fall and Spring, thesis

Language Requirements

In addition to proficiency in Spanish and English, the Ph.D. student must demonstrate a reading knowledge of two languages among French, Latin, Portuguese, Italian, German, Galician, Catalan, Basque and another language if related to the field chosen for the dissertation. The student is urged to demonstrate a reading knowledge of this language by the beginning of his or her second year of full-time study; he or she is required to fulfill both language requirements prior to being advanced to candidacy. A language requirement may be fulfilled by (1) passing the Princeton Graduate School Foreign Language Test (GSFLT), (2) successful completion (grade of B or higher) of a graduate reading course or regular graduate course in the foreign language, or (3) passing a special reading examination administered under the supervision of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature. If option three is chosen, the student should consult with the graduate program director, who, along with the department chairperson, will designate an appropriate examiner. Texts will be assigned for the examination, during which a dictionary may be used for the translation of sight passages.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination is an instrument designed to give the entire faculty of the department an opportunity to evaluate the student’s academic abilities and promise. The exam seeks to assess the student’s sensitivity to literature, capacity to deal critically with the text, and ability to express him- or herself cogently. Elaborate bibliographical information regarding the texts, while not discouraged, is not required.

The qualifying examination is only offered once a year, at the beginning of the Fall semester. Students who wish to be confirmed as Ph.D. students must take and pass the qualifying examination (1) at the beginning of their third semester if they enter the program with a BA or MA in Spanish in the Fall; (2) at the beginning of their fourth semester if they enter with a BA in the Spring; (3) at the beginning of their second semester if they enter with and M.A. or its equivalent in the Spring.

The department selects six texts and submits the list to the student not later than four months before the exam. It consists of (1) six hours of written work; the student answers four of six questions, omitting the one that he or she has selected for the oral presentation, each response
is expected to be a minimum of four typed, double spaced pages, at least two of the responses must be written in Spanish, and (2) an oral presentation of some 20 minutes on the selected text; notes may be used, but the student should not read from a text. The oral presentation must be given in Spanish. Following the presentation, the faculty will ask questions.

Students who pass the qualifying exam are automatically admitted to the Ph.D. program. Students who do not pass the exam will be allowed to finish their master’s degree but will not be permitted to advance to the Ph.D. program. Students are informed of the results of the exam only after all students have finished the oral portion of the exam. Traditionally, the chairperson or the graduate program director informs students privately about the exam results, and later meets with each student in order to discuss the results.

Procedure for Renewing Teaching Assistantships

All teaching assistants (M.A., Ph.D.) are evaluated by the department as a whole to determine whether their teaching assistantships will be continued during the second year. This evaluation will be conducted according to the following criteria, which include but go beyond the strict grade point average: (1) previous intellectual experience, both general and in the area of Hispanism: breadth of courses taken in related fields, and other features that can help to determine the quality of each student. If the recent experience (i.e., the work done while at Stony Brook) is significantly better or worse than the student’s previous experience, this shall be taken into consideration; (2) serious research capacity of each student as demonstrated by papers written for courses; (3) theoretical capacity of each student, as demonstrated by papers written for courses; (4) writing and speaking ability in the Spanish language; and (5) quality of each student as a teaching assistant.

The graduate committee receives evaluations from each faculty member who has worked with the student. The committee may also reread term papers written for courses. Students holding Incompletes will inevitably find themselves at a disadvantage in the process of evaluation.

Third and fourth year support for all students will be automatic provided that students remain in good academic standing and have received adequate written reviews of their teaching.

Comprehensive Examination

During their fifth semester in the PhD program, all full-time graduate students will select a Comprehensive Exam committee of three faculty members from the department. By the sixth week of the fifth semester, these students must file a Comprehensive Exam Committee Form with the Director of Graduate Studies. This form will contain the names and signatures of the faculty who have agreed to serve on the student’s Comprehensive Exam Committee. The student’s dissertation advisor must be among the members in this exam committee. Once the Comprehensive Exam Committee Form has been submitted, any changes to this committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Scope and timing of the Exam

During the sixth semester in the program all full-time doctoral students take the Comprehensive Examination. In close consultation with the members of their Comprehensive Exam Committee the student will define four thematic text-clusters. Each of these text-clusters will explore a specific topic, genre, debate, problematic, or issue within a research area in our discipline and/or its connections to other academic fields. The preparation of these text-clusters is an exercise designed to develop each student’s specific research interests and serve as preparation work towards their dissertation. The exam should also be considered a fundamental step in the preparation of a teaching portfolio for the student. Thus each cluster will also contain the main thematic threads to develop a proto-syllabus for a course. The text-clusters will be organized according to the following guidelines:

1) The primary specialization cluster will focus on the main area of concern for the student’s dissertation research. This cluster will consist of no fewer than 20 items between primary sources, theory, and criticism.

2) Each of the three secondary clusters will consist of no fewer than 10 primary and 4 theoretical and critical texts.

3) Both the primary and each of the secondary clusters must include an introduction (of at least one page and a maximum of two pages) articulating the main critical issues addressed in it. This introduction must also explain why the student has selected a particular combination of areas, genres, theories, and periods.

4) Each of the four clusters must also contain a set of at least three questions that invite reflection on the central issues and approaches proposed in the cluster.

Cluster preparation:

The primary texts in each of the four clusters can include literature, film, art, and other cultural objects or practices. The theoretical and critical bibliography should be selected with relevance to the topic. Creative thinking about sources is encouraged: “literary” texts can be used as “secondary” sources to think about a topic (for example, Borges’s short story “Pierre Menard” for a topic related to issues of reading and interpretation, the Historia verdadera de la conquista de Nueva España as performed theory debating, for example, the links between legal, testimonial, and fictional writing). Correspondingly, theoretical texts can be used as primary texts (for example, in a cluster about film studies in the Hispanic world, or La ciudad letrada as a post-chronicle).

Clusters may be based on one literary genre and/or geographical/temporal area of study (e.g., “Novels of the Spanish Civil War,” Modernista poetry) but multi-genre/ transnational/ transatlantic/ transhistorical approaches and connections are required in at least 2 of the 4 clusters (for example, “Post-dictatorship transatlantic texts”, which could include novels, films, art, and legal writing from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Spain and/or other countries in addition to sites such as museums, monuments, “lugares de la memoria”, etc.).

Text-clusters should engage with the geographic and temporal breadth of Latin American/Iberian/Latino cultures:
Every cluster should include a mix of canonical and non-canonical texts.

If the primary thematic focus of the clusters is on modern and contemporary issues, at least two of the clusters should also include pre-modern or early-modern works, and vice-versa. This aspect can be addressed in a trans-historical manner, showing connections between pre-modern and modern/contemporary issues.

If the primary thematic focus of the clusters is on Latin America, at least two of them should also include a comparative Iberian aspect, and vice-versa.

The oral exam:
The date for the exam should be agreed on with the Committee at least one month prior. Two weeks before the exam, the student will hand in a final draft of her or his four text-clusters to the Comprehensive Exam Committee. The exam will consist of a 10-minute presentation of the primary cluster and a five-minute presentation for each of the three secondary clusters. Each presentation will be followed by 30 minutes of questions and suggestions from the faculty on the Exam Committee. The primary cluster presentation should describe the underlying rationale connecting the four clusters, foregrounding the disciplinary, interdisciplinary and theoretical dimensions of the student's research. All the presentations should address the issues that provide coherence for the cluster, describe the main issues at work in the texts, the way the existing critical/theoretical bibliography addresses these issues, and formulate questions that need to be explored within that topic and those texts. The Exam will be conducted in Spanish and English. Upon successful completion of the exam and the approval of the dissertation proposal students will be granted ABD status.

Dissertation Proposal
Following successful completion of their Comprehensive Examination, students will work closely with the Dissertation Advisor (and other members of their Dissertation Committee as appropriate) on completing their dissertation proposal. The Advisor will approve the final draft, which will then be submitted to the full committee for approval. The deadline for submission is a month after having passed the Comprehensive Examination. The Dissertation Committee will then move to approve the proposal or to suggest modifications and enhancements. After the approval of the dissertation proposal students will be granted ABD status.

The proposal should be composed of three parts: (1) an introduction and description of the project consisting of approximately 15-20 pages commenting on the methodology, relevance to the field (2); an overview of each of the proposed chapters; (3) a detailed but selected bibliography of primary and critical sources. A copy of the proposal containing the signatures of the dissertation committee should also be forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Dissertation Committee
The student forms a dissertation committee with the advice of the graduate program director. This committee reviews the prospectus, the open draft, and the final draft of the dissertation. There will normally be five members: a dissertation director, who will be the first reader; a second reader; and three others (one of whom must be from outside the department). The dissertation director and student will arrange a date and a time for the defense with the committee and will take care of all necessary paperwork. A faculty member other than the dissertation director will preside as chairperson at the oral defense.

Dissertation
The initial draft of the dissertation is given first to the director of the dissertation (or the director and co-director as the case may be). After the approval of the director(s), each member of the dissertation committee should be provided with his or her own corrected draft of the dissertation and given at least one month to read it and make comments. The length of the dissertation should be a minimum of 225 pages, including notes and bibliography. One month prior to the defense, the candidate must submit the dissertation abstract to both the Graduate Director (who will approve it) and the Graduate School. The abstract is to be written in English and should not exceed 350 words. The abstract should consist of a short statement of the student’s research, a brief exposition of the methods and procedures employed in gathering data, and a condensed summary of the dissertation’s conclusion.

When the dissertation is nearing completion, the director of the dissertation and the student will jointly agree on a date for the defense. The candidate and/or the director will inform in writing the members of the defense committee, the graduate program director, and the graduate secretary of the defense date. Candidates should be aware that the department will not ordinarily reimburse outside readers for their travel to the defense or the cost of postage and other expenses related to the defense.

The defense will consist of two parts. The first part, lasting normally about 30 minutes, consists of an oral presentation of the dissertation. The public is welcome to this portion of the defense. Following the presentation, each member of the examining committee will have an opportunity to ask questions and make final suggestions regarding the dissertation. The candidate shall bring a final draft of the dissertation to the defense, not the final copy to be carried subsequently to the Graduate School, in case the committee suggests last minute changes. The candidate should also bring a draft of the dissertation abstract to the defense.

Following the dissertation period, the candidate and any others not on the dissertation committee will be asked to leave the room while deliberations are made. If all members agree to accept the dissertation, they will sign the final version of the sign-off sheet or signature sheet, which the candidate will bring to the defense (together with the appropriate pen, which must use black permanent ink). This document must also be shown to the graduate secretary of the department so that the “Clearance for Graduation” form may be typed and forwarded to the Graduate School.

All members of the department, including graduate students, should be notified at least four weeks prior to the date and time of the public defense.
Sample Four-Year Study Timeline for PhD:

1st year:
- 1st Semester: 12 credits (including SPN 693)*
- 2nd Semester: 12 credits (including SPN 693)*

2nd year:
- 3rd Semester: 9 credits
- 4th Semester: 9 credits

3rd year:
- 5th Semester: 3 credits course work, 6 credits of preparation for comprehensive exam
- By the 6th week of 5th Semester: Comprehensive Exam Committee Form completed
- 6th Semester: Comprehensive Examination. Student selects Dissertation Committee.

4th year: Dissertation
- Fourth week of 7th Semester: Proposal Submitted to Dissertation Committee.

*12 credits for students entering with a B.A. or equivalent; 9 credits for students entering with an M.A. or equivalent. Students without M.A. take 693 during both semesters of their first year.

Faculty of Hispanic Languages and Literature Program

Professors


De la Campa, Román, Emeritus, Ph.D., 1976, University of Minnesota: Latin American and Caribbean literature, contemporary critical theory.

Read, Malcolm K., Emeritus, Ph.D., 1978, University of Wales: Sociology of literature, literary theory, marxism and psychoanalysis.

Lastra, Pedro, Emeritus, Ph.D., 1967, Universidad de Chile: Modern and contemporary Spanish-American literature.

Vasvari, Louise, Emeritus, Ph.D., 1969, University of California, Berkeley: Medieval literature, translation theory; literature and linguistics, romance philology.

Associate Professors

Flesler, Daniela, Ph.D., 2001, Tulane University: Contemporary Spanish literature, postcolonial theory, cultural studies.


Pérez-Melgosa, Adrián, Ph.D., 1995, University of Rochester: Film and literature in the Americas, cultural studies, film studies.

McKenna, James B., Emeritus, Ph.D., 1965, Harvard University: 20th-century Hispanic culture and literature.

Pierce, Joseph M., Ph.D., University of Texas, Austin, 19th and early 20th-century Latin American literature, queer theory, kinship studies.

Uriarte, Javier, Ph.D. 2012, New York University: 19th century Latin American literature and culture; travel writing, war and state-sponsored violence.


Vialette, Aurelie, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 19th century Iberian Cultures, Working class Culture, Catalan Studies, Gender Studies, Transatlantic Studies (Mexico, the Philippines).

Assistant Professor
Loffredo, Fernando, Ph.D., 2010: History of Art, University of Naples Federico II: Spanish and Latin American Visual Culture
Director of the Spanish Language Program and Senior Lecturer

Lecturers

Colón, Aura, MA, University of Puerto Rico and Stony Brook: Caribbean and Latin American Literature, Transatlantic Studies, Migration
Corniel, Zaida, Ph.D., 2015, Stony Brook University: Caribbean literature and culture, Tourism Studies, Theater.
Davidiak, Elena, Ph.D., 2010, University of Iowa: Spanish Linguistics, bilingualism and multilingualism, language acquisition.

Number of teaching, graduate, and research assistants, Fall 2018: 17

- Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching
- Recipient of the State University Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Research
- Comparative Literature
- Women and Gender Studies
- Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Affiliated Faculty, Center for the Study of Inequalities, Social Justice and Policy

NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.