WELCOME!

Welcome to the Master of Arts degree in Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Cal State University, Los Angeles.

The Graduate program is a transformative experience that builds upon your undergraduate education. Graduate students become critical thinkers, independent researchers, and, ultimately, experts in their chose fields.

Cal State LA graduate program is designed to push you to achieve your academic and personal ambitions, support you through a diverse community of creative and highly skilled faculty and fellow graduate students, and provide you with the skills and knowledge to help you succeed in today’s knowledge-based world. Our commitment to academic rigor assures that you will be challenged by knowledgeable world-class professors, demanding coursework, and practical learning opportunities in the field of Spanish.

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures is committed to assisting you along your educational pathway and will work with you to accomplish your educational goals. I invite you to review this handbook, and if you have any questions along your academic career goals, please feel free to contact the Graduate Advisor and staff in the department.

Sachiko Matsunaga, Ph.D.
Chair, Modern Languages and Literatures
INTRODUCTION

This handbook contains information about important policies and procedures for graduate students in the SPAN MA, and tips for success in your accomplishing your degree.

The information contained in this handbook does not supersede information, policies or procedures contained in the University Catalog and Graduate Student Handbook, which are the official documents for the University. Students are responsible for reading all three thoroughly. The University and College may also have additional policies and procedures; always seek advisement from the department Graduate Advisor.

All official communication from the University, College, and/or Department to students will be sent to the student’s assigned calstatela.edu email address. Please check your calstatela.edu email address on a regular basis.
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The University Catalog describes the general graduate requirements as well as the details of the Spanish M.A. program. This document is intended to supplement the catalog and does not supersede it in any way. For all official rules and requirements, please consult the current catalog at http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/.

Admission Requirements
Generally, applicants must have a baccalaureate in Spanish. A 2.75 GPA in the last 90 semester units and a 3.0 GPA in Upper Division Spanish courses are required. Students who do not meet the grade point requirements may be admitted by special action (see University Catalog and consult the Department Graduate Advisor). Applicants whose undergraduate major was not in Spanish, as appropriate, must consult the department Graduate Advisor in order to determine prerequisites or their equivalents. Prerequisites for applicants with a B.A. not in Spanish usually consist of a minimum of four upper-division courses including SPAN 3050, SPAN 4010, one course on Spanish American Literature and one course on Spanish (Peninsular) Literature.

Application for Admission
All applicants must apply to the University online at http://www.calstatela.edu/admissions. THIS REQUIREMENT MUST BE MET WHETHER THE CANDIDATE IS A GRADUATE OF CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES OR OF ANOTHER INSTITUTION. In addition to the University application, a departmental application is required, and an oral proficiency interview may be required. This application may be obtained at http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/mld/gradfrenchspanish.php (under II. Application for Admission), in the department office (KH D1054), or requested by telephone (323) 343-4230.

Program Description
The M.A. degree in Spanish requires successful completion of a minimum of 33 semester units of course work plus a comprehensive examination. Spanish candidates must complete a minimum of 21 units of 5000 level course work. Individual programs are prepared in consultation with the Department Graduate Advisor. Students who have been admitted to the University and have submitted the departmental application should make an appointment with the Department Graduate Advisor as soon as possible.

The M.A. program in Spanish at Cal State Los Angeles is intended to provide a basic, yet comprehensive preparation that will meet the needs of students for whom the M.A. will be a terminal degree, and for those wishing to pursue a doctorate. Questions on the M.A. comprehensive examination in Spanish will be based on the Reading List that is in place at the time the exam is taken. All the works on the Reading List are governed by the guidelines found below. In cases where the term "selections" appears on the Reading List without qualification, it is expected that students will have read sufficient material by the author to enable them to discuss him/her in accordance with the guidelines.

1. Questions on literary topics are designed to allow students to demonstrate the following with respect to the selections read:
a. A familiarity with the work in question: themes and their development; style; relevant narrative, theatrical or poetic techniques, etc.

b. An awareness of ways in which the work is representative of its author.

c. An ability to relate the work and author to the period or literary movement with which they are commonly associated.

2. Questions on linguistics are designed to allow students to demonstrate the following:
An awareness of (1) the ways in which Spanish varies geographically and sociologically (i.e., its main “diatopic” and “diastratic” varieties) and (2) main concepts studied in sociolinguistic variation, including (but not limited to) those of a sociolinguistic variable, social factors conditioning variation and phenomena identified by the study of languages in contact.

The examination in Spanish will be administered over three days, on Fridays or Saturdays* of the 5th, 6th and 7th weeks of the Spring semester. **Topics included will deal with Spanish (Peninsular) literature, Spanish American Literature, and Sociolinguistics.** CANDIDATES MUST APPLY TO TAKE THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND ENROLL IN SPAN 5960 BY THE ADD DEADLINE OF THE SEMESTER IN WHICH THEY INTEND TO SIT FOR THE EXAMINATION. **The exam schedule will be posted online (“Announcements” section of the department website) and at the department office.**

**Eligibility to take the Comprehensive Examination:**
In order to be eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination for the first time, a student may not have more than one outstanding class or “Incomplete” on his/her M.A. program.

Moreover,
(a) all courses that expired BEFORE the semester in which the exam is taken must be validated BEFORE the comprehensive exam is attempted;
(b) courses that are expiring DURING the semester in which the exam is taken do not need to be validated if the student passes the exam;
(c) if a student fails the exam on that attempt and further courses expire, rules a and b will be reapplied for subsequent attempts.

In order to be eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination for a second or third time, a student must have no outstanding courses or “incompletes” on his/her M.A. program.

Once candidates have registered in SPAN 5960, **not attending any part of the comprehensive examination equals one overall failed attempt** unless they drop SPAN 5960 before the first part of the exam takes place. If candidates do not attend due to a serious emergency, they will be required to present a valid and clearly dated medical or legal document in order to avoid having the attempt counted.

**Structure of the Spanish Comprehensive Examination**
The various sections of the examination will be administered on each day according to the posted schedule. There will be a break on each day as appropriate. **Students must remember not to write their name on the bluebooks (used or not), only the title of the exam segment.**

**Literature:**
Literature examinations will be each 135 minutes in length. Three questions (out of five) on each examination to be answered.
**Linguistics:**
One linguistics examination, each 135 minutes in length on synchronic linguistics. Three questions (out of five) on the examination to be answered.

*Subject to change. Check with Department.*

Each exam receives a grade of Pass or Fail. Exams are graded independently by two readers, and must receive the equivalent of a “B” to pass. If the grades assigned by the two readers (who do not consult with each other in the process) do not coincide, a third reader is asked to break the tie.

Candidates will be notified of the results by the end of the term in which they took the exam. Failing candidates have the right to request a meeting with the Department Chair and/or his/her designee in order to be informed of the reasons for failing.

Candidates in Spanish must pass all five parts in order to pass the comprehensive examination. If three or four parts are passed, the candidate will be required to retake only the part(s) failed (one or two). All parts repeated must be passed in order to pass the examination. A maximum of three attempts are allowed. Candidates are reminded that courses in M.A. programs expire after seven years.

Students disqualified from a M.A. program may not reapply to the same program. See University Catalog.

**ATTN:** Questions must be answered in Spanish in essay format. Arguments must be presented in an organized progression of ideas. Correct sentence structure, orthography, and vocabulary are expected to obtain a passing grade.

A sample exam can be found on the web at: http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Department%20of%20Modern%20Languagess%20and%20Literatures/span_ma_comp_exam_info_fall2016.pdf

**ATTN:** The Historical Linguistics course (SPAN 501) is NO longer a requirement for graduate students who started their program under the quarter system. They can either change the catalog year (to semesters), or do a course substitution (with another 5000-level course).

Students who have already taken the comp. exam and failed the Historical Linguistics portion will have to register for it again. If the only section they failed is Historical Linguistics next time they register they will automatically get a Pass. If they also failed other sections they will not have to take the exam on Historical Linguistics, but will have to retake any other failed exams. This is not retroactive. **Please notice:** under semesters emphases or options do not longer apply to the SPAN M.A. This policy also applies to students who started under the quarter system, but will graduate in the semester system.
Reapplying to the SPAN MA: Students who have lost status may reapply to the SPAN MA as long as they meet admission requirements and have not been disqualified according to University Policy. The program policies and procedures may have changed in the meantime. Students are entirely responsible for familiarizing themselves with any changes. Additional coursework may be required (see course expiration policy below and information on elimination of Historical Linguistics course above).

Other Requirements

- All students must pass the Writing Proficiency Examination in English (UNIV 4000) (or comply with an equivalent requisite according to University policy) within the first semester of admission. See the Schedule of Classes for further information and examination dates.

- The approved M.A. program must be completed within seven years, with a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher. Failure to sustain a 3.0 average will result in probation and eventual disqualification from the Master's program. The GPA must be raised to 3.0 after completion of two semesters in residence or 12 semester units, whichever comes later. Failure to meet this requirement will result in disqualification.

- Course Expiration: Since courses expire after 7 years, students should complete all course work within four years in order to have three chances to take the Comprehensive Examination if needed.

- Students whose GPA in all courses taken after becoming classified or conditionally classified falls below 3.0 may be subject to probation or disqualification, using the same guidelines as given above. The recommendation to be placed on probation in this circumstance may be initiated by the department or the Associate Dean.

- Students who fall more than 9 grade points below 3.0 are subject to immediate disqualification, in accordance with University policy. It is most important for graduate students to understand that any WU received in a course (Unauthorized Withdrawal) is counted immediately as an F for the purposes of grade point calculation. The same is true for a grade of I (Incomplete) that is past the one-year limit. Incomplete grades become equivalent to an F after one year if they are not corrected, or if the student has not been approved for an extension through the Office of the Associate Dean of Arts & Letters. The instructor involved, the department chair and the graduate dean must approve extensions of incompletes. An Unauthorized Withdrawal or an Incomplete that is past the limit will drop three grade points per unit of enrollment.

- All applicants, regardless of citizenship, whose preparatory education was principally in a language other than English must demonstrate competence in English. Those who do not possess a bachelor's degree from a postsecondary institution where English is the principal language of instruction must receive a minimum score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). For further information regarding this requirement, consult the University catalog.
GENERAL INFORMATION
Appointment is possible during the first semester of graduate study or any other semester afterwards. The usual assignment is one course per semester. Appointments may be renewed for a total of three semesters if the student demonstrates competence as a teacher and makes adequate progress toward completion of the Master's degree. An appointment for a fourth semester may be made only when extraordinary circumstances warrant: the extension must be in the best interests of the Department; the student must have demonstrated sufficient ability as a teacher to merit such an extension. The request for an extension is by petition to the Department Chair.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE
The applicant must submit to the Department Chair an "Application for Appointment as a Graduate Teaching Associate in Spanish" and three letters of recommendation from appropriate individuals. It is strongly recommended to include letters from individuals familiar with the student's teaching abilities or teaching potential. Those students who receive a favorable recommendation from the Department Chair will be notified of the next step in the appointment process.

ELIGIBILITY
M.A. candidates in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures must meet the following minimum qualifications for appointment or reappointment as a Graduate Teaching Associate:

a) Classified graduate standing.
b) G.P.A. of 3.5 in the language in question.
c) Current enrollment in a course that appears on the student's approved graduate program. A course previously taken for which a grade of "I" was assigned does not meet this requirement.
d) The student must either complete a 3-unit semester course on language teaching methodology with a grade of B or better, or attend for a semester a 1000 or 2000 level class taught by a full-time member of the faculty, or an appropriately qualified part-time faculty member. The student is normally assigned to teach a minimum of two 30-minute segments of the class. The faculty member shall supervise all student teaching and submit a written evaluation of the GTA's teaching performance in the segment(s) to the Department Chair. This requirement may be waived for students who have been full time teachers of the language at the secondary school level for at least two years, and receive a favorable teaching recommendation from their supervisor.

e) In cases where the Appointments Committee judges instructional performance to be marginal, a GTA may retake ML 4960 or equivalent in order to be reconsidered for teaching assignment.
f) Failure of the M.A. comprehensive examination renders a student ineligible for reassignment as a GTA.
g) Reassignment as a GTA is contingent upon satisfactory instructional performance as measured by student evaluations, class visitation reports of the GTA supervisor done at appropriate time, et cetera.

If a student fails to maintain the eligibility requirements listed above, or withdraws from the University, his/her appointment will be terminated.

For further information, contact the Chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at (323) 343-4230 or write to:

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Attn: Department Chair
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive, KH D1054
Los Angeles, CA 90032-8112
Times to Remember

(A) During the first semester in which you are enrolled, you must take the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE). If acceptable according to University policy, a Writing Intensive CSULA undergraduate course may fulfill this requirement.

(B) Advancement to Candidacy—after completing 9 semester units within your degree program, you should request to Advance to Candidacy. The Advancement to Candidacy Review is an opportunity to determine if the program is a good match for the student’s interests, abilities, goals, and performance. It is a moment, early in a student's program of study, when the student can decide whether or not he/she should continue in the program. It is also a moment when the department reaches a similar determination.

To be Advanced to Candidacy, you must meet the following criteria:
1. You must be Classified status (i.e., have an approved program on file in the Associate Dean’s office). Conditional students cannot apply to Advance to Candidacy;
2. You must have satisfied the GWAR by taking and passing the WPE or satisfying this requirement using the comparable routes explained above; and
3. You must have completed a minimum of 9 semester units from an approved program with 3.0 or higher GPA with no outstanding Incompletes;
4. You must attempt to advance before completing 18 semester units.

When appropriate, the graduate advisor might suggest that you visit the writing center, take a writing class, or enroll in other courses relevant to your needs. These classes could address either developmental or professional needs.

Remember, Advancement to Candidacy is not automatic. In some cases, the department may decide not to advance you to candidacy. In such a case, the department may choose to end your tenure in the program, or may specify conditions for future advancement.

(C) As you near completion of your program: In order to graduate, you must apply one semester before your expected completion of requirements. See the Schedule of Classes for dates. You are responsible for keeping track of all dates and meeting all deadlines that pertain to your program of study.

(D) Students who stop attending for more than one semester must first submit an official leave of absence to avoid losing continuing status

Reminder on Comprehensive Examinations

“A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking and demonstrate mastery of the
subject matter. The results of the examination evidences independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis and accuracy of documentation.”

- The Educational Policy Committee

The comprehensive examination is offered in Spring semester only. **Students who choose to drop 5960 must do so before the first exam segment takes place or it will count as an overall “fail.”**

**Failure.** It is University policy that if the student fails a component of the exam, the student will have to wait until the next cycle to take that component of the exam again. If the student fails any section three times, he/she will not be allowed to retake the examination, and thus will not successfully complete the MA.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why am I a “conditionally admitted" student?
Many graduate students we invite to study in this department are “conditionally admitted.” This simply means that the faculty assessing your academic records have required additional, preparatory coursework specific to your stated degree objective. This is designed to prepare you for success in graduate (5000-level) seminars. Upon completion of this prerequisite coursework, with a GPA of 3.0 or above, you will have the opportunity to become a “classified” graduate student.

2. May any of the courses I took as an undergraduate count towards my M.A.?
In some cases an upper division course you took may count on your conditional program, if it applies well to your course of study. Also, some 4000-level courses taken after admission to the M.A. program may count as elective credit, if pre-approved by the Graduate Advisor. However, in almost all cases, undergraduate units may not substitute for 5000-level graduate seminars or coursework.

3. May I take graduate classes from other Departments?
Only with the prior approval of the Graduate Advisor, up to 6 units can be taken from other programs at Cal State LA.

4. May I receive graduate program credit for graduate courses taken at another school?
It is possible, so you should talk with your Graduate Advisor as early as possible if you have specific transfer courses in mind. No more than 9 semester units of acceptable transfer, extension and/or special session courses may be included on a master’s degree study plan. Six semester units of 5000-level or other graduate courses taken through extension are eligible for master’s degree credit.

5. What is advancement to candidacy?
Advancement to candidacy is a opportunity for faculty to review your academic progress after the completion of at least 9 graduate-level semester units.

Advancement is part of the continuing process of review of your progress, and is not automatic. In some cases, the faculty may decide at this point in time to end your tenure in the program.

7. When should I advance to candidacy?
Sooner rather than later. You should plan to advance to candidacy after you become a classified graduate student, have satisfied the GWAR, and have completed 9 or more semester units with a 3.0 or higher GPA with no outstanding incompletes. You must attempt to advance before completing 18 semester units.

8. What if I receive a grade lower than a C?
A grade of C is allowed on the program; however, any grade below C, including C-, requires that the course be repeated with both grades computed in the grade point average. **Students must maintain at least a B (3.0) average to retain good standing.**

9. **What if I fail one section of the Comprehensive Exams?**
You will have the opportunity to re-take that section twice (as long as you do not have any expired courses). If you fail that section a third time, you will not receive your M.A. degree.

10. **Typically how long does it take to finish the MA degree program?**
Coursework is typically finished over 3-4 semesters, depending on course loads. Additional semesters are sometimes devoted to preparation for the comprehensive exam.

11. **How much time do I have to complete the MA degree program?**
According to University policy, “No subject, unit, or grade credit will be granted for any course completed more than seven years before the date of completion of the master’s degree.” Your coursework expires after 7 years. Any coursework that you completed toward your MA degree plan before that time must be retaken.

**Handbook revised September 2017**
REFERENCES

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures - King Hall Building D1054
(323) 343-4230 | Fax: (323) 343-4234
http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/mld

Dean’s Office, College of Arts and Letters - Music Building 229
(323) 343-4001
http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/al

Office of Graduate Studies - Library N B
http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatestudies