



Department of Hispanic Studies

Ph.D. 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 new programs contributing to local, regional, national and international knowledge.

THIS MANUAL IS 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 in order 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. This is why 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., they 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 GRE or TOEFL scores).

Students who have an M.A. degree in a field other than Spanish and are seeking a Ph.D. with an emphasis in literature must take, concurrently with the other courses normally required for the doctoral program, one course from each of the following groups:

- Hispanic literature of the United States
- Latin American literature through Modernism
- Latin American literature since Modernism
- Peninsular literature through the XVII century
- Peninsular literature, centuries XVII through XX

Students with an M.A. degree in a field other than Spanish whose emphasis is linguistics will be required to take SPAN 6308 Introduction to Spanish Linguistics, plus one course from each of the following groups:

- Formal linguistics (Syntax, semantics, or pragmatics)
- Formal linguistics (Phonetics or phonology)
- Sociolinguistics
- Applied linguistics

PH.D. IN SPANISH

TIME FRAME

Students who enroll as doctoral candidates must complete their degree requirements within 10 years of the date of first enrollment with a doctoral degree objective. Failure to comply will result in the candidate being ineligible for that doctoral degree.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

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

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

International students and all types of Graduate Assistants (TA/TF, RA, etc.) must maintain full-time enrollment of at least 9 credit hours. 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.

ENROLLMENT DURING THE LAST SEMESTER AND PROPOSAL DEFENSE

In the semester in which the student expects to graduate, they must submit *an application for graduation* to the Office of Registration and Academic Records, 108 E. Cullen. Deadlines for filing the application for graduation are listed in the Academic Calendar published in each semester's Schedule of Classes and also in the Departmental one. Any student who expects to graduate in a given semester must be enrolled for that semester.

Students must be enrolled for at least 3 hours of credits during the semester they expect to defend their dissertation proposal, even if they have finished all course work (see the Graduate Director regarding appropriate courses in these cases), and they must continue to be enrolled through graduation.

CONCENTRATIONS

Before entering the Ph.D. Program the student should decide on a particular concentration for the Ph.D. in Spanish. Possible concentrations are:

- Creative Writing
- Linguistics (includes Sociolinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Formal Linguistics).
- Literature (includes US Hispanic, Peninsular, Spanish American)

Students should take coursework not only in their own concentration but in other concentrations and disciplines that support their overall academic and research goals.

If a student wishes to change concentrations within the first year of study (having completed 0-18 credit hours in the program), they must reapply to the Ph.D. program indicating their new area of

concentration on the application. Students who have taken more than 18 credit hours of coursework within their current concentration must petition the Director of Graduate Studies to change concentrations. If the Director, in consultation with faculty members from the new concentration, approves the petition, the student will be required to take up to an additional year of coursework (18 credit hours) in the new concentration.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The Ph.D. in Spanish requires that beyond the achievement of the master's degree, students complete a minimum of 36 semester hours of approved graduate courses [with a minimum grade of B- (2.67),] plus 6 semester hours of dissertation for the Ph.D. degree as follows:

All	
Required coursework	6 cr
Elective courses	30 cr
Dissertation	6 cr
Total	42 cr

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The Department will, under normal circumstances, offer at least 8 different graduate courses every long semester to allow full time students to complete the 36 hours of course work in four long semesters. It may also offer courses in summer, but in order to earn the Ph.D. degree the student must not plan to enroll only in summer.

Required coursework

Students from each concentration (Creative Writing, Linguistics, and Literature) must take one course (3 credit hours) in U.S. Latino Studies/U.S. Spanish and one course (3 credit hours) outside their concentration, either in another concentration in Hispanic Studies or in another department on campus. Courses in other departments will be chosen in consultation with the student's faculty advisor and must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Grade requirement

No course in which a grade below B- (2.67) is received will apply toward the degree. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B) for all graduate courses attempted is required in order to earn a graduate degree. Failure to maintain this average may result in warning, probation, or suspension.

RESTRICTED ENROLLMENT COURSES

Special Problems Courses (6198, 6298 and 6398): These courses allow the student to develop readings in a specific field of interest under the direction of a faculty member. The student and the professor will be required to complete in advance a form (available from the Graduate Director) describing the course, which must then be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. 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 Problems, but only three of these may count toward the degree.

Reading and Research Hours (7198, 7298 and 7398): These courses 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 in advance a form (available from the Graduate Director) describing the course, which must then be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. 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, but only three of these may count toward the degree.

EVALUATION

In order to advance to candidacy, the student must present two Qualifying Papers of publishable quality and successfully defend a proposal for a dissertation project.

Students who entered before Fall 2018 are under the old guidelines. These students should see the Graduate Director regarding correct procedure.

PERFORMANCE

Screening Procedure. At the end of each student's first year of course work at the Ph.D. level, a routine screening procedure will be conducted by all faculty members with whom the student has studied in order 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.

PH.D. QUALIFYING PAPERS

The requirements for Qualifying Papers (QPs) are:

- Papers must be article-length and of publishable quality.
- One paper must be related to the dissertation.
- Papers written prior to admission to UH **may not** be presented as Qualifying Papers.
- One paper must be submitted for peer-reviewed publication (or equivalent) by the date of the dissertation proposal defense. Before submission to a journal (or equivalent), this manuscript must be reviewed and approved by the Dissertation Committee.
- Students with a concentration in Creative Writing must present one paper that is creative in nature, and the other must be analytical.

By the beginning of the semester in which students will complete 36 hours, they should send the QP they intent to submit for publication to their Dissertation Committee for review.

PH.D. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE

In order to advance to candidacy, the student must successfully defend a proposal for a dissertation project. At the beginning of the semester in which the student will complete 36 hours, they should indicate their intention to defend a proposal to their prospective Dissertation Director. Proposals will be discussed and defended by the end of that semester, or at the latest, prior to the beginning of the following semester.

Students with incomplete grade(s) will not be allowed to advance to candidacy.

PH.D. DISSERTATION

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation Committee will be decided upon by the student and the prospective director of their dissertation before s/he defends the dissertation proposal. This committee will be formed by two members within the field (at least one will be a senior professor), in addition to the Dissertation Director, who will also be a senior Spanish professor, and one external member. The Dissertation Director will aid the student in developing a dissertation on a topic in literature or linguistics that will be original and of scholarly value.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Once finished, the candidate will defend the Ph.D. Dissertation before the Dissertation Committee **no earlier than the end of the second semester of dissertation hours**. Additional faculty and students may be invited to attend the defense only if the candidate agrees to this following consultation with the Dissertation Director; however, only the Dissertation Committee members may ask questions of the candidate.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Reading knowledge of one language in addition to Spanish and English is required. It may be demonstrated in one of the following ways:

- Four college semesters at the undergraduate level (or equivalent proficiency as demonstrated by testing) in another Romance language.
- Reading knowledge of Latin or any other approved language, as demonstrated either by satisfactory scores on the Educational Testing Service examinations for that language, or the completion of two semesters of graduate reading courses in the language chosen with a grade of B- or higher.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY PH.D. OPTION

Departments granting Ph.D. degrees may, in individual cases, modify their Ph.D. course requirements to permit a larger share of course work to be pursued in another department. When course requirements are so modified, the primary or sponsoring Department should submit the following for the Dean's approval:

- The design of the Ad Hoc Interdisciplinary Curriculum
- The names of the graduate faculty members in both the sponsoring and supporting Departments who are responsible for directing the student through the curriculum and dissertation.
- A copy of the Dean's written approval will then be forwarded to the Office of the Senior Vice President.

Doctoral-level students interested in pursuing this option should talk to the Director of Graduate Studies in their primary department concerning possible modification of course requirements.

According to the on-line University of Houston Bulletin of Graduate and Professional Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: For students pursuing the Ph.D. in Spanish who specifically request to this option, the curriculum may be modified as follows:

- Required core courses in Spanish 6 hours
- Courses in a specialization area of Spanish 18 hours
- Courses in a related field outside the Department 12 hours
- Dissertation in an area of Hispanic literature/linguistics 6 hours
- Total 42 hours

The Ph.D. Qualifying Papers and successful defense of a Dissertation Proposal (as noted above) will be required to advance to candidacy.

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 hour of course work to be counted toward the M.A.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There is a graduate bulletin board in just outside the AH 432 where timely information is posted regularly. In addition, every semester, a calendar of events related to the Graduate Program, including exams dates and important deadlines, is available on the [Hispanic Studies Graduate Program webpage](#).

Important information of various kinds is routinely relayed to enrolled graduate students by e-mail. Be sure to check your e-mail regularly and notify the Director of Graduate Studies if your e-mail address changes.

There are a few scholarships available for prospective and current graduate students. Competition for them is usually held in the Spring. Information about these is communicated by e-mail and also posted as soon as it is received.

If you have further questions please contact:

Dr. Elizabeth Goodin-Mayeda, Director of Graduate Studies at cegoodin-mayeda@uh.edu or

Dr. Paola Arboleda-Ríos, Graduate Admissions Advisor at parboeda@uh.edu