

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Languages, Literatures, & Cultures

Updated August 15, 2018

OVERVIEW

The Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures offers a Master of Arts (M.A.) in French and a Master of Arts in Spanish. These graduate degrees are intended to prepare graduates to enter doctoral programs, to teach French or Spanish, or to pursue professional positions in such fields as international relations, business, or publishing. The curriculum offers a range of courses in French, Francophone, Peninsular and Latin American literatures and cultures, and Linguistics.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- **ACADEMIC GOOD STANDING**

According to Graduate Education policy, if the student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0, that student is automatically placed on academic probation. To continue degree pursuit, the student must progress toward a 3.0 cumulative average and is expected to emerge from academic probation within nine credit hours or two successive academic terms, whichever is sooner. A student will not be advanced to M.A. candidate status while on academic probation. To be eligible for a Teaching Assistantship or a Research Assistantship, a student must maintain a GPA of 3.0 minimum. **If a student does not plan to enroll for a Fall/Spring semester during his/her graduate work, he/she must petition Graduate Education for a leave of absence. There is a penalty for failing to enroll when not taking classes. Also, a student must maintain continuous registration (achieved through online registration), even after coursework is completed, and until final examinations are taken.**

- **ADVISING**

Graduate Program Director:

The Graduate Program Director is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the Graduate Program, from the initial point of contact – fielding questions from prospective students – to the point when the student completes the M.A. in French or Spanish. The Graduate Program Director meets with the student at least once per semester to advise on course selection, review the program of study, and discuss progress towards completing the degree. Guided by the Graduate Program Director, students select their examination committee and establish a timeline for completing the degree. Spanish M.A. students submit a **Progress Review** to the Graduate Program Director at the end of **every semester**. French M.A. students submit a **Progress Review** to the Graduate Program Director **annually**. Finally, the Graduate Program Director acts as the student's advocate within the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and the University.

Graduate Faculty Mentor:

In the Spanish M.A. Program, students also work with a Graduate Faculty Mentor. The Graduate Program Director assigns a Graduate Faculty Mentor to each student early in the first semester of study. The Graduate Faculty Mentor assists the student with professional development, such as encouraging the student to present at scholarly conferences and helping the student prepare for M.A. exams.

- **EVALUATION**

Graduate students will be evaluated on an annual basis by the Program Faculty and Graduate Program Director. Students will receive a paper copy of the report with faculty signatures. The report will include future coursework and any remedial work needed to avoid probation.

- **GRADUATION**

In the final semester of your degree program, in addition to informing the Graduate Program Director, you must apply online for graduation through the Banner portal no later than the second Friday of the semester. A link to instructions for completing your application can be found on Graduate Education's page for Current Students, under "Master Forms & Policies:"

<https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/current-students/index.php>

If you apply after the second Friday, you are responsible for contacting the master's candidacy advisor (LaToya Cash 314-977-2245 latoya.cash@slu.edu) to initiate preparation of your degree audit.

- **INCOMPLETES**

Students must complete coursework on time. Incompletes at the graduate level will be permitted only under extenuating circumstances (e.g. serious illness or accident). The incomplete must be cleared within twelve months; a shorter time period may be designated at the instructor's discretion. Should the incomplete fail to be cleared within the one-year period, the grade will be automatically converted to an "F." Students must submit the appropriate form requesting the incomplete to the Graduate Program Director. Teaching and Research assistants may not carry more than one incomplete on their records if they wish to have their assistantships renewed.

- **INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The Graduate Education Catalog reads as follows: "The University is a community of learning, and its effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. As members of this community, students share with faculty and administrators the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty in submitting an assignment, test, essay, or any other documentation required to validate the student's learning. In a case of clear indication of such dishonesty, the faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply sanctions to protect the environment of integrity." Although not all forms of academic dishonesty are given here, the instances listed below should be seen as actions that violate academic integrity:

- soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted;
- submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but represented as the student's own work;

- copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing/recognizing that source.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with sanctions. In a case of dishonesty within a course, the instructor may assign an appropriate grade and/or recommend further sanctions to the Dean or Associate Dean, who is then responsible for the final decision and notification of all associated parties. The final decision of the Dean or Associate Dean may be appealed as described in "Procedures for Academic Appeals."

- **LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

An approved leave of absence will extend the time to degree and maintain access to university resources (e.g. mail, library privileges). If a student wishes to extend the leave, a new request must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director using the "Petition for a Leave of Absence" (found on the Registrar's Forms page: https://www.slu.edu/registrar/pdfs/leave_of_absence.pdf). Leaves of absence should be requested for compelling reasons only, and must be requested before the start of the leave. For *Parental Leave Policy and Petition* information, please consult the Graduate Education website: https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/pdfs/ge_petition_for_parental_leave.pdf

- **PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC APPEALS**

The Graduate Education Catalog states: "As a general policy, if a student desires to appeal any academic decision that appeal should first be made to the faculty member or faculty committee involved and, if necessary thereafter, to the department or program chairperson, the Associate Dean or Center Director of the particular school/college/center, and the Dean, in that order. Should the student wish to pursue an additional level of appeal, the case is taken to the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education who reviews the file to determine if the process was followed. The Associate Vice President does not overturn a decision, but may send the case back to the school/college/center if process was not followed:" <https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/pdfs/graduate-academic-cppeals-process.pdf>

- **REGISTRATION**

Students must be registered before the first day of classes to avoid late registration fees. Late registration begins on the first day of classes and extends through the second Friday of the semester. Registration after the second week is possible only by petition and with dean's approval.

- **TIME LIMITS**

Typically, the M.A. in French or Spanish is completed in 2-2.5 years. If the student does not complete program requirements within five years from the time he/she began coursework, the student must apply for an extension from the college. This requires a signed form of support from the Graduate Program Director as well as a letter of explanation from the student. Financial assistance is not guaranteed.

- **WITHDRAWAL**

If a student wishes to withdraw from the program for the duration of the current semester, he or she must inform the Graduate Program Director in writing and complete the Petition for Complete Semester

Withdrawal Form (available in the Office of the University Registrar) and return it to the Registrar's office. If a student decides to withdraw from the program prior to completion, he or she must inform the Graduate Program Director in writing and complete the Petition for Complete Withdrawal Form (available in the Office of the University Registrar) and return it to the Registrar's office.

M.A. REQUIREMENTS

M.A. IN FRENCH

Students preparing for the M.A.-in-French are required to take at least 30 graduate credit hours, which include:

- A) FREN 5100
- B) nine credit hours of coursework in the period prior to the year 1900
- C) nine credit hours of coursework after the year 1900.

A maximum of six credits of coursework may be approved for transfer toward fulfillment of degree requirements. (See Office of Graduate Education for regulations regarding transfer of credit.)

In addition, **a final scholarly essay or written examination, and a final oral examination are required.**

Students may take a general written examination or write a Final Project.

Written Examinations for the M.A.-in-French:

- **General Written Examinations:**

These examinations cover the material listed on the *French M.A. reading list*. Students will choose three areas from the list. When starting the written examinations, the student will receive a sealed envelope, labeled with the name of each area, and containing a choice of essay questions. The student must write one essay per area and has 90 minutes per area to do so. Testing on each area is followed by a 15 minute break. It is not allowed to go back or review the essay after turning it in. Students have one hour for lunch. This is not an open-book exam. Books, dictionaries, and online materials are not allowed.

Grading: Students are evaluated on the knowledge of the area they demonstrate; their ability to write a clear and organized essay with literary, cultural and/or theoretical examples to support an argument; the level of analysis, mastery of the language, accuracy, and style.

After the student has completed the written exam, the exam committee members will read the student's work and complete an evaluation form. In addition to commenting on his or her view of the examination, each committee member will assign one of three grades: Excellent, Pass, or Fail. The student must have two passing votes in order to be eligible to take the M.A. Orals and receive the M.A. degree.

- **Research Paper (or final project)**

Student may pursue the option of a research paper instead of a written examination.

A Final Project (FP) is a research paper that showcases the student's ability to think both critically and creatively, and to conduct research independently. The FP usually originates from a research paper written for a graduate class during the student's career in the M.A. Program. The FP could represent a

significant revision and extension of a paper that was written for a class, or it could be related to a course area, or to the area of concentration of a professor.

The FP should represent a crowning achievement of the student's career in the M.A.-in-French Program at SLU. Students might be able to present their FP for publication, or at a professional venue, such as at a research colloquium.

The completed research paper must

- be at least 30-40 pages in length.
- follow the latest MLA guidelines.
- be typed, double-spaced and in size 12 font
- be written in French

Procedure & Timeline:

The FP usually moves through three stages: defining a subject; writing the paper; presenting a final draft.

Stage 1:

In consultation with the Faculty Mentor who is to direct the project, the student will define the topic of the Final Project. For full-time students, this is usually done at the end of the first year of study or shortly after the beginning of the last year of study ; for non-full-time students, this is best done before the final semester of study, but no later than four (4) weeks into the last semester.

- The student notifies the Director of the M.A. Program of his/her intent to write a FP, and indicates the composition of the FP committee.
- The student will notify in writing the Faculty Mentor and French Faculty of his/her plan to write a Final Project. Along with the letter, the student will include a thesis statement with a short description of methodology (1-2 pages) and a working bibliography.
- It is the responsibility of the student to schedule a meeting, with all the members of the committee, during which he or she will present orally the initial steps of his/her work in progress. The topic must then be approved by **all members of the FP Committee**.

This stage is best finished before the start of the semester during which the FP is to be completed.

Stage 2:

- After the FP proposal is approved, research and writing will continue during the following semester.
- The student meets with his/her Faculty Mentor, to discuss a timeline of events. The student and the Mentor should work out together when written work is to be submitted, and how frequently they will meet to discuss the student's research.
- For students petitioning to graduate in Fall, a first draft should be submitted October 15 to the Faculty Mentor for review.
- For students petitioning to graduate in Spring, a first draft should be submitted March 15 to the Faculty Mentor for review.

Stage 3:

- After the student submits the first draft, the Faculty Mentor arranges a meeting with the student to discuss the student's progress and any further revisions to the FP.
- In consultation with the Mentor, the student completes the final version of the FP.

- Students wishing to graduate in December submit their final version to all members of his/her committee by November 20.
- Students wishing to graduate in May submit their final version to all members of his/her committee by April 20.
- The student needs to determine a date for the defense with the Mentor and the members of the FP committee.

- **Oral Examination**

M.A. candidates choose their jury. The Jury or exam committee is made up of 3-5 professors, who reflect the areas chosen for the written exam, and who must also reflect 7 out of the 10 courses taken during the student's career. All students must pass the oral examination in order to receive the Master's degree. The oral exam usually lasts 60-75 minutes.

During the first part, professors ask questions regarding the written exams; 10-15 minutes are allotted per area. If a final project has been written, the first part will last a maximum of 45 minutes and will start the following way: the Faculty Mentor starts the meeting by introducing the candidate. The student defends the project beginning with a brief overview (ten minutes), which will be followed by questions from the Faculty. The Faculty Mentor will moderate, and see that the discussion runs smoothly and according to schedule.

During the second part, professors examine the candidate on the classes they have had together. After the student has completed the oral exam, the committee members evaluate the student's performance immediately. The student must receive a majority of passing votes in the oral examination in order to receive the M.A. degree.

M.A. REQUIREMENTS

M.A. IN SPANISH

Students preparing for the M.A.-in-Spanish are required to take at least 30 graduate credit hours.

Students are required to take at least:

- A) Two courses in Peninsular Spanish Studies,
- B) Two courses in Latin American Studies and
- C) Two courses in Linguistics.

Students may also take courses at our campus in Madrid.

A maximum of six credits of coursework may be approved for transfer toward fulfillment of degree requirements. (See Office of Graduate Education for regulations regarding transfer of credit.)

In addition to coursework, students present at the Annual LLC Student Symposium.

Written Examinations

Exam questions are decided upon and evaluated by the three faculty members appointed by the Graduate Program Director in consultation with the student. Students are not allowed to bring any books with them to the exams.

General Written Examination:

This examination covers the material on the general reading list. This is a four-hour exam in which the student must answer 1) one of three questions posed about Peninsular Spanish

Studies, 2) one of three questions about Latin American Studies, and 3) one of three questions about Linguistics.

Specialty Written Examination:

This examination covers the material on the specialty reading list. This is a three-hour exam in which the student must answer two of the four questions posed by the examination committee. This exam is typically scheduled for the day after the general written examination. After the student has completed the written exams, the committee members will read the student's work and complete an evaluation form. In addition to commenting on his or her view of the examination, each committee member will assign one of three grades: Excellent, Pass, or Fail. The student must have two passing votes in order to be eligible to take the M.A. Oral Examination and receive the M.A. degree. Please refer to the M.A. Retake Policy for all questions on regulations about retaking the M.A. Written and Oral exams.

Oral Examination

An evaluation committee is composed of three members of the faculty, appointed by the Graduate Program Director in consultation with the student. These members may or may not be the same as the written examination committee members. The oral examination will be scheduled after the student presents an acceptable written examination or research paper. It covers the courses that the student has taken, lasting a minimum of one hour then as long as necessary for the committee members to fully evaluate the student to their satisfaction. After the student has completed the oral exam, the committee members will evaluate the student's performance immediately. The student must receive two passing votes in the oral examination in order to receive the MA degree. Please refer to the M.A. Retake Policy for all questions on regulations about retaking the M.A. Written and Oral exams.

Research Paper

N.B. This option is not available to students in the Madrid program.

Students may pursue the option of a research paper *in lieu of of written examinations*. This requires the permission of the Graduate Program Director and the support of a committee. The committee consists of three graduate Spanish faculty members (a Research Paper Advisor and two readers). The student will select a Research Paper Advisor to aid in the development and writing of his or her research paper. The job of the Research Paper Advisor is only to guide the student and make suggestions. The student performs all of the research and writing of the research paper. In addition to the Research Paper Advisor, the student will choose one member of the Spanish Program Graduate Faculty to be a Research Paper Reader. The other Research Paper Reader will be selected by the Spanish Graduate Program Director in consultation with the student. The Spanish research paper may be written during the last year of the student's graduate career. Typically, students write the research paper in or immediately following their last semester of coursework. The subject matter is chosen by the student and must be approved by all of the committee members. The research paper should be between 30 and 40 pages in length. Two out of three votes are necessary for approval of the research paper. The completion date is October 15th for the Fall Semester and March 15th for the Spring Semester.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

Teaching Assistantships: Teaching Assistants usually teach one class in Elementary or Intermediate level language as well as one laboratory per semester. Teaching Assistants are trained and supervised by our Faculty. They receive a stipend and tuition remission for four courses per year.

Research Assistantships: Research Assistants work to support and assist one or two Faculty members with their research. Research Assistants receive a stipend, tuition remission for six courses per year, and health insurance.

Graduate Lab Assistantships: Graduate Lab Assistants work in collaboration with our Language Resource Center Director; they help provide cultural, linguistic and technical support for our classes; they also provide some tutoring to our students. Graduate Lab Assistants receive a stipend on an hourly basis.

Tuition Scholarships: Tuition scholarships are also available each year.

1818 Program Tuition Scholarships: Teachers who participate in the 1818 Advanced College Credit Program are eligible for tuition remission for two courses per year. Please verify details with the Office of the 1818 Program.

Professional Development Opportunities

Students are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities such as:

- **Symposium**
Our department organizes an Annual Student Symposium each spring semester, where Undergraduate and Graduate Students have the opportunity to present their work. Graduate Students are encouraged to participate actively in the organization of the event.
- **Confluence**
Students who have presented at the Annual Student Symposium have the opportunity to submit their work for publication in our online journal. *Confluence* is a peer-reviewed journal.
<http://www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/languages/confluence/>
- **Resources**
Graduate Student Association: <http://gsa.slu.edu/>
Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning: <http://www.slu.edu/cttl>
Teaching Assistantship Program in France: <http://highereducation.frenchculture.org/teach-in-france>