MA Degree Requirements

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies and the University of Washington Graduate School Requirements for the M.A. degree are as follows:

1. A total of 60 applicable credits (500-level and above). Please note that SPAN 600 credits used for MA exam preparation do not fulfill any degree requirement and do not count toward the 60-credit total needed to graduate. In exceptional circumstances, students may petition the GPC (Graduate Program Coordinator) to carry out coursework at the 400-level. To remain in good standing the student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on the University's 4.0 grade scale. The minimum acceptable grade for any given course is 2.7.

2. All students are required to take either SPAN 577, or an alternate graduate-level literary theory course, or a research methods graduate course. Selection of alternatives to SPAN 577 must be approved by the GPC. SPAN 510 (Methodology of Spanish Language Teaching) is required of all Teaching Assistants and is to be taken during or before a student's first quarter of teaching.

3. Distribution requirement: A minimum of five credits (normally one course) must be earned in five of the seven following areas: Medieval Spain; "Golden Age" Spain; Spain of the 18th and 19th Centuries; 20th-century Spain; Colonial and 19th-century Latin America; and 20th-century Latin America; and Spanish applied linguistics.

4. Applicable credits are the following: Those earned in 500-level courses in the Department; those earned in courses cross-listed with another department; approved courses offered by the Department's adjunct faculty; up to ten credits of approved non-cross-listed courses; up to 6 credits of approved transfer credit. Non-cross-listed courses must be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator at the time of registration, must be numbered 400 and above, and must be deemed relevant to the student’s studies in this Department.

5. MA candidates must pass an auxiliary language reading ability test, the Graduate Foreign Language Exam (GFLE), in a language other than English and Spanish. Normally this language will be selected from among the Romance Languages and German. Students must be examined before the end of their fourth quarter of graduate study. Information regarding the Graduate Foreign Language Exam (GFLE), can be found here at the Office of Educational Assessment Website (OEA). Be sure to ask the OEA specifically for the GFLE, when scheduling the test. The GFLE is not the same as a placement or proficiency test. A student may also demonstrate proficiency with native status or by holding a university degree in the third language.

6. M.A. candidates must pass an M.A. examination: During the first quarter of graduate study, students must select one area in which to be examined from the seven areas of study specified above. They will then have a year to prepare that field. Students may not write their M.A. Thesis in the field they have chosen for their examination. The M.A. examination is written at the beginning of the fourth quarter of study (ordinarily fall quarter). The exam will consist of one question, and the student will have five hours to answer his/her question, with only a dictionary available for consultation. The examination in the chosen area is based on the M.A.
Reading list, available on this website. For more details regarding an acceptable and unacceptable exam, see MA Exam Rubric (PDF).

7. M.A candidates must complete an M.A. Thesis, written in Spanish: Students must take ten credits of M.A. Thesis (SPAN 700) in their second year of study (5 credits in the Fall quarter and 5 credits in the Winter quarter). The M.A. Thesis is written in Spanish (minimum 45 pages of text, plus bibliography) and directed by a graduate faculty member and submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) for its approval by the end of the fifth quarter of study. If approved by the GSC, the M.A. Thesis is then submitted electronically to the Graduate School by the end of the sixth quarter of study. For more details on electronic submission, see: Final Submission of Your Thesis/Dissertation.

8. Unsatisfactory Performance and Progress:

-A student will be placed on probation if s/he fails the MA examination, and will have only one opportunity to retake the exam. Should the student pass the exam retake, s/he will be taken off probation. Should the student fail the exam a second time, s/he will be dismissed from the program.

-A student will be placed on probation if s/he receives no credit for SPAN 700 (thesis work) in any given quarter, for failing to comply with the schedule and guidelines set up by his/her thesis advisor. To remove probation status, the student must receive credit for SPAN 700 (thesis work) the following quarter. If s/he does not receive credit the following quarter, s/he will be placed on final probation.

-A student will receive a warning from the GPC (Graduate Program Coordinator) if her/his cumulative GPA drops below a 3.0 in any given quarter. If the student raises her/his GPA to at least a 3.0 the following quarter, no further action will be taken. However, should the student fail to raise her/his GPA to at least a 3.0 in that following quarter, s/he will be placed on probation. If the student is still unable to correct this situation the next quarter, s/he will be placed on final probation. Finally, if the student still fails to raise her/his GPA to at least a 3.0 in the following quarter, s/he will be dropped from the program. For example, a student's GPA drops to a 2.95 in winter quarter. In early spring quarter, he receives a warning from the GPC. By the end of spring quarter, he fails to raise his GPA to a 3.0, and is placed on probation fall quarter, assuming he does not take any classes in the summer. By the end of fall quarter, he has still not raised his GPA to a minimum of 3.0, and is placed on final probation winter quarter. If this student still fails to raise his GPA to a 3.0 by the end of winter quarter, he will be dropped from the program that spring.

Students may appeal departmental recommendations directly to the Chair of the Graduate Program. Appeals beyond this point must follow the process outlined in Graduate School Memorandum No. 33, Academic Grievance Procedure.

9. M.A. candidates make application for the Master's degree at the Graduate School Office within the first two weeks of the quarter in which they expect the degree to be conferred. They must, at the time of application, notify the Graduate Program Adviser of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies.

10. Graduate students must be registered as full-time or part-time students at the University of Washington for the quarter in which the degree requirements are completed.

11. Time Limit: All work for the M.A. degree, including credits transferred from other institutions, must be completed within six years. However, M.A. candidates subsidized by teaching assistantships, research assistantships, graduate staff assistantships, or comparable financial support, are expected to complete their program within six quarters.
12. Transfer Credit: A graduate student may submit a petition to the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department requesting permission to transfer up to six quarter credits taken while a graduate student at another recognized institution. The Department further requires that this school have a graduate program in the discipline for which transfer credits are requested.

13. Removal of Incomplete Grades: Incomplete grades will be given only exceptionally. Incomplete work must be completed and a regular grade must be assigned by the end of the following quarter (including summer quarter). In instances of exceptional hardship, students may petition the Graduate Studies Committee, but only before the deadline just stated, for an extension of time. Failure to complete incomplete work on this schedule may jeopardize a student's good standing and eligibility for financial support and teaching and research assistantships.

14. Advising: Graduate students should consult with the Graduate Program Adviser quarterly before registration opens for the following quarter, to ensure that they making satisfactory progress. Any potential area(s) of concern will be brought to the attention of the Graduate Program Coordinator for discussion with the student, and possible recommendation of probation to the Graduate School. Each student, consulting with appropriate faculty and administrators of the Department, bears the responsibility for making the best use of the available or obtainable resources for achieving educational objectives.

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Source URL: https://spanport.washington.edu/ma-degree-requirements