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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES

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http://calstatela.edu/academic/mld

Modern Languages and Literatures Dept.

Spanish M.A. Program Handbook

Effective FALL 2024



SPANISH MA Program Handbook

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SPANISH MA Program Handbook

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Bienvenidos

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 chosen fields.

Our graduate program is designed to push you to achieve your academic and personal ambitions, support you within 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. We invite you to review this handbook, and if you have any **questions about your academic career goals, please feel free to contact the Graduate Advisor and/or staff in the department.**

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Cal
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Photograph by. Moses You



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.



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/.



Admissions

Admission Requirements

Generally, applicants must have a baccalaureate in Spanish. A minimum 2.75 overall undergraduate GPA, and a B (3.0) grade point average in upper-division Spanish coursework, are required. Students who do not meet the GPA requirements may be admitted by special action (see University Catalog and consult the Department Graduate Advisor). Applicants whose undergraduate major was not in Spanish 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.



SPANISH GRADUATE STUDENTS CAN ALSO BECOME TEACHING ASSISTANTS.



Program Description

The M.A. degree in Spanish requires successful completion of a minimum of 30 semester units of course work plus a comprehensive examination. Spanish candidates must complete a minimum of 18 units of 5000-level coursework. Individual programs are prepared in consultation with the Department's Graduate Advisor. Students who have been admitted to the University should make an appointment with the Department's Graduate Advisor as soon as possible, and before registering for classes.



Cal State LA Spanish MA graduate students present at the Sacramento State University Interdisciplinary Conference.

Comprehensive Examination

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 the author 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, and their historical context.

2. Questions on linguistics are designed to allow students to demonstrate the following: An awareness of (a) the ways in which Spanish varies geographically and sociologically (i.e., its main "diatopic" and "diastratic" varieties) and (b) 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 in five parts 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 (on the Department website or in the Department's Canvas course) and at the Department office. **Subject to change. Check with Department.*

Pictures above from Prodigios Odinarios book review (written by students in Professor Baler's class).

Golden Eagles



Photo by. Tracy Gamble

Eligibility to Take the Comprehensive Exam

In order to be eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination for the first time, a student must be advanced to candidacy. Further, a student may not have more than two outstanding "Incompletes" on their M.A. program. A student who has completed eight courses and is concurrently enrolled for any remaining courses (maximum of two) on their program, will be eligible to take the Comprehensive examination.

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 EXAM

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.

LINGUISTICS

One linguistics examination, 135 minutes in length, on synchronic linguistics. Students answer three questions (out of five) on the examination.

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. Once any part is passed, it does not need to be retaken; the candidate will be required to retake only the part(s) failed. 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.

(Above) Grad students Laura and Diana. (Upper Right) Spanish graduate students enjoy a lecture with international guest speaker James Peck.

Comprehensive Examination Eligibility (continued)

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 required 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%20Languages%20and%20Literatures/span_ma_comp_exam_info_fall2016.pdf

Please note: There are no longer any emphases or options in the Spanish M.A., including for students who began their programs under the quarter system prior to 2016.

Reapplying to the SPAN MA

Students who have lost continuing 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).



Spanish graduate students Norma and Diana in the Teaching Associate program.

Other Requirements

• All students must satisfy the GWAR (Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement) before completing 12 units. See p.18 on this handbook and 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 coursework 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

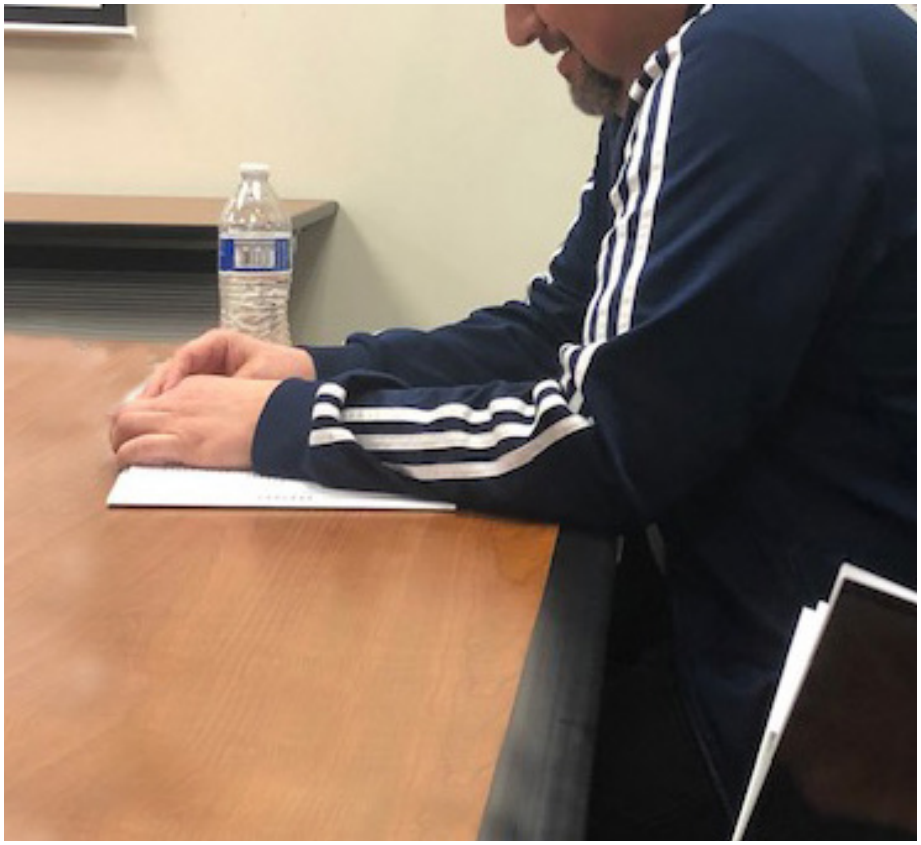
above. The recommendation to be placed on probation in this circumstance may be initiated by the department or the Associate Dean.

• 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. Petitions to extend an incomplete must be signed by the course instructor with an indication whether the instructor recommends the petition be approved or denied. The final decision regarding extension of Incomplete grades rests with the Deans of Graduate or Undergraduate Studies, as appropriate.

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.



Spanish student at book reading of Prodigios Ordinarios.

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSOCIATE (GTA) PROGRAM IN SPANISH

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 (see below). 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

Degree-seeking graduate student in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures/ Spanish.

Teaching Associates must be currently enrolled in or admitted to a CSULA graduate degree program. The successful applicant will work effectively, respectfully, and collaboratively in diverse, multicultural, and inclusive settings.

The applicant must be a degree-seeking graduate student in the M.A. in Spanish program and must be enrolled in courses towards the completion of that graduate degree during the appointment period.

1. Native or near-native proficiency in Spanish.
2. Spanish BA with a 3.5 G.P.A. or above.
3. Good academic standing at CSULA (3.0 GPA in graduate courses).
4. Commitment to complete a TA orientation workshop during the first weeks of employment.

The Spanish program cannot guarantee the workshop will be offered every semester.

DUTIES

Successful candidates will teach Elementary Spanish and hold office hours accordingly.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Please submit:

- Letter of application
- Curriculum vitae
- GET print-out verifying enrollment in a program of graduate study in this department
- (3) letters of recommendation*
- Application for appointment as a graduate teaching associate in MLL/Spanish
- University Application for Academic Employment form.





Spanish program professors Solomianski and Baler at student welcome event.

*Two of the three recommendation letters must be written by faculty with whom applicant took either fourth-year college or graduate Spanish courses. Applicants who have taught Spanish in a high school may use letters from supervisors.

Employment is contingent upon proof of eligibility to work in the United States.

Reassignment as a GTA is contingent upon satisfactory instructional performance as measured by student evaluations, class observation reports by faculty in the Department, department needs, 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 FUTHER INFORMATION

Contact the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Chair:

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
Attn: Department Chair
Cal State University, Los Angeles.
5151 State University Drive,
KH D1054
Los Angeles, CA 90032-8112

(323) 343-4230





Above: Graduate Teaching Associate leads SPAN 1001 lecture. Below: Campus Library

TIMES TO REMEMBER

(A) Before completing 12 units, you must satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Graduate students are exempt from this requirement if they hold an earned bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university where English is the primary medium of instruction, or if they have a score of 41 or better on the writing portion of the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST) or a score of 4 on the analytic writing portion of the GRE or GMAT. All students who are not exempt must pass the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE, UNIV 4000) or take the equivalent course (UNIV 4010). Students who are not exempt should register for the WPE in their first semester.

(B) Advancement to Candidacy
Advancement to candidacy is a part of the continual review of a student's progress and is not automatic. It is granted by the college graduate dean upon completion of the requirements listed below and upon the recommendation of the major department/division/school.



Spanish graduate Teaching Associate Rebecca.





Above: Spanish graduate alumnae left to right Mindy, Norma and Estela.. Right: Graduate student Diana and Professor Baler.

It is the University prerequisite to enrolling for the thesis, project, and comprehensive examination; individual departments/divisions and colleges may have additional requirements.

Advancement to candidacy requires:

1. Satisfaction of Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement.
2. Classified graduate standing.
3. An approved master's degree study plan on file in the college graduate studies office.
4. Completion of a minimum of 12 semester units of the master's degree study plan with an overall B (3.0) grade point average or higher.
5. Recommendation of the major department/division/school.
6. Approval of the college graduate dean.

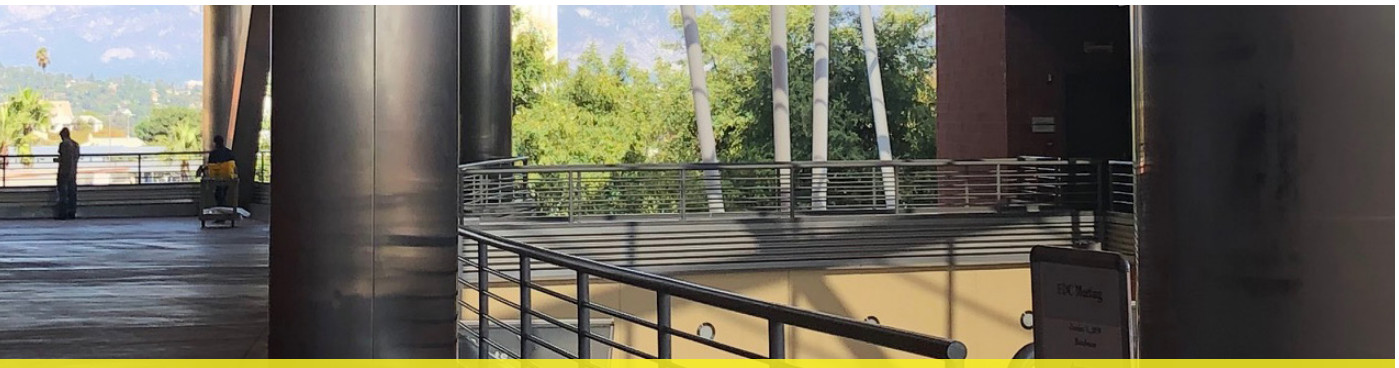
Only students who are advanced to candidacy are eligible to enroll for comprehensive examinations. Spanish MA students should request advancement to candidacy towards the end of the semester prior to their first attempt at the comprehensive examination.

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.

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

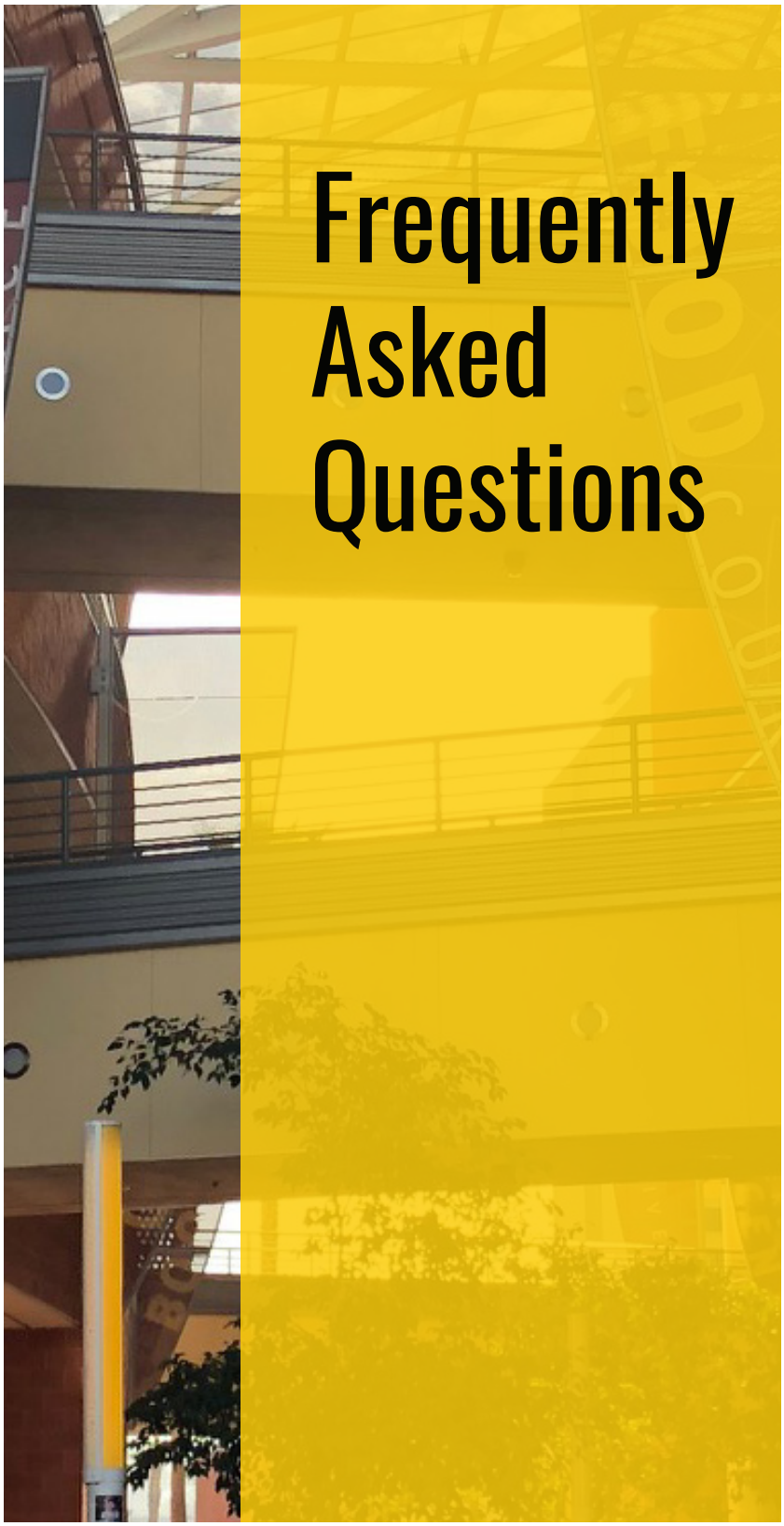
Comprehensive Examinations

"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 evidence 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 satisfying all requirements for your B.A. may count as elective credit, if pre-approved by the Graduate Advisor. However, 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

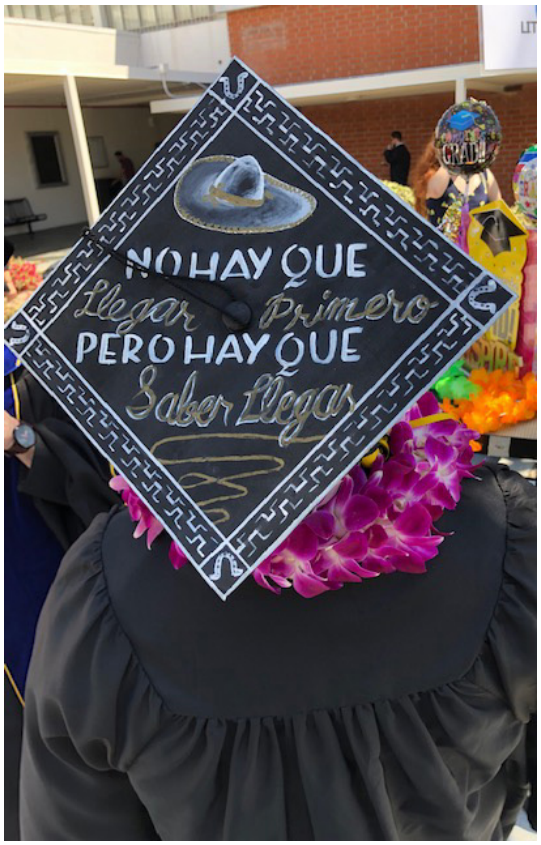
semester units of acceptable transfer, extension and/or special session courses may be included on a master's degree study plan. Six semester units of 5000-level or other graduate courses taken through extension are eligible for master's degree credit.

5. **What is advancement to candidacy?**
   Advancement to candidacy is an opportunity for faculty to review your academic progress after the completion of at least 12 graduate-level semester units.

6. **When should I advance to candidacy?**
   Spanish MA students should request advancement to candidacy towards the end of the semester prior to their first attempt at the comprehensive examination.

7. **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.

8. **What if I fail one section of the Comprehensive Exams?**
   Any section failed on the first or second attempt at the Comprehensive Examination must be repeated and passed in a subsequent semester in order to successfully pass the entire Comprehensive Examination. Only any section(s) failed must be retaken.







Students celebrating graduation.

9. **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.

10. **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 in September 2024



REFERENCES

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
King Hall Building D1054
(323) 343-4230
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 North
http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatestudies



Graduate student Emilio with two undergrads studying Spanish.



Artist and writer James Peck with Professor Baler.





Modern Languages and Literatures Dept. site

Spanish M.A. program information