Guidelines for Comprehensive Exams
Latin American Studies
LAS 5690

1. **Comprehensive exams (comps) are required in two fields, with 1 to 3 written essays (take-home essays) in each field and an oral defense**. Fields in which our students generally take exams include Latin American Studies as well as anthropology, art, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies, education, history, literature/Spanish, music, political sciences, sociology, and women, genders, and sexuality studies.

2. LAS graduate students planning on taking the comprehensive exams should form **a committee of two Cal State LA faculty members**. Students should work closely with these faculty members during their classwork and, when available, take a 5000 level seminar in their chosen areas of study.

3. Students may take the comprehensive exams during the last semester in which they are enrolled in classes or after they complete all coursework in their program. It is recommended that students take the comprehensive exams as soon after finishing their coursework as possible. Exams are offered in the Fall and Spring semesters.

4. Students need to **submit the Comprehensive Exams Form** to the LAS Director with the appropriate signatures by the end of week one of the semester in which they will take their exams. The Director will issue the student a **permit to register for LAS 5960** once they receive the completed form. Students will then register for LAS 5960 no later than the campus add deadline.

5. Each faculty member in the committee will design a set of questions (usually 1-3) and help students develop a comprehensive reading list (usually between 8-10 books). Students should have their **questions and reading list for each field by the end of week two** of the semester in which they plan to complete their exams.

6. Students are encouraged to work closely with each faculty member during the semester in which they take their exams (if not before) and must solicit and respond to faculty feedback. **Students cannot contact their examiners after Monday of week 11** of the semester in which they are taking the exams.

7. For each field, the exam will usually consist of 15-20 typed, double-spaced pages (although the length and format may change according to the discipline) and should include a clear system of citation and a bibliography. Students are encouraged to edit their papers carefully, and final copies should be as polished as possible.

8. Students have **until 5:00 P.M on the Wednesday of week 14** of the semester to submit answers via email (everba@calstatela.edu) or hard copy (typed) to the Latin American Studies office (KH B3006).

9. If students are unable to finish the exams on time, they need to drop LAS 5960 before the campus drop deadline and immediately inform the Director.

10. The written exam is followed by an **oral examination, usually in week 15 of the semester or during final examinations week**. The Program Director will schedule the date and time of the oral exam. During the oral exam, each faculty member on the student's committee will ask questions based on the student's written responses (including follow-up questions). Students are encouraged to find ways to bridge the two subject areas on which they are tested by identifying parallels or intersections among the areas.

11. If a student fails any one of the two field exams, they will retake only the field(s) failed.* Students may take the comprehensive exams up to two more times if they do not pass on their first attempt.

* At the discretion of the Director and the student's committee, a student may be offered the opportunity to revise an essay that is slightly below a passing grade during the same semester.

Comprehensive Exams Form

Latin American Studies Program
California State University, Los Angeles

Student Name _____

Student ID number _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

Field	Professor Name & Signature
_____	_____
_____	_____

Program Director Signature _____

Date _____

* Students need to submit this form to the Director of the Latin American Studies Program (KH B3006) no later than the 1st week of the semester in which they will take the exams.