

## THE GRADUATE HANDBOOK

### Policies & Procedures of the Graduate Program of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures

University of Pittsburgh

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

This Handbook contains the policies and procedures of the graduate program in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures; it is intended to serve as a practical guide for both faculty and graduate students in the Department.

The Handbook is a supplement to the University's *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*,

available at [www.umc.pitt.edu/bulletins/graduate/index.html](http://www.umc.pitt.edu/bulletins/graduate/index.html) and to *Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh* ([www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html)). The Handbook amplifies and concretizes material presented more briefly on those web pages and discusses issues specific to the Department. However, the Handbook is *not* a substitute for the *Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh* which is the definitive source of information on such University-wide issues as Admissions, Grading and Credit, Registration, Probation, Residency, Statute of Limitations, Tuition and Fees, Thesis Format and Stylistics, among others.

The Department maintains a file for each student enrolled in the graduate program. Since 1975, in accordance with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment, all students, upon formal request, are entitled to see the documents in their folders which were placed there after January 1, 1975, and to which students have not previously waived access. Please check periodically with the Graduate Administrator to make sure that your folder is up to date. You should notify the Graduate Administrator if any significant documents are missing. It is *your responsibility* to make sure that your current home address, e-mail address, and telephone number(s) are on file. For purposes of teaching and advising, members of the department's graduate faculty and the Dean's staff are permitted to consult graduate student files, but no one else may have access to them without the student's permission. Evaluations and other materials placed in student files are intended for the use of the students and the department only, and are not to be released to others without the written consent of both the writers and the students.

Every active graduate student has a mailbox in the departmental offices at 1309 CL. We urge you to check your mailbox regularly, and to read memos, announcements, and e-mail sent by the Graduate Administrator, the department's faculty, and its staff. We request that you not use this mailbox for personal business, such as banking, billing, etc., for which you should use your home address.

The Graduate Administrator is charged with maintaining graduate records and assisting the Director of Graduate Studies. Consult the Administrator, the Director of Graduate Studies, and your Advisor, if you have any questions on the program.

## **HOW TO REGISTER**

The first step in preparing to register is gathering information about the courses being offered. You can begin with the *Schedule of Classes*, which is available online. The *Schedule of Classes* includes all the information you need to register (Course Title, Course Number, Course Registration Number [CRN], room, time and instructor for every course being offered).

For more detailed information on the content and scope of courses, you can consult the

Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences *Course Descriptions*. You should note that this publication includes upper-division undergraduate courses, numbered 1000-1999, which might in some circumstances be good choices. Finally, students can seek information about courses directly from the instructor.

Once you have thought about the courses you wish to enroll in, you should make an appointment with your Advisor (or the DGS if you do not have an advisor yet), in order to discuss your choices and to agree on a schedule. Please remember that all international students, as well as those students holding Teaching Assistantships or Teaching or non-teaching Fellowships, *must* be full-time students, which is achieved by taking a minimum of nine (9) credit hours (usually three [3] classes) in both the Fall and the Spring terms.

New students must register no later than the first day of classes. Note that continuing and readmitted students face a much earlier deadline. Please note also that the Fall term always begins at the end of August.

It is the *responsibility of the student* to make sure that any Holds placed on his or her registration for any reason (by the Office of International Services for immigration or visa issues, by the Office of University Collections if fees or overdue fines have not been paid, by Hillman Library if books have not been returned, etc.) are removed so that registration can be completed.

As of the Fall 2005 term, all invoices are distributed by e-mail, rather than traditional mail; there is no paper invoice. Check your invoice carefully before paying the tuition fees at the Office of Student Accounts (G-8 Thackeray Hall) to make sure that the courses you have selected are listed accurately and that tuition scholarships and other forms of financial assistance are correctly credited to your account.

Students must be registered during the term they graduate (whether or not they have exhausted their regular funding).

## **1. STATEMENT OF GRADUATE POLICY**

### **1.1. Degrees and Areas of Study**

The Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures of the University of Pittsburgh offers an en route Master of Arts (M.A.) and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

Fields of Study for the en route M.A. and Ph.D. Degrees:

Both degrees are awarded in *Hispanic Languages and Literatures*.

At both academic levels, all students “major” in *Latin American Literatures and Cultural Studies* and elect a minor concentration in either *Peninsular Literature and Cultural Studies*, *Brazilian Literature and Cultural Studies* or *Cultural Studies*.

## 1.2. Admission to Graduate Status

In general, students accepted into the Ph.D. program of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures meet the following criteria:

- 1.2.1. They have completed an undergraduate major in Spanish, Latin American, Luso-Brazilian or Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, or another related field, involving significant work with Spanish or Latin American content.
- 1.2.2. They are prepared to enroll in courses that are taught entirely in Spanish.
- 1.2.3. International Students whose native language is not English must achieve a minimal level of English language proficiency of 90 on the TOEFL (and with a score of at least 22 each in speaking, listening, reading and writing) or 7.0 on the IELTS. International students who have received a degree from an American institution do not need to submit TOEFL or IELTS scores.

### A. *English Language Proficiency Test*

International students who have TOEFL scores below 100 or IELTS below 6 are required to take the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency upon arrival. Based upon the outcome of these tests, students may be required to enroll in courses to improve their command of English.

### B. *English Language Comprehensibility Test*

All University of Pittsburgh graduate students who are not native speakers of English and who have been appointed as TA/TFs *must* be tested before being assigned any teaching duties. This includes non-native speakers of English who have attended universities in the United States, including the University of Pittsburgh, and those who have been TA/TFs in other US institutions.

Please note that any additional language study (in either Spanish or English) that is needed to achieve requisite levels of proficiency cannot be counted toward the 30 or 72 credits required for those degrees because they are undergraduate courses and not at the 2000-level or higher.

## 1.3. Duration of the Program

It is expected that the Ph.D. program will take five years to complete. Incoming students who are offered financial assistance in the form of Teaching Assistantships, Teaching Fellowships or non-teaching University fellowships are, assuming that satisfactory academic progress is maintained, entitled to five (5) years of support, whether or not they already have an M.A. degree when they enter our graduate program. However, students with an M.A. from another university can elect to receive only four (4) years of funding and will be entitled to transfer up to 24 credits upon successfully passing the M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary Examinations during their fourth semester. The decision to do so must be submitted to the departmental Graduate Office in writing by the end of the first week of their second term in the graduate program (normally the first week of January).

#### **1.4. Graduate Advising**

The *Director of Graduate Studies* (DGS) administers the departmental graduate program and coordinates the efforts of individual advisors. S/he is responsible for overseeing the application of the Department's specific rules and requirements within the framework of the University's regulations concerning graduate study. At the beginning of the academic year, the DGS meets with incoming graduate students to discuss the general requirements of the program and to help them think about the overall direction of their courses for the first and subsequent terms in the Department.

The DGS serves as adviser of each student entering the graduate program. New students should make appointments to meet with him/her to begin formally thinking about their preparation for the M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary Examinations, course distribution, and departmental requirements. Students have the right to change advisors at any time. This often happens as a student starts developing clear ideas about his/her Ph.D. project. Students are free to change Advisors after talking with the Chair or DGS. These changes are recorded in the departmental Graduate Office. After a change is made, the student works with the new Advisor who ensures that degree requirements are fulfilled, and that students are on course preparing for their M.A. Comps/ Ph.D. Prelims.

During the registration period each term, students meet individually with their advisers (or with the DGS if they have not chosen adviser yet) to decide upon courses for the following term and to discuss the students' progress to date. In overall terms, the advisor's tasks are to maintain regular contact with students, to advise them regarding University and departmental requirements and rules, to regularly assess their progress toward the successful completion of graduate studies, and to advise them intensively during the preparation for the M.A. Comps/Ph.D. Prelims. Although the fourth term, when these important examinations are given, seems far away when new students are entering the program, this first semester is a good time to start planning.

Usually after the M.A. Comps/Ph.D. Prelims, students ask a graduate faculty member with

whom they wish to develop their dissertation to serve as *Dissertation Director*. The very latest this decision should be made is the semester after the student has successfully passed the M.A. Comps/Ph.D. Prelims (in other words, under normal circumstances, no later than the fifth semester). Under the direction of this person, the student writes the dissertation proposal in preparation for the Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination (normally presented during the sixth or seventh semester).

Upon receiving the faculty member's agreement to serve as Dissertation Director, the student notifies the departmental Graduate Office and fills out a form. If the student has already chosen an Advisor who is also appropriate to serve as the Dissertation Director (or if the Advisor originally assigned to him/her is appropriate), then the new relationship is also recognized by filling out a form. Choosing a Dissertation Director *is the student's responsibility*, limited only by the availability of faculty within the field in which a student expects to specialize, and by the consent of the faculty member selected.

Every year, toward the end of the Spring term, the graduate faculty meets to evaluate student progress. One by one, Advisors analyze the individual student's progress in the program. The Language Coordinator also presents evaluations of the TA/TFs' teaching in the undergraduate program. In the days following the faculty meeting, individual evaluation letters are prepared by the Chair for each student in the graduate program.

If a student wishes to request a waiver of a departmental rule or regulation, s/he should ask the DGS, preferably with a letter of support from his/her advisor. If it is a University rule that the student wishes to have waived, s/he should bring a letter requesting the waiver to the DGS, who forwards it to the A&S Office of Graduate Studies with an explanatory note

If additional information about and/or interpretation of requirements and regulations is needed, advisors can consult the DGS or, if appropriate, refer the students directly to the DGS for further discussion. Students who are not satisfied with their advisors' advice should consult the DGS. If still dissatisfied, they can appeal to the Chair, who may in turn consult with the departmental Graduate Committee, or, in exceptional cases, with the faculty as a whole. If rulings from the Chair's office do not satisfy students, they may wish to file a petition with the A&S Office of Graduate Studies (5141 Sennott Square).

### **1.5. Students' Responsibilities**

Students should acquaint themselves with all regulations concerning graduate study, whether in the *Regulations Governing Graduate Study* ([www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html)), or in this Handbook --we urge you to pay special attention to the Department's "Graduate Degree Milestones" discussed in Section 2, below.

It is *the students' responsibility* to ensure that all requirements are fulfilled, to initiate all

steps leading to their fulfillment, and periodically to confirm that their departmental folders are kept up to date and contain the appropriate forms or letters documenting:

- A. Course Registration, in consultation with the Advisor, in order to ensure that specific requirements for exam preparation will be met.
- B. Any funded student who enters with an M.A. and opts for 4 instead of 5 years of financial support must file that decision in writing.
- C. The submission of the Ph.D. Preliminary Long Paper (or for those pursuing the terminal M.A. degree, the M.A. Research Paper). See below, sections 1.6.1. and 1.6.2. for details and deadlines for submission.
- D. Fulfillment of prerequisites for taking the M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary Examination, and evidence that the Exam has been passed (exam cards) See 2.2.
- E. Designation or change of Advisor or Dissertation Director (form).
- F. The composition of the Dissertation Committee (which should be determined before the submission of the Ph.D. Proposal which in turn initiates the Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination process). Any later changes in the composition of the student's committee must be recorded on the appropriate form in the Office of the Graduate Administrator and, if the student has advanced to Ph.D. candidacy, such changes must be approved, in writing, by the A&S Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.
- G. Evidence that
  - 1) the Ph.D. Proposal has been elaborated on time;
  - 2) both the written and oral segments of the Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination have been taken and approved (forms); and
  - 3) admission to Ph.D. Candidacy has been approved by the A&S Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (letter from the dean).
- H. A statement regarding the language in which the dissertation will be presented. See Section 1.6.2.A.
- I. Doctoral students must keep their Dissertation Directors informed of status of their work. Unless students indicate otherwise, they are assumed to be making progress toward the completion of their dissertations in consultation with their directors and committees as recorded in the file. Students are advised that they should assist the

Dissertation Director in ensuring that this file is kept up to date.

- J. There is a statute of limitations regarding the time to completion of degree. See <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/reggeneral.html#limits> .

## 1.6. Programs/Areas of Study

The Department offers both the Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in *Hispanic Languages and Literatures*.

At both academic levels, all students “major” in *Latin American Languages and Cultural Studies* and elect a minor concentration in either *Peninsular Literature and Cultural Studies*, *Brazilian Literature and Cultural Studies*, or *Cultural Studies*.

The faculty encourages students to give serious thought to their decisions regarding their minor field, which may have implications in terms of their job searches, and their Advisors can provide guidance and advice.

### 1.6.1. The Ph.D. Degree

The Department offers the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in *Hispanic Languages and Literatures*.

All students “major” in Latin American Languages and Cultural Studies and choose a minor concentration in either *Peninsular Literature and Cultural Studies*, *Brazilian Literature and Cultural Studies*, or *Cultural Studies*.

Pertinent literary works and theoretical topics related to these areas (especially the major area) will be included in Core Courses offered by the Department. The Department has also developed a List of 40 basic texts with which students are expected to be familiar. Please note that students are personally responsible for the readings on the list in their major and minor fields, whether or not these have been dealt with in their classes.

All students who aspire to Ph.D. candidacy must:

- A. Pass the *M.A. Comprehensive/PhD. Preliminary Examination*. Details about this examination are found in “Graduate Degree Milestones” in section 2, below.

NOTE: Students who fail to pass the examination can apply for and receive a terminal M.A. degree, but they are not permitted to continue on to study for the Ph.D. The M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary examination *cannot* be retaken *except* upon recommendation of the department’s Graduate Committee and only in response to extraordinary personal circumstances that must be properly



documented.

B. Elaborate and submit a draft of the dissertation project by February 28 of the Spring term in which they take the exam. This draft is a prerequisite for taking this examination and with the exam answers will form the evaluated corpus of writings.

C. Regarding *Coursework and Credits*, students must:

Take, prior to the M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary Examination, a minimum of thirty (30) credits (usually ten [10] courses).

For advancement toward the Ph.D., students must take an additional thirty (30) credits. This means that a total of sixty (60) course credits are required toward the seventy-two (72) credits that are mandatory for the doctoral degree. The remaining twelve (12) credits can be Ph.D. dissertation credits; dissertation credits are *not specifically required* for completion of the Ph.D. degree, but 72 credits are required in every case (see 1.8 for additional detail).

Upon attaining the 72 credits, students normally maintain their full-time, active student status by registering for Full Time Dissertation Study.

D. *Language requirements:*

A prerequisite for undertaking the Proposal Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is evidence of the student's ability to read Portuguese. This can be done by successfully passing (with a grade of B or better) any of the following:

- two (2) terms of beginning Portuguese (PORT 1001 and PORT 1002)
- one (1) term of Portuguese for Spanish speakers
- a Portuguese 1002 equivalency examination
- a 2000-level course in Luso-Brazilian Literature or Culture, conducted primarily in Portuguese.

E. Moving Toward the Dissertation.

After students:

1. complete the minimum of six (6) terms of residence (or their equivalent, i.e. sixty [60] credits) required by the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, and
2. meet the Portuguese language requirement described above, and
3. pass the Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations,

they devote the final stage of the program to preparing a dissertation. Approval of the dissertation topic follows successful completion of the Dissertation Overview/ Ph.D.

Comprehensive Examination conducted by a four-person faculty Committee. That committee includes one faculty member from outside the department. Lecturers and adjunct professors will not be allowed to sit on committees. According to the department's policy, the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is combined with the Dissertation Overview (see 2.3 below).

### **1.6.2. The Ph.D. Dissertation**

A doctoral dissertation is required. It must meet the standards established by the University. As of fall 2004, all dissertations are submitted electronically. Consult <http://training.cssd.pitt.edu/thesisdissertationtemplates.htm> for templates for proper preparation of the text.

Students *may not register* for Ph.D. Dissertation Credits (SPAN 3000) until all other requirements have been completed.

#### The Language of the Dissertation

Dissertations at the University of Pittsburgh are to be presented in English, as prescribed by the Graduate Faculty. Students may, however, request permission to write the dissertation in a language other than English. To do so, the following four-step process should be undertaken immediately after students pass the Proposal Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, in conjunction with the submission of the Application to Candidacy form.

1. Students must complete a special form, the "Application for Permission to Write a Dissertation in a Language Other than English," which must be accompanied by a two-page essay in English summarizing the subject matter of the dissertation and the reasons for needing to write it in Spanish or Portuguese. The application form is available in the Office of the Graduate Administrator.
2. Students' Advisors must provide the Office of Graduate Studies and Research with a rationale for the request.
3. Students have to submit an essay or seminar paper that they have written in English to the Office of Graduate Studies.
4. Students must have an interview with the A&S Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, in order to evaluate their proficiency in English. The office staff contacts the student after the relevant paperwork has been submitted.

#### Steps in Writing the Doctoral Dissertation

The latest time at which a *Dissertation Director* can be chosen (in lieu of such a choice, the Advisor will become the Dissertation Director) is during the months before the elaboration of the proposal and the preparation for the Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive examination (usually during the sixth or seventh semester). Dissertation Directors must be designated, in writing. The form for this purpose is available in the Office of the Graduate Administrator, and is kept on file there.

When faculty members agree to direct dissertations, they advise the candidates regarding their choices of topic and, in consultation with the students, help make arrangements for appointing the members of the Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive *Committee*. This committee, composed of the Dissertation Director, two (2) other departmental faculty members, and one (1) outside faculty member, will evaluate the Dissertation Overview and the associated Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination. All four must be members of the Graduate Faculty, but additional graduate or non-graduate faculty may participate, if so desired. (Note: Lecturers and adjunct professors will not be allowed to sit on committees.) Normally, this committee continues as the Dissertation Committee.

Upon completion of the *Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam*, students then develop their Dissertations under the guidance of their Directors. After the latter approve the penultimate drafts, students distribute copies to the other committee members for a preliminary reading and evaluation, thus allowing the students time for revision before their final defense.

Once a revised dissertation is approved by the Dissertation Director, the student must coordinate the date and time of the defense with the other members of the Committee. The Graduate Administrator confirms the date and time with all members of the dissertation committee. *At least three (3) weeks* before the defense date, the candidate submits "hard" copies of the revised dissertation to the Director and other members of the committee. The defense itself should take place *no later than three (3) weeks* before the end of the term in which students anticipate receiving their degrees, in either the Fall or Spring. Students who schedule their defenses closer to the end of the semester risk postponing receipt of their Ph.D. degrees until the following semester.

Upon successful completion of the defense, the Graduate Administrator sends formal notification to the Office of the A&S Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

Please note that *the candidate is required to be registered* during the academic term in which the dissertation defense is held. Students should consult with the Graduate Administrator to determine the number of credits, if any, for which they must enroll in the final term. Also note that the department specifically *does not hold* dissertation defenses in the Summer term.

## Graduation:

At the beginning of the semester in which students expect to graduate, *they must apply for graduation* at Office of the A&S Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Application deadlines are published, and following the first deadline, rapidly increasing fees are charged for late application.

### **1.7 Distribution of Graduate Course Credit**

Students are required to take a *minimum* number of substantive courses within the department. Only upper level courses having graduate course numbers, can count toward the substantive course credits required for the Ph.D. degree.

#### **1.7.1. Ph.D. Course Requirements**

Students who are working toward the Ph.D. degree must take a total of forty-eight (48) credits (16 classes) of substantive courses in the department, of the 72 credits required for the Ph.D. The remaining twenty-four (24) credits may be amassed through any combination of credits earned in courses taken outside the department, six (6) credits transferred from other institutions, no more than six (6) credits of Directed Study (SPAN 2902 or SPAN 3902), or three (3) credits of M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary exam preparation (SPAN 2990), or six (6) credits of Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination (SPAN 3910), and up to a maximum of twelve (12) credits of Ph.D. dissertation (SPAN 3000).

48 Credits (of 60) Regular Courses in the department, including Methods and Portuguese 1010.

12 Credits (of 60) *any* combination of  
 additional regular courses within the department,  
 courses from outside the department,  
 up to 2 Directed Study courses,  
 MA Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary Exam preparation  
 (3 credits), and/or  
 Dissertation Overview/Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam prep.  
 (6 credits)

Plus any combination of the previous options and Ph.D. Dissertation Research to arrive at the required 72 credits. (Remember that *00 level courses*, i.e., in English, Spanish, or any other language, *do not count* toward the 72 credit total.)

Course sequence:

During their first two years in the program, students are required to take at least two courses of each of these three categories:

## A) Period:

Colonial

Nineteenth/early twentieth century

Mid-twentieth/twenty-first centuries

## B) Area:

Andes

Caribbean

Diaspora

Lusophone

Mexico and Central America

Peninsular

Southern Cone

Transatlantic

Transpacific

US Latino

## C) Topics/Perspectives:

Afro-Hispanic/Afro-Lusophone Studies

Decolonial/Postcolonial

Gender and Sexualities

Genres

Film and Media Studies

Indigenous Studies

History and Genetic Criticism

Indigenous Studies

Ontologies, Philosophies, Epistemologies

Performance Studies

In the spring of their third year, students will be required to take a course on academic writing and research methods, Spanish 2300. The minimum requirements/goals of this course include writing a complete draft of their prospectus and a draft of their grant proposal. If possible, work in a draft of an academic article may be part of the goals.

During their first two years in the program, students are required to take a least two courses of each of the three categories listed. A committee of three members chosen by the students will mentor them and evaluate progress to meet this requirement. The committee must be fully functional by the end of March of the spring term prior to taking the

comprehensive exams. Students cannot double-dip: if a course satisfies more than one requirement, they will have to choose which one they are taking the course for. When indicating their teaching preference, faculty members will submit a complete syllabus of their graduate course and suggest which requirement/s it satisfies. The graduate committee will then meet to determine which course or courses effectively satisfy which requirement/s and, at least two weeks prior to the beginning of registration, include that information in the course schedule.

### **1.7.2. Ph.D. Degree with an M.A. from Another Institution (4 years of financial support)**

Students who enter the department with a Master's degree from another institution must complete thirty (30) credits of substantive coursework in the department, of the seventy-two (72) total credits required for the Ph.D. degree. The remaining forty-two (42) credits may be distributed among credits transferred from the institution from which they earned their M.A. degree (no more than 24 credits, which must be approved by the Graduate Committee), coursework taken at the University of Pittsburgh in departments or programs other than Hispanic Languages and Literatures, up to three (3) credits of Ph.D. Preliminary Exam preparation (SPAN 2990), up to six (6) credits of Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam/Overview (SPAN 3910), and up to a maximum of twelve (12) credits of Ph.D. dissertation (SPAN 3000).

#### Acceptance of Transfer Credits

A. Graduate Students who have taken graduate coursework at another institution but have not earned the M.A. can petition for the transfer of six (6) credits toward the M.A. in the department, pending Graduate Committee approval.

B. Students who have earned an M.A. in a field other than the Humanities or the Social Sciences at another institution can petition for the transfer of six (6) credits from their M.A. program toward earning either another M.A. or toward the Ph.D. in the department, whichever is applicable, pending approval by the Graduate Committee.

C. Students who have earned an M.A. in a field of the Humanities or the Social Sciences at another institution, and decide that they wish only 4 years of support, can petition to transfer a block of twenty-four (24) credits toward the Ph.D. in the department.

#### Cross Registration Credits

Students may register for graduate courses at Carnegie Mellon University, Duquesne University, The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Robert Morris University. Such work, if approved in advance by the student's advisor, will not be considered as transfer credit,

and may be counted for credit toward a graduate degree. The grade earned will be used in computing the student's quality point average (QPA).

### Requirements in Terms of Grades

Graduate students may take the “pass/fail” option for a *maximum* of two (2) courses within each degree program. These options should usually apply to Directed Study Courses. The student must fill out a special form (available in the office of the Graduate Administrator) which serves as an agreement between the student and the instructor confirming that the student chooses this grade/credit option for the course.

Students may also register for courses as Audits, which receive N grades. N grades do not count toward the thirty (30)-credit M.A., or toward the seventy-two (72)-credit Ph.D., nor do they satisfy the nine (9) -credit minimal full-time registration requirement for TA/TFs.

See also “General Regulations” in the current A&S *Graduate and Professional Bulletin* [www.umc.pitt.edu/bulletins/graduate/index.html](http://www.umc.pitt.edu/bulletins/graduate/index.html)

## **1.8 Financial Aid**

### Eligibility

Students are eligible for financial aid in whatever form (i.e., Teaching Assistantships and Fellowships, non-teaching fellowships such as the Mellon Pre-Doctoral, Lillian B. Lawler, Provost’s Development, Provost’s Humanities, Foreign Language and Area Studies , Cultural Studies, etc.) as part of their maximum of 5 years of support.

Students entering the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from elsewhere and wish to transfer 24 credits are eligible for a *maximum* of four (4) years of financial aid.

Students who are U.S. citizens or residents can also receive financial assistance, usually taking the form of guaranteed student loans, through the office of financial aid.

### Applications for Grants, Fellowships and Prizes

Graduate students already in the program who intend to apply for grant or fellowship support, either internal or external, are strongly urged to present the first draft of their fellowship proposal to their advisor or other interested faculty member, a minimum of two (2) calendar months before the deadline for receipt of applications, so that it can be revised to assure that the proposal that they put forward is of the highest possible quality.

In the case of the Andrew W. Mellon, the Lillian B. Lawler and the Alfredo Gutiérrez

Fellowships, the application process consists of two parts. Students hand in their completed applications at the departmental Graduate Office by the set deadline. They are then read and ranked by the members of the graduate committee, and the department submits the finalists to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, for consideration by the respective university-wide committees.

Memos with application forms, information about requirements, and the departmental deadlines will be distributed by the departmental Graduate Office as soon as they become available.

## **2. GRADUATE DEGREE MILESTONES**

### **2.1. M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary Examination**

All students who wish to pursue a Ph.D. degree in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures must take the M.A. Comprehensive/Ph.D. Preliminary examination. This includes those students who come to the Department with an M.A. from the University of Pittsburgh or from another institution. A student, having received a passing, automatically advances to the Ph.D. program. Those who wish to have an “en route” M.A. degree officially awarded at this point in their academic career, and who have not chosen to transfer 24 credits from a previous M.A., can apply for it.

#### Overview:

The M.A. comprehensive/Ph.D. preliminary exams take place in mid-March of the fourth semester of the program, the week after spring break. In order to take the exam, students must have completed all courses (i.e., have no incompletes) at the time in which they take the exams. The exams allow students to demonstrate a specialized knowledge of the fields most relevant to support the proposed dissertation research. (That is, the exams demonstrate that the student is qualified to undertake the proposed research in terms of relevant content as well as theory and methods.) The exams have two components, a written and an oral one.

**The written component** consists of a take-home assignment and a concise draft of the dissertation topic. During the seven days of their take-home assignment (for example, questions are given Thursday 9.00am and responses are due Wednesday 9.00am) students should write three short essays (12-15 double-spaced pages each) each based on one of the three reading lists (of 20-25 items each) composed by the students in consultation with all the members of their comprehensive exams committee. Students should finalize forming their comps committees no later than the last day of September prior to taking the exams and present the final approved lists no later than the last day of October of the same term.



Each committee should consist of three faculty members from the department one of which will chair it. The comprehensive exams committee may, but does not have to be, the same as the dissertation committee. Each list has to focus on distinct but complementary aspects of the topic that the student expects to be the subject of her/his dissertation. A list concentrates on the main dissertation field and the other two on critical, theoretical, geographical or historical areas that complement and provide a larger context of debate for the issues discussed in the dissertation field. Each list should include approximately 50% of primary and secondary texts and be prefaced by a short statement (½ to one page) explaining how the list comes together. Each member of the committee shall prepare two questions per list and the director chooses one from each member for each essay of which, in turn, the student chooses one to answer. (In other words, students have to answer one of three questions per field or list).

**The short draft** of the topic of the dissertation should be a concise 10-15 double-spaced page document that describes the student's dissertation project. Typically, the draft should include the following elements: (1) Introduction; (2) Corpus; (3) Contribution to the field and research preparation; (4) Methodology and work plan. Students must hand in their short dissertation project drafts no later than February 28th of the corresponding term. The document will be graded by all members of the committee, and the result will be taken into account in the overall grading process of the exams.

**The oral part of the exams**, of no more than two-hours, is conducted by the student's examination committee within two weeks of the written component. The subject matter of the oral exam will be the three essay responses and the proposal draft. Students will meet with the examination committee to discuss the written exams and the direction of dissertation research, including the nature of the prospectus to be presented at the end of the third year. The committee should help the student identify strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions for improvement.

**Results.** The comprehensive/preliminary exams are taken on a Pass/Fail basis. All three areas sections of the exam must be approved in order to receive a pass. (Each member of the committee should grade each written essay and its oral defense separately on a pass/fail basis; the final grade for each area will result from the addition of each member's grade.) In the case of a fail in all three areas of the exams the student will be asked to leave the Program and will be offered the option of applying for a terminal M.A. In the case of a fail in one of the three areas, a written commentary must be provided by each of the examiners to the chair of the examining committee, who will forward them with the committee's report to the Director of Graduate Studies and a recommendation of whether the student should or not be allowed to retake that portion of the exams. The Graduate Committee will determine whether the student may retake the exam; if a retake is approved by the Graduate Committee, the student must retake it by the end of the term, which should include time for its oral defense. If the student does not pass the exams for a second time, s/he will be asked to leave the program with the option of applying for a terminal MA.

## **2.2. Doctoral Degree**

Prior to scheduling the Ph.D. Proposal Overview and Comprehensive Examination, a student must demonstrate reading ability in Portuguese, in addition to Spanish and English. This requirement can be fulfilled in one of four ways (see 1.6.2.B.)

### **2.2.1. Ph.D. Proposal Overview and Comprehensive Exam Requirements**

At the time a student is ready to begin to develop a dissertation proposal, s/he must formalize an intellectual relationship with a Dissertation Director. The student must explicitly ask a specific faculty member to serve in this capacity, and the faculty member must agree to do so. This agreement is registered on a form available in the Graduate Office and kept on file in the student's departmental folder. The Dissertation Director may or may not have previously served as the student's academic advisor. The Dissertation Director also serves as the student's academic advisor from this point through the dissertation defense.

A candidate for the Ph.D. must present the Proposal Overview and take the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination:

- a) no later than 12 months after having passed the MA comprehensive/Ph.D. preliminary exam if the 24 credits transfer option was chosen, or no later than 18 months after having passed the MA comprehensive/Ph.D. preliminary exam if the 0-6 credits transfer option was chosen.
- b) at least two (2) terms (eight [8] months) before the intended date of graduation.

In preparation, a student can enroll for up to six (6) credits of "Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination" (SPAN 3910). However, no more than three (3) credits of "Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam" may be taken in any one term.

When a student is ready to submit the Ph.D. Proposal and to take the Comprehensive Examination, s/he invites, in consultation with the Dissertation Director, two (2) other members from the department's graduate faculty and one (1) faculty member from outside the department to serve on the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam Committee (lecturers and adjunct professors will not be allowed to sit on committees.), and then to continue to serve on the dissertation committee.

When the draft of the written proposal, usually at least twenty (20) to forty (40) double-spaced pages in length, has been approved by the Dissertation Director, the student gives it to the committee members. On the basis of the proposal, (and within approximately one week), committee members prepare and return written questions to the Dissertation Director who in turn gives them to the student. These are designed to clarify the proposal and to test the student's range of knowledge and preparation for

developing the dissertation successfully. The student answers these questions in writing, returning the answers to the Committee members within two (2) weeks. Committee members then have at least one (1) week to read and evaluate these materials before the date of the exam. For scheduling purposes, the student should be prepared to present the proposal to the Committees at least one (1) month before the date of the examination

During the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, the student is called upon to discuss both the answers to the Committee members' questions and the dissertation proposal in a two-hour oral exam before the Committee. On the basis of the evaluations of the proposal, the written answers, and the oral exam, Committee members may either recommend that the student be advanced to Ph.D. candidacy or instruct him/her to do additional work as deemed appropriate. The oral exam serves as the student's Ph.D. Comps, and the results are reported as such to both the department and the Office of Graduate Studies.

A student *may not register* for dissertation credits (Span 3990) until s/he has been admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree, having: 1) successfully presented the Proposal Overview and Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam, 2) advised the Graduate Office that s/he intends to present the dissertation in English or has successfully petitioned the Dean for permission to present in another language, and 3) completed at least sixty (60) credits of coursework.

Students must meet with their dissertation committees yearly, at a date prior to the annual meeting at which the faculty evaluate the academic progress of all students in the program.

### **2.2.2. Admission to Candidacy and Incomplete Grades**

A student may present the Ph.D. Proposal Overview and Comprehensive Examination even with grades of "I" or "G" on the academic record; however, a student will *not* be recommended for candidacy for the Ph.D. degree as long as there is more than one "I" or "G" grade in departmental courses. This means, in effect, that a student cannot register for Ph.D. Dissertation Credits – courses that normally eliminate the need to enroll in additional coursework – as long as there is more than one "I" or "G" grade on the transcript.

### **2.2.3. The Dissertation Defense**

Upon being advanced to doctoral candidacy, a student then works on the dissertations under the guidance of the Dissertation Director. This process is expected to take a year, or possibly more time.

After the Dissertation Director reads and approves a penultimate draft, a candidate, in consultation with all the members of the Committee, sets a tentative date for the defense, and advises the Graduate Office of that intention. The Graduate Administrator reconfirms

the date and time with the Committee members, schedules a room for the defense, and submits an announcement of the defense for publication in the *University Times*.

*At least* three (3) weeks before this date, the candidate distributes individual paper copies of the revised dissertation to the Dissertation Director and the other members of the Committee in preparation for the oral defense. At this point the candidate should also give a copy of the dissertation to the graduate administrator so that it is available for other faculty and graduate students in the department. This copy is to remain in the office of the graduate administrator at all times; no copies of it, in all or in part, can be made.

Upon successful completion of the oral defense, the Graduate Administrator will notify the Office of the Dean. It is not uncommon, even though an oral defense is successful, for the Committee to require modifications of the text which must receive final approval from the Dissertation Director. Upon completion of all outstanding details, students are required personally to hand carry to the Graduate Dean's office (5141 Sennott Square) a) the properly signed Electronic Thesis Defense (ETD) approval form; b) an uploaded file to ETD submission page; c) three (3) paper copies of the abstract; d) two (2) copies of the title page; e) a signed Survey of Earned Doctorate form; f) University Microfilm Agreement, and g) a receipt for processing and microfiche (in 2004, \$85.00, paid at Student Payment Center (G-7 Thackeray Hall). Please refer to templates at <http://training.cssd.pitt.edu/thesisdissertationtemplates.htm>. If there are Co-Directors of the dissertation, both must personally sign or initial all the relevant documentation before it is handed in at the Dean's Office.

#### **2.2.4. Other Specifications**

##### A. Language.

A candidate may present the examinations in English or Spanish, whichever language is most comfortable. Students whose native language is neither Spanish nor English will be given an additional 30 minutes to complete both the AM and the PM questions. Please note that University regulations *require* Ph.D. candidates hoping to present their dissertation in a language other than English to request permission to do so and to demonstrate English language competence to the satisfaction of the Office of Graduate Studies. This process occurs after the proposal is successfully defended, and as a prerequisite to advancement to candidacy. Request forms are available in the departmental Graduate Office (see 1.6.3.A.).

##### B. Repetition of Examinations.

Failed Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations *may not* be retaken *except* upon recommendation of the Graduate Committee of the department and only in response to extraordinary personal circumstances that must be properly documented.

### C. Dissertation Research Using Humans as Subjects

The University of Pittsburgh is guided by the ethical principals regarding all research involving humans as subjects, as set forth in the report of the National Commission for the Protection of Human of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (*Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects for Research* [the “Belmont Report”]).

Most research at the university involving humans as subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before it is allowed to proceed. For the complete text of IRB policies and practices, see <http://www.irb.pitt.edu/> or contact the IRB at (412) 692-4370.

### D. Graduation Requirements

Any student who plans to complete degree requirements for either the en route M.A. or the Ph.D. in any given term must apply for graduation in the Office of Graduate Studies (5141 Sennott Square). Every term, university calendars announce deadlines for such applications, after which late fees are charged. Students must be registered for at least one credit, or, if applicable, for Full Time Dissertation Study (FTDS) during the term in which they plan to graduate.

### E. Student Conduct

Being a member of the University of Pittsburgh community is a privilege. This privilege comes with the responsibility to act in accordance with all institutional rules and policies. This *Student Code of Conduct (Code)* provides information on behavioral expectations and outlines the process used to address Violations of these expectations. Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible members of the University community. Students who violate the Code will be subject to disciplinary action by the University, when such conduct takes place on University Property or in the course of a University-sponsored or University-supervised activity.

*In addition, conduct off-campus may be subject to disciplinary action by the University if that conduct: 1) threatens the health, welfare, safety, or educational environment of the University community or any individual member thereof, or otherwise disrupts the neighboring environments; and/or 2) is considered by the University to be a serious offense that would negatively reflect upon the Student’s character and fitness as a member of the Student body; and/or 3) is an incident occurring within the University of Pittsburgh Police jurisdiction.*