Graduate Student Handbook

Master of Arts in Romance Languages

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

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Introduction 1

Programs of Study 2

Foreign Language Requirement 3

Transfer Credits & Course Load 4

Forms 5

The Comprehensive Examination 6

The Comprehensive Examination Committee 7

The Thesis 9

Graduate Assistantships 10

1

INTRODUCTION

The graduate program in Romance Languages will lead to an M.A. degree in Romance Languages with a French or Spanish option and a concentration in one of two areas: language/culture/civilization or literature. The program both prepares students for further graduate study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and provides advanced work for teachers of French or Spanish in secondary school and colleges. It also offers the opportunity for rigorous advanced study in the humanities to qualified persons from non-academic professions.

Graduate students are expected to read and conform to the directions and requirements stated in all section of the Graduate Catalog that pertain to their program and to their remaining in good standing with the Graduate School and the University.

Moreover, the department distributes explanatory materials authored by our advisors and updated periodically, such as the “Master of Arts - Roman Languages” brochure, the two-page summary of requirements and objectives entitled “UNO:M.A, in Romance Languages”, the departmental Newsletter, “the reading lists” for both the French and the Spanish options on which the preparation for the comprehensive examination is based, and the present “Graduate Student Handbook,” Most of these documents are on display in the organizer placed by the door of the departmental office LA 241. All are also available from the Graduate Coordinator and are posted on our website.

The Coordinator of Programs advises all Romance Language graduate students in planning their programs, both comprehensively and semester by semester. A cumulative file of each student’s progress is kept in the Graduate Coordinator’s office and should be referred to each time the student is advised. The Graduate Coordinator keeps the students informed of important deadlines and of anticipated course offerings in semesters ahead. He/She makes sure that the “Advisors’ Guide to Advanced Course Offering in Foreign Languages” (issued twice a year in October and March) is widely disseminated among graduate students, and that the latter pay attention to all the relevant details, including the courses labeled ROML, courses that are taught in English for both the French and the Spanish students, and that most of them are 6000-level courses.

The Graduate Coordinator counsels students when they have problems, and he/she listens to their grievances and complaints. The Chair of the Department also welcomes students’ questions, inquiries, suggestions and complaints. The students may also voice their opinions on the program anonymously in the yearly poll for graduating students.

Moreover, the major professors chosen by advanced students to advise them on their preparation for the comprehensive exams may also be consulted on matters concerning the students’ progress in the program, and their career objectives.

2

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

To aid you in the decisions you must make regarding your graduate education, here is a summary of the requirements for the various options available to you.

a. Languages/Culture/Civilization OR b. Literature

a. Non-thesis OR b. Thesis

- 33 credits in course work with at least 18 in courses numbered over 6000 - 30 credits in course work with at least 18 in courses numbered over 6000 including up to 6 credits in thesis research.

Please note the following:

 Satisfactory performances on a comprehensive examination (written and oral) will be required. Candidates in the Languages/Culture/Civilization area must demonstrate proficiency in one period of literature which they may select and are thus strongly encouraged to take several literature courses as well. The basis for preparing for the comprehensive examination is “The Reading List.”

 Reading knowledge at the fourth-semester level of a second Romance Language (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian) or Latin will be required. Proof of completion of this requirement ought to be on file before the student approaches the comprehensive examination stage.

3

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Degree candidates must be certified as having proficiency at the fourth semester level of a second Romance Language (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian) or Latin.

There are two ways to certify that one has this proficiency:

1. Presentation of evidence (or an official transcript) that the student has passed the equivalent of at least a fourth semester’s work in that language with a grade of B or better in the last course, or with an average of B or better in all college courses taken in the language- all such evidence subject to approval by the Department and by the Graduate School. Completion of this course work, moreover, must have been no earlier than six years prior to the time students enters his/her graduate program at UNO.

2. A ‘PASS’ on a test designed at the level of the final examination in the fourth semester course in the language for which he/she is being tested. The student will be responsible for making arrangements with an appropriate Foreign Language faculty member for this service.

Testing in Latin is done by the UNO Foreign Languages Department. Students may repeat the foreign language test as often as necessary to make a passing score.

The foreign language requirement may be satisfied at any time during the candidate’s program, but must be satisfied prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

4

TRANSFER CREDITS AND COURSE LOAD

As stated in the Graduate Catalog, “a total of 12 hours in extension and transfer credit may be used in a master’s degree program, if approved by the department and the Dean of the Graduate School, and if the candidate has completed at least nine hours of graduate residence at UNO with an overall B average.” Application for transfer credit should be initiated in the offices of the Graduate Coordinator.

Up to 6 hours of relevant course work from other departments in the university may be applied toward the M.A. in Romance Languages degree. Prior approval by the Graduate Coordinator is required.

If a student’s knowledge of the language of the other option is sufficient, courses offered in the other option may be selected and their credits applied to the total of 33 credits needed to graduate from the main option. No more than 6 credits in French for a student in the Spanish option, and vice versa will be allowed. The choice of such a route may also serve as a quick way to fulfill the language requirement needed to complete the main option (see Foreign Language Requirement).

Courses labeled ROML may be chosen by students in both options, as they are being taught in English and are aimed at the students of both options. The professors teaching them have command of English, French, Spanish, and other Romance languages as well.

The maximum course load allowed by the Graduate School is 12 semester hours in a regular semester and 9 in the summer term. Most full-time students take at least four semesters to complete the M.A. program. A maximum of 6 graduate credits may also be earned during summers. Part-time students often work on their degrees for several years. The department is prepared to accommodate students more or less at their own pace so long as a reasonable degree of continuity is sustained. It should be noted, however, that the Graduate School requires completion of the master’s degree program within six years from the time of initial enrollment. For further details, see the Graduate Catalog.

Students holding graduate assistantships have to be enrolled in 9 credits every semester (see Graduate Assistantships, below).

5

FORMS

A number of forms must be filed out and submitted to the Graduate School during the course of the M.A. program. In most instances these forms are prepared in the Graduate Coordinator’s office with assistance from the student. The two most important of these are as follows:

Application for Admission to Candidacy: This form may be submitted at any reasonable time after the student has completed at least 12 semester hours of work with B or better grades and an overall B average. The from consists of a summary of the student’s work completed and work yet to be done; it also states the student’s thesis topic (thesis option) and the names of the professors appointed to his/her examination committee (both thesis and non-thesis option). It must be submitted no later than at the specified date in the semester before the one in which the student expects to graduate. Exact dates are printed in the calendar in the opening pages of the Graduate Catalog, or are available on-line. The Coordinator will assist in the filing of this form.

Request for Master’s Examination: In the M.A in Romance Languages, the examination being referred to here may mean two things: a) the comprehensive examination for the students in the non-thesis option or b) the thesis defense for the students in the thesis option.

For students who have completed all their course work and are taking only their comprehensive exam or their thesis defense during their last semester at UNO, registration in the course labeled French 7040 or Spanish 7040, “Examination Only” will be required. The 7040 courses earn no credit for the student and cannot be taken twice.

One of the required forms is filled out entirely by the student on-line and without assistance from the Coordinators. It is the Application for Master’s Degree (Diploma) and must be filed during registration at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to graduate

When pertinent to individual students, other forms having to do with transfer credits and exemption from taking the foreign language test are transacted from the Coordinator’s office.

 6

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Soon after a student has completed his/her course work, and after having fulfilled the second Foreign Language requirement, he/she will be scheduled for a three-hour written comprehensive examination. When all examination committee members have read the written exam in its entirety, the student will have a one-hour oral exam on the material of the written exam and on the other appropriate material, such as the entirety of the “Reading Lists” in the chosen areas.

Our MA students who live outside the state of Louisiana may opt to come to campus to take the MA Comprehensive Examination, the written and the oral exams, or they may opt to use UNO’s partner in online testing, Proctor U. If the oral exam is online, students will set up a Skype appointment with their examination committee.

To assist faculty in verifying student identity in online courses, the University of New Orleans partners with Proctor U, a nationally-recognized leader in online exam proctoring services. Proctor U provides a convenient, affordable, and secure way for students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable Internet connection.

Pricing for Proctor U

* $8.75 for exams up to 30 minutes
* $17.50 for exams from 31 up to 60 minutes
* $25.00 for exams from 61 up to 120 minutes
* $33.75 for exams from 121 up to 180 minutes
* $42.50 for exams beyond 180 minutes

For more information on using Proctor U, please click on the following link:

<http://www.uno.edu/distance-education/online-testing.aspx>

In conference with the students, the Major Professor chosen by the student selects areas of study and designates them as the subject matter of the examination, as described in the preamble to the “Reading Lists.” A committee of three faculty members (the Major Professor and two members) will examine the candidate for the M.A. in Romance Languages in four areas.

French M.A. candidates in the Literature track prepare 3 of the 7 literature areas (Medieval, Renaissance, 17th century, 18th century, 19th century, 20th-21st century, Comparative Romance Literatures to 1800) and 1 area in Language/Culture/Civilization.

French M.A. candidates in Language/Culture/Civilization prepare 3 of the 7 areas in that track (Historical French Linguistics, Descriptive French Linguistics, Applied French Linguistics, Romance Linguistics, French Civilization I, French Civilization II, French Civilization III) and 1 area in

 7

Literature. No more than 2 areas above may be selected either in Linguistics or Civilization. Students in this option may not choose the “Comparative Romance Literatures” list as their sole literary option.

Spanish M.A. candidates in Literature prepare 3 of the 8 literature areas (Spanish Medieval Literature, Golden Age I: Renaissance, Golden Age II: Baroque, Spanish 18th and 19th century, Spanish 20th-21st century, Spanish American Literature, Comparative Romance Literature to 1800 and 1 area in Language/Culture/Civilization.

Spanish M.A. candidates in Language/Culture/Civilization prepare 3 of the Language/Culture/Civilization areas (Historical Spanish Linguistics, Descriptive Spanish Linguistics, Applied Spanish Linguistics, Romance Linguistics, Spanish Civilization I, Spanish Civilization II, Spanish American Civilization I, Spanish American Civilization II) and 1 area in literature. No more than 2 areas above may be selected either in Linguistics or in Civilization. Students in this option may not choose the “Comparative Romance Literatures” list as their sole literary list.

The Reading Lists on which the examination is based may be obtained from the Graduate Coordinator and are posted on the website.

THE COMPREHSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

The examination committee for the comprehensive examination is composed of three members of the graduate faculty with expertise in the areas chosen for the exam. The student is generally given some voice in the selection of the committee members, especially the Major Professor.

The Major Professor is responsible for advising the student on how to put together his/her choice of track and areas selected from the appropriate “Reading Lists,” and on the composition of the examining committee.

The committee gives a pass/fail to each area of the written. If a “pass” was secured in all four areas, the candidate proceeds to the oral comprehensive exam. If one of the four areas is judged failing, the student must retake the failed area before being permitted to take the oral exam. If two or more areas are judge unsatisfactory, the student must retake the entire exam before continuing to the oral.

If one section of the written exam is to be retaken, that section must be retaken no earlier than one month during the same semester and no later than the end of the following regular full semester. If the entire exam is to be retaken, it must be retaken no earlier than the beginning of the following regular semester and no later than the end of the following two regular semesters. Summer sessions are not considered regular full semesters.

 8

On the oral comprehensive examination, a majority vote of the committee is required for a passing performance. In the event of failure on the oral exam, the student will be required to take the oral exam again, no earlier than one month during the same semester and no later than the end of the following full semester. Both the written and the oral comprehensive examination may not be repeated more than once.

The Written comprehensive examination lasts three hours and covers four areas, 45 minutes for each area. At least 50% of the written exam must be written in the target language, with the remainder written in English. The oral comprehensive examination is to be scheduled no earlier than three days and no later than seven days after the written exam. The oral exam lasts one hour on average, and starts with the “Explication de texte” in the French option. The candidate receives the test one hour in advance of the time of the oral exam and prepares the explication prior to the actual oral exam. The explication has to be articulated in French. The remainder of the oral exam may be conducted in a mixture of French and English. In the Spanish option, the oral exam lasts an hour on average, and proceeds according to the same rules just mentioned for the French option, except for the “Textual Explication.”

The chair of the examination committee (the Major Professor) has the following responsibilities during the oral comprehensive examination: he/she plans the order of questioning, serves as timekeeper, and conducts the evaluations made by the committee. At the conclusion of the oral comprehensive exam, after the students has left the room, the chair calls for a vote of “pass” or “fail.”

The chair then has the proper reports and forms signed by committee members, and informs the student of the results.

The committee chairperson will inform his/her other colleagues of the candidate’s grade point average prior to the written examination.

The Coordinator will inform the Dean of the Graduate School of the candidates for M.A. with “Honors”.

 9

THE THESIS

Although the thesis is usually drafted late in the program, every student interested in this opinion should from the beginning be giving serious thought to the selection of a topic. Commitment to a topic is not required until sometime well beyond the middle of the program, but two or three ideas, often developing out of courses one that has been taking, should be working in the student’s mind. In some instances, a student may have a thesis topic suggested to him/her by a professor who has been impressed with a paper or report the student has completed in a course. More in-depth research and lengthier writing on topic a student has already investigated and possibly written upon in a seminar are acceptable procedures in fulfilling the thesis requirement. On the other hand, the topic may emerge from an interest that has no direct connection with any of the courses a student has taken. In any event, every student should feel free to approach the appropriate members of the graduate faculty to get their reaction to ideas the student has for a thesis topic.

Although ultimately the thesis topic must have the approval of the Graduate Coordinator in the option, the major professor, and the thesis committee, the choice of topic is the prerogative and the responsibility of the student; topics are never assigned by the department.

The average length of M.A. theses in the Foreign Languages Division is 60 double-spaced typewritten pages, including notes and bibliography. However, the quality of the work is the significant consideration. The M.L.A. Handbook in its most recent edition is to be used for all documentation. A detailed set of guidelines and procedures for the entire project of researching, drafting, and presentation is provided by the Graduate School and given to each student by the Coordinator once the project gets underway. Briefings and elaborations on this important document are made by the Coordinator and the major professor at pertinent times throughout the project.

THESIS DEFENSE

A one-hour oral defense of the thesis is scheduled by the major professor when the final draft of the thesis has been approved by the full committee. Upon the student’s satisfactory response to questions from committee members about the content and form the thesis, examination approval sheets are signed and student is certified for graduation.

Any member of the Graduate Foreign Language Faculty may attend a thesis defense. Only committee members may ask questions. The defense is open to the public.

10

GRADUATE ASSITANTSHIPS

The department offers a limited number of graduate assistantships to qualified, local students.

Assignment of assistants and specification of duties are made according to the needs of the department (which may vary considerably from semester to semester), but in no instance are the duties of an assistant to exceed the equivalent of 20 work-hours per week.

All graduate assistants are classified as full-time students and are responsible for paying all fees. G.A.’s are considered Louisiana residents for fee purposes. Each assistant receives a copy of his/her official appointment (Personnel Action Form).

Appointments are normally for a full nine-month term, but each semester the appropriate supervisors, together with the Department Chair, conduct a review of each assistant’s performance in his/her graduate work and job assignments to give the department assurance that responsibilities are being met.

The Graduate School permits a student to hold an assistantship appointment for a maximum of four semesters. Depending on whether a student receives an appointment at the outset of his/her program or at some later time, the department may reduce the number of semesters he/she is eligible for reappointment. It would be contrary to department policy, for instance, to subsidize a student for two full semesters during which time he/she is engaged only in completing the thesis.

Applications for assistantships may be made at any time, but offers for appointments are generally made the first week of April and again in early November if there are any spring semester vacancies. The Chair makes the appointments upon recommendation by the Coordinator. Application forms are available in the office of the Coordinator, and all application materials should be sent to the Coordinator rather than to the Graduate School. Only ‘degree’ students are eligible to apply; students who enter the program on a ‘provisional’ status are not eligible to hold assistantships. After an applicant has formally accepted an offer for an assistantship, he/she is expected to sign the standard loyalty oath required of university employees and also to certify in writing a commitment to full-time graduate work.

11

Categories of Graduate Assistantships in Romance Languages

The M.A. program in Romance Languages at UNO offers the following types of graduate assistantships (G.A.-ships):

I. Research Assistantships (R.A.-ships): R.A.’s assist senior professors in their research and teaching duties. If the beginning R.A. has completed the 18 credits of graduate course work at the moment of appointment he/she may hold a “type III” appointment. If he/she has not yet completed the 18 credits at the moment of appointment, a “type II” appointment only will be offered.

II. Teaching Assistantships (T.A.-ships): T.A.’s teach one or two sections of an elementary course, under some guidance and supervision provided by the Graduate Coordinator in the option of their choice (French or Spanish).

If the 18 credits have not been completed at the time of the initial appointment, T.A.’s are closely supervised in the conduct of their classes and their final grades have to be approved and their grade sheets entered via computer by the supervising Coordinator before filing.

The review mentioned on page 9, paragraph 4 of the Graduate Student Handbook applies to both categories.

III. Foreign Language Lab Monitors: In rare cases, graduate assistantships may be offered to a qualified graduate student who will work in the Foreign Languages Lab. This type of appointment will depend on departmental resources, needs, and on the candidate’s qualifications.

Term of Appointment

Graduate Assistants hold an assistantship appointment for a maximum of four semesters. If an emergency occurs and G.A. does not serve for one of the four semesters in full, a reappointment for an additional semester may be granted, if the overall performance of the G.A.in question warrants this exception.

12

An assistantship appointment ceases after four semesters whether the graduate student has completed his/her degree requirements by the end of the fourth semester of employment or not. More often than not G.A.’s complete their degree before the four-semester appointment expires.

The obligations of “full-time status”

The following remarks elaborate those on page 10 of the Graduate Student Handbook:

G.A.’s have to maintain full-time student status (a 9-credit course load) at all times. A graduate assistant not enrolled in 9 credits cannot hold his/her appointment.

The G.A.’s first duty is to enroll in the graduate courses offered by our department, and their choices have to be approved by the Graduate Coordinator. These students have been selected to benefit from our program in a manner unavailable to other students, and a certain degree of loyalty is expected to the department allowing them to further (and partially finance) their education at such a high level.

Our degree requirements allow that: “With permission, up to six (6) hours may be taken outside Romance Languages” (see the “note” on page 1 of UNO-M.A. in Romance Languages -- the two-page summary on requirements). This permission will be granted after proper advising, not randomly or automatically.

In the case of a summer appointment, a rare occurrence, the full-time student status entails 6 credits.

The summer appointment is made in addition to, and independent of, the four-semester limit for the regular appointment as a G.A.

Other obligations of a G.A. (advising, meetings, etc.)

A graduate student who holds an assistantship in the M.A. in Romance Languages program at UNO has special obligations with respect to advising.

He/she meets with the Graduate Coordinator during registration to come up with a reasonable choice of courses for the respective semester.

He/she meets periodically with the Graduate Coordinator to get advice/help/information in order for the good standing in grades and overall performance to be maintained. A student not in good standing cannot continue to hold an assistantship, and a sudden withdrawal from an appointment for reasons of unsatisfactory grades (e.g. below the B average) may put the department in an awkward situation.

13

The Teaching Assistants must consult closely with the Graduate Coordinator with respect to their teaching duties.

An official meeting occurs once a semester for all graduate assistants. They meet with the Coordinator and the Chair to discuss issues of pertinence to their studies and their work. Attendance is mandatory. The meeting usually takes place a week or two before the beginning of each term.

Benefits for Graduate Assistants:

Graduate assistant status confers certain special benefits upon those holding such an appointment. Here are some of them:

-Support for their professional pursuits undertaken during or after their graduate studies with us (letters of recommendations, calls in their support, and advising).

-Special events designed for them.

Our graduate assistants are a select group and we are proud of their accomplishments.

Pride in our program and dedication to its success ought to inspire them too.

Useful Addresses:

Departmental website: http://forl.uno.edu

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