

Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures/A&S
MA and PhD Programs in Spanish
AY 2015-16

Key Assessment Findings

Graduate Assessment

Students graduating with an MA in Spanish take a two-day written comprehensive exam in which they are examined on both material covered in their coursework and readings from the Spanish MA reading list that students prepare individually in consultation with the program's faculty. PhD candidates take a three-day examination, half of which is devoted to their area of specialization. PhD students are responsible for a much more extensive reading list in the particular area of their specialization, developed in coordination with their professors' input. Exams are read and evaluated by all members of the section and discussed in detail.

Two Masters level students took and passed graduate comprehensive exams in AY 2015-2016 (Table 1). Both students were native speakers of Spanish, so their language skills were superior. One student performed well on the exam, but one had several gaps. The low performing student had gaps in her knowledge base and did not apply theory as expected. This student came in to our MA from a non-literary background (art and ballet); while this artistic perspective could be incorporated into course work and class discussions, it may not have provided the student with sufficient background knowledge to successfully achieve the desired levels of performance on the exam. As our program becomes more centered on cultural studies, we may find that our comprehensive exam procedures may need to be somewhat modified. Alternately, we may need to require additional coursework from some students coming from non literary backgrounds

Table 1: MA Level Comprehensive Exam Results

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Accuracy of content	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2.00	1.41	2
2) Consistency and clarity of argumentation	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.71	2
3) Pertinent application of literary theory	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2.00	1.41	2

4) Demonstrate ability to connect the text to its socio-cultural context, and, when appropriate, place it in the broader global context	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.0 0	2
5) Superior mastery of written Spanish	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.0 0	2

One student successfully completed the PhD comprehensive exams in 2016 (Table 2). She was found to meet expectations in all areas, and to exceed in the area of written Spanish.

Since our graduate program has been limited due to recent retirements and a delay in the hiring of a Latin Americanist, we temporarily restricted admission to our PhD program over the last two years. With the new hire we made in spring 2016, to begin teaching in fall 2016, we hope to again admit students to our PhD program. And with recent increases in the Teaching Fellow stipend, we hope to enroll more students in both our MA and PhD programs.

In addition, the Graduate Studies committee has agreed to further develop our students' professional preparation for jobs after graduation. To that end, we are coordinating a workshop for the second half of the spring semester where students can learn more about how to better prepare their applications for teaching/research positions in Spanish as well as for other related jobs outside of the academia. This field-specific workshop will be in addition to the support offered by the Office of Career Services.

Table 2: PhD level Comprehensive Exam Results

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1) Accuracy of content	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	2.00	#DIV/0!	1
2) Knowledge of secondary literature in the major fields	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	2.00	#DIV/0!	1
3) Consistency and clarity of argumentation	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	2.00	#DIV/0!	1
4) Pertinent application of literary theory	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	2.00	#DIV/0!	1

5) Demonstrate ability to connect the text to its socio-cultural context, and, when appropriate, place it in the broader global context	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	2.00	#DIV/0!	1
6) Superior mastery of written Spanish	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	#DIV/0!	1