



UNIVERSITY*of*VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT*of*  
SPANISH ITALIAN & PORTUGUESE

**GRADUATE  
HANDBOOK  
2023-24**

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook serves as a guide to policies and procedures governing graduate education in the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese at the University of Virginia, and is meant for use by faculty, staff, and students. Every effort has been made to assure that it is accurate and up-to-date. In case of apparent errors, inconsistencies, or omissions, please notify the Director of Graduate Studies in Spanish. Students should be aware that although the handbook provides links to many of the policies of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) and of the University of Virginia, no attempt has been made to provide comprehensive access to all relevant policies. Further information can be found on the University's website, particularly the pages devoted to [GSAS](#). All University and GSAS policies that officially govern graduate study at UVA are outlined in the [\*Graduate Record\*](#).

The policies stated herein apply to students who matriculate in the Fall Semester of 2023. Returning students have the option of following the policies stated in the edition of the Graduate Handbook that was in effect when they first matriculated, or the ones stated in this edition.

Any questions about the graduate program should be referred to the Director of Graduate Studies.

## **DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES ON THE PHD IN SPANISH**

The PhD program in Spanish admits students holding either a B.A. or an M.A. at the start of their course of study. The requirements for the PhD in Spanish are stated in the *Graduate Record*, outlined here, and explained in the pages that follow. Please keep in mind that a student must be registered for a minimum of 12 credits in any given semester to be considered full-time. Non-Topical Research credits count toward this total.

<b>YEAR ONE</b>	
<b>Fall Semester (1)</b>  Course 1 (3 credits)  Course 2 (3 credits)  Course 3 (3 credits)  Course 4 (3 credits)  GHSS 6050: Intro to Grad Studies (1 credit)	<b>Spring Semester (2)</b>  Course 5 (3 credits)  Course 6 (3 credits)  Course 7 (3 credits)  Course 8 (3 credits)  Submit Statement of Research Interests by May 1
<b>Summer</b> <b>Revise a Seminar Paper for Publication and/or Inclusion in Portfolio. Begin Work on Reading Lists</b>	
<b>YEAR TWO</b>	
<b>First Semester (3)</b>  Course 9 (SPAN 8210, 3 credits)  Course 10 (3 credits)  Course 11 (3 credits)  SPAN 8998: Non-Topical Research (3 credits)	<b>Second Semester (4)</b>  Course 12 (3 credits)  Course 13 (3 credits)  Course 14 (3 credits)  SPAN 8999: Non-Topical Research (3 credits)  GHSS 7050: Professional Life After Grad School (1 credit)  Submit Second-Year Portfolio by April 1
<b>Summer</b> <b>Develop Reading Lists and Exam Questions for Comprehensive Exams</b>	

<b>YEAR THREE</b>	
<b>Fall Semester (5)</b>	<b>Spring Semester (6)</b>
<p>Course 15: SPAN 8900, PhD Comprehensive Exams (12 credits)</p> <p>As part of this course, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Reading Lists and Exam Questions by September 1</li> <li>• Submit Comprehensive Exam Portfolio by November 15</li> <li>• Complete Oral Exam by December 15</li> </ul>	<p>Course 16: SPAN 8901 PhD Dissertation Proposal (12 credits)</p> <p>As part of this course, students will submit and defend the Dissertation Proposal by April 30.</p> <p>Complete Language Requirement by the end of the semester</p>
<b>Summer</b> <b>Begin Dissertation Research</b>	
<b>YEAR FOUR</b>	
<b>Fall Semester (7)</b>	<b>Spring Semester (8)</b>
SPAN 9998: Doctoral Research (12 credits)	SPAN 9999: Doctoral Research (12 credits)
<b>Summer</b> <b>Continue Dissertation Work</b>	
<b>YEAR FIVE</b>	
<b>Fall Semester (9)</b>	<b>Spring Semester (10)</b>
SPAN 9998: Doctoral Research (12 credits)	SPAN 9999: Doctoral Research (12 credits)
<b>Summer</b> <b>Continue Dissertation Work</b>	
<b>YEAR SIX</b>	
<b>Fall Semester (11)</b>	<b>Spring Semester (12)</b>
SPAN 9998: Doctoral Research	SPAN 9999: Doctoral Research

(12 credits)

(12 credits)

Submit and Defend Dissertation by the  
end of the semester

## **1. Advising and Mentoring**

In August of the first year in the program, the DGS will assign a faculty advisor to each graduate student. In principle, that person will serve as the student's advisor until the student identifies a dissertation director in the second semester of the third year, although students are free to change advisors as they develop relationships with individual faculty members. The student should discuss such a change with the DGS and allow the DGS to notify faculty members.

Students will be provided with a blank **Academic Plan** when they enter the program. Additional copies of the Academic Plan can be found on the Resources tab of the Spanish Graduate Program Collab site. They should complete this form in consultation with their advisor, keep it up to date as their plans evolve, and submit a copy to Linda Newman (Linda@virginia.edu). Students should also consult the User's Guide that appears in the appendices for a list of semester-by-semester recommendations.

## **2. Coursework.**

Students must complete 14 graded, three-credit courses, the 12-credit Comprehensive Exams course (SPAN 8900), and the 12 credit Dissertation Proposal course (SPAN 8901), at the University of Virginia. They must also complete two one-credit courses, GHSS 6050 "Introduction to Graduate Studies" and GHSS 7050 "Professional Life After Graduate School." They are expected to pursue a diversified course of study that balances work in their prospective research field with work in other fields of literature and culture, as well as cognate disciplines. To achieve this end, each student must meet the following distribution requirements. A single course may fulfill more than one requirement. Students are expected to select their courses in consultation with their advisor. They are also encouraged to integrate part of their work into a coherent curriculum that will become the secondary field of interest in the comprehensive exams. If that field lies outside the department, it is expected that the student will work with faculty competent in that field.

1. One course on media (archival sciences, oral, manuscript and/or print culture).
2. One course in the History of the Spanish Language.
3. Two courses in theory in the humanities and/or social sciences.
4. One course from an area of study different from that of the student's proposed dissertation research (i.e. a student specializing in Latin America must take at least one course about Peninsular Spain).
5. A minimum of two graduate courses outside the Spanish program. Students are allowed to take up to 4 courses outside the department, including those that they used to satisfy other coursework requirements stated here. Taking a fifth course requires approval of the advisor and the DGS.
6. SPAN 8210, Teaching Foreign Languages

With prior approval of the DGS and the Graduate Committee, students may satisfy any of these requirements, except SPAN 8210, with Independent Study courses (SPAN 9995: Guided Research), keeping in mind that such courses may not reproduce standard courses offered by the department or the University, and require the participation of a supervising faculty member.

The Academic Plan and User’s Guide that appear as appendices to this handbook can be useful in planning out coursework and making sure program requirements are met.

### **3. GHSS 6050 Introduction to Graduate Studies**

First-year students are required to take GHSS 6050 “Introduction to Graduate Studies,” a one-credit course that covers a variety of topics having to do with research, publication, wellness, and professionalization. The DGS is the instructor of record for this course, but most sessions will be lead by staff from the UVA Library and the University’s PhD+ program.

### **4. Statement of Research Interests**

At the end of their first year, students are required to submit a two-page statement outlining their current research interests and their plans for pursuing them. The statement should include the student’s plans for satisfying the language requirement (no. 9 below). This statement should be developed in consultation with the student’s advisor and must be submitted to the advisor and the DGS by May 1. The advisor and DGS will assess the SRI and will provide written feedback to the student by May 15. The student should spend time over the summer reviewing the comments on the research statement and revising seminar papers written during the first year. The student will revise this statement during second year and include it in their Second-Year Portfolio (see below).

The rubric that will be used to evaluate the Statement of Research Interests can be found in the Resources tab of the Spanish Graduate Program Collab site, and should be consulted before students begin work on this document.

### **5. GHSS 7050, Professional Life After Graduate School**

During the second semester of year 2, students will complete a 1-credit course that introduces them to professional life after graduate school. The DGS is the instructor of record for this course, but the course itself is conducted by the University’s PhD+ program.

### **6. Second-Year Portfolio**

By April 1 of year 2, all students will submit a Second-year Portfolio for evaluation. This portfolio will consist of the following:

1. Two heavily-revised course papers and/or a published article.
2. A revised Statement of Research Interests that includes a one-page bibliography (see above).
3. The names of 3 tenure-track professors who have agreed to serve as **comprehensive examination committee members** (See below for details).
4. An unofficial transcript showing all courses taken during the first two years of graduate study, and grades received during the first three semesters.

The portfolio will be evaluated by those members of the tenure-track Spanish faculty who have taught the student, using an established rubric. That rubric can be found on the Resources tab of the Spanish Graduate Program Collab site and should be consulted before a student begins work on the portfolio. By May 15, the DGS will provide the student feedback on their performance. Should the faculty decide

that the student's performance does not warrant continuation in the program, the student will be granted a terminal MA. Otherwise, students are urged to spend their second summer developing the contents of the Comprehensive Exam Portfolio (see below).

## 7. Comprehensive Examination

### General Description

During the Fall Semester of year 3, the student will enroll in 12 credits of SPAN 8900, PhD Comprehensive Exams. A member of the student's comprehensive examination committee will serve as the instructor of record for that course. Under the direction of the committee, the student will develop a Comprehensive Exam Portfolio (contents described below). The reading lists must be finalized by September 1. The portfolio as a whole must be submitted by November 15. The committee will evaluate the contents of the portfolio and conduct an oral exam (described below) no later than December 15.

### The Comprehensive Exam Committee

The comprehensive exam committee must consist of at least two members of the department's tenure-track faculty. The third member must be a tenure-track faculty member, but may be from outside the department.

### The Comprehensive Exam Portfolio

The Comprehensive Exam Portfolio will consist of the following (Items 2-4 are further described below):

1. A table of contents and a 3-5 page statement framing the contents of the portfolio.
2. Three Reading Lists (Primary Research Field, Secondary Research Field, General Area) as finalized by September 1.
3. Teaching Materials.
4. Two Field Papers, one for each of the research fields, primary and secondary, described below.

**Reading Lists:** Each student shall construct three reading lists for the comprehensive exam, as well as two questions that will guide the composition of the two field papers, one question per paper. The lists and questions will be created in consultation with and approved by their Comprehensive Exam Committee. Students are encouraged to begin constructing these lists during their two years of coursework, but must have them approved by the Comprehensive Exam Committee by September 1 of the semester in which they take SPAN 8900. It is the student's responsibility to inform the DGS that their lists have been approved.

- 1) **Primary Field of Research:** Roughly 40 texts, including both primary and secondary sources. Fields can be organized in a variety of ways, including but not limited to period, genre, and/or theoretical approach. The list must be accompanied by a question that will guide the composition of the field paper about this list.
- 2) **Secondary Field of Research:** This list may cover, but is not limited to, a theoretical approach, a cognate discipline or field, and/or a methodological approach, and will consist of roughly 30 texts, including both primary and secondary sources. The list must be

accompanied by a question that will guide the composition of the field paper about this list.

- 3) **General Area List:** This list encompasses a broad series of texts/objects from an identifiable field of Hispanic or Luso-Hispanic studies. Roughly 30 texts. Examples include but are not limited to: Modern Iberian Literary and Cultural Studies; Latin American Literature; Islamic Iberia; Modern Narrative; Text and Image. This list does not require an overall question or a field paper, but *does* require the submission of the Teaching Materials described below.

**Field Papers:** In conjunction with the comprehensive exam committee, the student will develop one broad exam question that covers the major texts, genres, themes, issues, and controversies of each of the two research fields. In devising these questions, the student and the committee should keep in mind that the purpose of these papers is to frame the basic issues, questions, and approaches of the field of study in question. The student will finalize the questions and the lists, and have them approved by their Comprehensive Exam Committee, by September 1. The student will answer that question in a paper of roughly 30 pages, including bibliography and notes. These essays are considered “open book,” and the student may consult with faculty members as necessary. Students are encouraged to draw upon written work completed in prior semesters, but they are expected to heavily revise whatever materials they reuse. The General Area List does not require a question or a field paper.

**Teaching Materials:** Each student will submit a statement of one or two pages that clearly articulates their teaching philosophy and provides examples from their experience. They will also submit one course syllabus that correspond to the area covered by the General Area List.

### The Oral Exam

The oral examination will be held no later than December 15 of the student’s third year. During the exam, the Comprehensive Exam Committee will be free to ask about any aspect of the comprehensive exam portfolio, including the three lists, teaching materials, and two field essays. Students should expect questions concerning the written work submitted as part of the portfolio, as well as broader theoretical, methodological, and field-oriented questions relating to the student’s three reading areas. The exam is expected to last about 80-90 minutes.

Oral exams in our department are public; they are open to all members of the department, as well as friends and relatives, and graduate students are encouraged to attend. If for some reason the student cannot attend an in-person meeting, the oral exam may be held online.

### Evaluation

The Comprehensive Exam Committee will assess the student’s work using the rubric available on the Resources tab of the Spanish Graduate Program Collab site, and inform the student of the results shortly after concluding the exam. This evaluation will determine whether the student receives a grade of “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” for SPAN 8900. The committee may require the student to make revisions to the written work included in the portfolio, or retake the oral exam. In that case, the student will receive a grade of “Incomplete” for SPAN 8900 and will be expected to complete any outstanding requirements by February 15 of year 3.

**A note for students with disabilities:** It is possible to alter the format and timing of the exams to meet

accommodations that have been determined in consultation with the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC). Please make sure to speak with the SDAC, your advisor, as well as the DGS as soon as possible.

## **8. Dissertation Proposal**

### **The Dissertation Committee**

Following the comprehensive examination, the student will form a dissertation committee in consultation with the DGS. That committee must be composed of four tenure-track faculty members, at least one of whom must be from outside the department. The members may or may not include the individuals who comprised the comprehensive exam committee. One member will serve as the Dissertation Director and as the student's primary advisor in the program. That person will also serve as instructor of record for SPAN 8901, PhD Dissertation Proposal, to be taken in the Spring semester of year 3. The committee may also include an additional committee member from another university with permission from the Graduate School. Students are expected to finalize their dissertation committee no later than January 30 of their third year.

### **Dissertation Proposal**

During the spring semester of their third year, the student will develop an 8-10 page dissertation proposal under the supervision of the dissertation committee. Development of this proposal will constitute the course requirements for SPAN 8901. The proposal will clearly state the research question that the student proposes to answer, will describe the materials and the methods that the student will use in answering that question, and will state a preliminary hypothesis. The proposal will also include a bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources, as well as a research plan. The student must submit the proposal to the dissertation committee two weeks before the agreed-upon proposal defense date. The proposal defense must be held by April 30 of year 3. The results of the defense will determine whether the student receives a grade of "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" for SPAN 8901. If the work is unsatisfactory, the student will receive a grade of "Incomplete" in SPAN 8901 and will be required to resubmit the proposal by September 1 of year 4. The committee will determine whether it is necessary to conduct a new defense of the proposal.

### **PhD Candidacy**

A student who is at the dissertation stage is considered to be a PhD Candidate, or to be in PhD Candidacy. In order to advance to candidacy for the PhD, students are expected to have completed all pre-dissertation requirements, including coursework, language proficiency examinations, the comprehensive exam, and the dissertation proposal defense, by the conclusion of their third year of study. Students who fail to advance to candidacy by the end of the sixth semester will need to request a special extension from the DGS.

## **9. Language Requirement**

Students will demonstrate a competent reading knowledge of two foreign languages (other than Spanish and English), or mastery of one. Students planning to fulfill the requirement with languages taught outside the department are urged to contact the relevant department for more details about the examinations they administer, or to speak with the DGS. For languages taught by the department,

please visit the webpage on [Proficiency Certification](#).

The language or languages to be used will be decided by the student in consultation with his or her advisor. The language requirements should be met prior to entering candidacy. (Languages are intended to serve as research tools.)

Students who have not met the language requirements by the stated time or within the grace period allowed by the Graduate School, will be obliged to take a leave of absence or withdraw until they fulfill all requirements necessary to continue in the program.

## **10. Dissertation**

### **The Dissertation**

A student who is at the dissertation stage is considered to be a PhD Candidate, or to be in PhD Candidacy. In order to advance to candidacy for the PhD, students are expected to have completed all pre-dissertation requirements, including coursework, language proficiency examinations, the comprehensive exam, and the dissertation proposal defense, by the conclusion of their third year of study.

The student will complete an original dissertation, guided by the Dissertation Director, and in close consultation with the rest of the dissertation committee. The dissertation must conform to the regulations of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences as stated here:

<https://graduate.as.virginia.edu/thesis-submission-and-graduation>.

The dissertation may be written in English or Spanish. The final text of the dissertation must be provided to the Director and the other readers at least six weeks before the oral defense of the dissertation is scheduled. Students are encouraged to share chapters of the dissertation with committee members prior to final submission.

### **The Dissertation Defense**

The student will defend the dissertation orally before the established dissertation committee, which will consist of a Dissertation Director, two other members of the department's tenure-track faculty, and a tenure-track faculty member from outside the department who will serve as the Dean's representative (see 8 above). It is expected that the student will defend their dissertation during Spring semester of the fifth year, and graduate that May, although it is also possible to delay the defense and the graduation until the summer after fifth year, provided the committee members are available.

Students who are in good academic standing and require additional time to complete their dissertation are eligible to apply for an additional year of support from the Graduate School and other sources external to the University. Students can also move to an affiliate status that allows them to retain access to e-mail and electronic library holdings while completing their dissertations remotely. (For details, the policies on Continued Enrollment and Degree Conferral in Absentia, below)

Dissertation Defenses in our department are public: they are open to all members of the department, as well as friends and relatives, and graduate students are encouraged to attend. If a student no longer resides in Charlottesville at the time the dissertation is defended, the defense may be held online.

## **11. Additional Matters**

**Statute of Limitations:** Students are normally expected to complete the program within six years. Exceptions may be granted, where deemed necessary, by the DGS in consultation with the Department. Students planning to take a semester or year off must notify the DGS in writing by March 1. See the policy on Leaves of Absence below.

**Satisfactory Progress toward the Degree:** Students in the PhD program must provide evidence of progress toward the degree. Such progress is normally defined as the completion of all graded course work with a grade of B- or higher, of GHSS 6050 and 7050 with a grade of “Credit,” and of the Comprehensive Exams (SPAN 8900) and the Dissertation Proposal (SPAN 8901) with a grade of “Satisfactory.” Courses in which students receive a grade lower than B- do not count toward the degree.

## Other Departmental Policies and Procedures

### 1. Funding

1.1. **Standard Financial Package:** Students are guaranteed six years of support, contingent upon satisfactory progress toward the degree. Further details about the funding package, which is granted by GSAS, not the department, [can be found here](#). The standard funding package includes:

- Two years (the first and fifth) of full fellowship funding with no teaching obligations. Students may elect to take the second fellowship year during their sixth year instead.
- Four years of teaching in the department. The normal teaching load is 1-1.
- A stipend for each summer after the first through fifth years. No stipend is given for the summer after the sixth year, or any subsequent year if the student remains in the program beyond that point.

Some students may receive additional support from extra-departmental sources.

1.2. **Extension for Significant Life Events:** Students who experience what the University calls a “significant life event,” such as the birth of a child or a major illness, during their graduate studies may request a one-semester extension of the normal time limits associated with the program. [Details here](#).

#### 1.3. Staying More than Six Years:

- The department can often fund an additional year even if there is need for undergraduate instructors. Contact the DGS as early as possible in your sixth year if you believe you might need a seventh year of funding.
- The department often has Visiting Assistant Professorships available for recent recipients of the PhD. These positions are filled through a national search, and are usually limited to one year. UVA students who are about to finish their PhD, or have recently graduated, are welcome to apply.

1.4. **Funding Conference Travel:** It is expected that graduate students will attend a variety of regional, national, and even international conferences to present their work over the course of their time at UVA. You should speak with your advisor about this early in your graduate career. Students may apply to the DGS for funds to attend a conference in which they will be presenting work. Departmental conference grants are usually \$600, although larger amounts will be given if the budget allows. You may apply every semester, but keep in mind that the department's ability to meet a second request during a given academic year will depend upon overall demand. In order to request conference funds, send an email to the DGS with the following information:

- The name of the conference
- Location and dates of the conference
- The title of the section in which you are participating

- The title of your paper
- A detailed budget, with information on conference registration, travel, and lodging.

1.5. **Funding Research:** Many students will find it necessary to travel to specialized libraries and archives to pursue their research. Talk with your advisor about what your needs may be, so that you can plan well in advance. Depending on their specific needs, students may need to apply to a variety of sources internal and external to UVA, including the following:

- **The Charles Gordon Reid Summer Travel Fellowship (Departmental):** Provides a stipend of approximately \$3,000 for a student who wishes to pursue a research project or a course of study in a Spanish-speaking country. All students are invited to apply, regardless of year in the graduate program. To apply, submit a description of the project, an explanation of how the fellowship would contribute to your professional development, and a budget to the DGS by **February 28, 2024**.
- **Summer Research Fellowships (Departmental):** Provides funding in various amounts to support summer research travel by graduate students. All students are invited to apply, regardless of year in the graduate program. To apply, submit a description of the project, an explanation of how the fellowship would contribute to your professional development, and a budget to the DGS by **February 28, 2024**. Students who apply for the Charles Gordon Reid Fellowship and do not receive it will be automatically considered for this award.
- **Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Summer Research Grants (GSAS):** Awards of up to \$5000. Applications accepted from January 15 to March 1. Awards announced in April. [Details available here](#).
- **Buckner W. Clay Endowment (IHGC, UVA):** The Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures administers this endowment, which provides yearly research grants to UVA graduate students. Most funding is for summer research. [Details available here](#).
- **Teaching Relief Fellowships (GSAS):** If your research requires more than just a summer, you can apply for one of these fellowships, which replaces one semester of teaching obligations with one semester of fellowship support, allowing you to spend an entire semester at a remote library or archive. [Details available here](#).
- **Scholar's Lab Fellowships in the Digital Humanities (Scholar's Lab, UVA):** Students interested in DH should familiarize themselves with [the opportunities made available by UVA's Scholars Lab](#).
- **Jefferson Fellowship (Jefferson Foundation):** Students who have entered PhD candidacy or have a plan to do so by the end of the year of application may compete for the [Jefferson Scholars Foundation Fellowship](#), which provides two years of fellowship support without teaching responsibilities, guaranteed research funds, and health insurance. This award is meant to recognize and support top doctoral candidates at UVA
- **Other Sources:** Speak with your advisor and/or the DGS about other possibilities.

1.6. **Funding Language Study:** All students are expected to have mastery of English and Spanish,

as well as to demonstrate proficiency in two other languages, or mastery of a third. Many students, moreover, will need to use one or more of these language in their research. The department and the University provide a variety of resources for developing these language competencies.

- **Del Greco Library Travel Stipend for Summer Study in Salamanca (Departmental):** Non-native speakers who wish to enhance their **proficiency in Spanish** may apply for this award. These funds are available thanks to a generous bequest from the family of Arnold Del Greco, who was a professor in the department for many years. The bequest specifies that the study take place at the University of Salamanca, which sponsors summer Spanish language-study programs of 5-6 weeks in length. Submit a letter of interest to the DGS by **February 28, 2024**. The fellowship will be awarded each year depending on the availability of funds. The coursework completed at Salamanca will not be counted toward the degree.
- **Charles Killian Woltz Summer Fellowships (Departmental):** Non-native speakers who wish to enhance their **proficiency in Spanish** may apply for a summer stipend to study in a Spanish American country of their choice for the summer. Submit a letter of interest to the DGS by **February 28, 2024**. The fellowship will be awarded each year depending on the availability of funds. The coursework completed at Salamanca will not be counted toward the degree.
- **Summer Language Fellowships (Departmental):** Provides funding in various amounts to support **summer language study** by graduate students. All students are invited to apply, regardless of year in the graduate program. Generally, these awards will be given to students who need the language for specific research purposes, not just to satisfy the departmental language requirement. To apply, submit a letter of interest to the DGS by **February 28, 2023**.
- **The Center for American English Language and Culture (UVA):** Offers [a variety of language assessment and training programs for non-native speakers of English](#). All graduate students are required to take the UVELPE assessment of English proficiency administered by CAELC before matriculating in the program. The results of this assessment may lead to recommendations for further English-language training. Students may take CAELC courses during the academic year without charge. In exceptional circumstances, the department may fund summer learning opportunities with CAELC. Inquire with the DGS.

## 2. Taking Courses as a Graduate Student

- 2.1. **Picking Courses:** Students should pick their coursework in close consultation with their advisor. Everyone is encouraged to use their “Academic Plan” to plan ahead, making sure to meet all requirements for the degree and for whatever certificate(s) they want to complete. Completed Academic Plans should be shared with the advisor and with the DGS.
- 2.2. **Registering for Courses:** New students register for courses during orientation in August. Continuing students register late in the Spring semester for Fall courses and late in the Fall

semester for Spring courses. [Details about registration procedures can be found here.](#) Registration for all courses is handled via SIS, except when a student wishes to register as an Auditor. See 2.5 below.

- 2.3. **How Many Courses?**: Students should follow the program outlined in the chart above in order to complete their coursework in a timely manner. Ordinarily, students are expected to maintain **full-time status**, which requires them to be registered for a minimum of 12 credits per semester. During the first year, this requirement is met by enrolling in four courses per semester. In other semesters, a student may need to enroll in 3-12 credits of SPAN 8998/9 or SPAN 9998/9 in order to meet the minimum credit requirement. These are so-called “formal courses,” which do not meet and have no requirements.
- 2.4. **Dropping or Withdrawing from a Course**: There is a limited amount of time during the beginning of the semester during which students may freely drop or add courses to their schedules without consequence. After the add/drop deadline a student may only withdraw from a course, which leaves a record on the student transcript. [The relevant deadlines are available here.](#)
- 2.5. **Auditing a Course**: Student have the option to audit a course, as long as they have the permission of the instructor. Auditors are expected to do the reading and participate in class, but are not expected to complete assignments and do not receive either a grade or credit toward the degree. Audited courses do not count toward the 12-credit minimum for full-time status. In order to register for an audit, the student must submit a request via e-mail to the Director of Graduate Studies, **including the course name and five-digit SIS class number**. If the DGS approves the request, the DGS will forward this e-mail to the GSAS Registrar, who will enroll the student as an auditor in the course. It is not possible to enroll as an auditor via SIS.
- 2.6. **Attendance**: It is assumed that graduate students will attend each and every meeting of a course in which they are registered, unless illness or a personal emergency prevents them from doing so.
- 2.7. **Incomplete Grades**: Graduate students may request a grade of “Incomplete” (IN) from their instructor in any course. If the request is granted, then the student will have 200 days from the end of the term in which the Incomplete was received to finish all coursework. **At the completion of 200 days, SIS will automatically convert any IN to an F on the student's transcript.** To avoid a failing grade (thus jeopardizing enrollment and good standing status in the Graduate School), students must complete the coursework for an IN grade prior to the 200 day deadline. Upon completion of the coursework, the instructor of the course must submit a grade change through SIS, indicating the old IN grade as well as their new earned grade. Students who receive more than one grade of IN in a single semester will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. Students with an Incomplete (IN) grade in any class will not be allowed to take the comprehensive exams.
- 2.8. **Passing Grades**: No grade below a B- is considered passing in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. In our department, a grade of B or B- represents marginal work.

### 3. Teaching and Working in the Department

### **3.1. Teaching During the Academic Year**

- 3.2. Teaching Requirement:** Teaching is an essential part of graduate training, so all graduate students are required to teach, usually during their second, third, fourth, and sixth years in the program. Fellowship support is provided for years one and five. Opportunities to extend into a seventh year usually come with teaching responsibilities. There are also opportunities to teach during the summer. See 3.8 below for details.
- 3.3. Teaching Orientation and SPAN 8210:** All students who will be teaching for the first time are required to attend the teaching orientation that is held in late August, usually the week before classes start. They are also required to take SPAN 8210 during their first semester of teaching.
- 3.4. Teaching Assignments:** The department plans its budget and curriculum for any given year during the Fall semester of the previous year, and usually concludes the process by the end of November. It is in the course of this planning process that graduate students are assigned their teaching obligations, taking into account both departmental needs and individual preferences. If you want to change your teaching assignment after this planning process is concluded, then you must make a request in writing to both the Director of Graduate Studies, Ricardo Padrón, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Alicia López Opere. The department will do its best to honor requests made for legitimate academic reasons, or that stem from some personal emergency. Once you sign your offer letter in the summer, your teaching assignment is final, and you will be expected to teach the course you have been assigned unless you take a leave of absence or withdraw altogether from the program. Please note that if you plan to take your second year of fellowship during the sixth rather than the fifth year, you must inform the department of these plans by October 1 of your fourth year. Changes are possible after that point, but are not guaranteed.
- 3.5. Supervision:** All graduate teaching assistants who are assigned to the 1000 and 2000 levels will be supervised by the Director of the Language Program. All those teaching at the 3000 and 4000 levels will be assigned to a faculty mentor responsible for the specific course to which he or she has been assigned. Students teaching at that level should also be in communication with the Director of Undergraduate Programs in Spanish, who supervises the major and the minor.
- 3.6. Cancellation of Classes** is NOT allowed. You are expected to teach your class every day. If you cannot teach your class due to an emergency or university business (illness, job interview, conference), you must find a substitute from among the staff of the department. If you cannot find a substitute, call your Course Coordinator. As a last resort **call** (do not text or email) the Director of Language Programs or the Director of Undergraduate Programs. There is no reason to cancel a class, since there are plenty of people who will be willing to take over for you. Once you have arranged for your substitute inform the Director of Language Programs or the Director of Undergraduate Programs of your plans, specifying who will be teaching your course and when. Any faculty member (Tenure Track or Academic General Faculty) can serve as a substitute, as can any graduate student who has completed or is currently enrolled in SPAN 8210. Please note that failure to show up to

even a single class is considered a serious offence and may constitute sufficient grounds for the termination of your Teaching Assistantship.

- 3.7. **Inclement Weather:** In case of extreme weather conditions (such as snow storms), UVA may cancel classes. Check the university website or call 434-924-SNOW (7669). If classes are not cancelled, but it is too dangerous for you to drive into work, please find a substitute.

### 3.8. **Teaching During the Summer**

- **Eligibility:** In order to be eligible for these opportunities, you must: a) be enrolled as a graduate student during the academic year immediately prior to the summer in which you wish to teach; b) have completed SPAN 8210 by the time you assume the summer teaching assignment; and c) have plans to return as a student the fall semester immediately afterward. The final requirement may be waived if the need for instructors is particularly acute.
- **Summer Session in Charlottesville:** The department offers a variety of classes, usually in the lower division, during the summer sessions. Instructors are selected by the Summer Session Chair (usually the Director of the Language Program) together with the Graduate Committee, on the basis of (1) demonstrated excellence in teaching and in all teaching-related duties, and (2) seniority in the graduate program. When a choice must be made between candidates with equal seniority, it may be made on the basis of teaching experience or by drawing lots. New teaching jobs sometimes appear late in the spring, and teachers on the “stand-by list” will be offered those positions. **Applications will be requested in October for the following summer.** Assignments will be made during the spring semester, when it becomes clear how many sections will be available.
- **The Summer Language Institute (SLI) in Charlottesville:** Two or three graduate students may be employed in this program. The selection of instructors is based upon: (1) demonstrated excellence in teaching and in all teaching-related duties; (2) seniority in the graduate program; (3) other factors such as excellent interpersonal skills, good leadership abilities, the ability to handle challenges professionally, and a sense of responsibility, maturity, compassion, and patience. **Applications will be requested in October for the following summer.** Assignments will be made during the spring semester, when it becomes clear how many sections will be available. For more information, speak with Prof. Joel Rini.
- **Summer Teaching in Valencia, Spain:** Two or three positions are generally available to lead the summer program in Valencia (late May- early July). Responsibilities include advertising the program among UVA students, teaching two classes in Valencia (four hours per day), and travel with participating students from Washington, D.C., and working with the resident faculty in Valencia. Ideal candidates should have a high level of energy, good organizational skills, generosity of spirit, and knowledge of Spanish and Spanish institutions, demonstrated leadership qualities, and teaching skills, plus a deep sense of responsibility, maturity, and patience. The positions require a round-the-clock commitment to the program. Compensation includes a salary for teaching, accommodation in Valencia, and round-trip transportation. **Submit a letter of interest to Prof. Opere by February 28, 2024.**
- **Summer Teaching in Costa Rica:** One position is available to teach Spanish in Costa

Rica. The five-week program is in Alajuela, Costa Rica's second largest city, about 15 kilometers from San José, the capital. The dates are roughly May 20-June 30. The position provides: 1) Housing with a host family, with private room and bath; 2) RT airfare – The TA to travel with the group on all in-country excursions; 3) \$30/day incidental/food allowance in addition to a stipend of \$3,000. Responsibilities include teaching, assisting with group travel, leading daily afternoon activities, and being generally available to work with 15-20 program participants. Applicants should have a high degree of fluency in Spanish, an advanced knowledge of Spanish grammar and structure, plus possess an equally high level of personal maturity and resourcefulness. **Applications will be requested in October for the following summer.** Assignments will be made during the spring semester.

### 3.9. Teaching at UVA After You Graduate

- **Five Year Moratorium:** Alumni of our graduate program will not be considered for a permanent position in the department until five years have passed since their graduation.
- **Temporary Positions:** Recent graduates, and students in their final year of study, may apply for temporary teaching positions when they are announced. Such positions are usually not renewable, or have limited renewability.

### 3.10. Other Employment

- **General:** Teaching, taking courses, preparing for exams, and writing a dissertation are demanding responsibilities, and when combined, constitute much more than full-time work. Nevertheless, some students may find that they need to take on work beyond the Teaching Assistantship. In considering such opportunities, please follow the guidelines below. Remember that if you are an international student, *you may not accept paid employment outside UVA.*
- **Jobs You Can Take Without Question:**
  - **Temporary, part-time teaching or translating jobs**, announced via email by the Chair or the DGS.
  - **Del Greco Librarian:** A small administrative job offered by the department which pays \$15/hour for 60 hours of work over the course of the academic year.
  - **Research Assistantships** offered by individual faculty members with grant funds. Please inform the DGS if you have taken a research assistantship.
  - **Internships** offered by UVA entities such as PhD Plus. Please inform the DGS if you plan to take an internship, since it may qualify you for a teaching reduction.
- **Jobs You Should Think Twice About:**
  - Any tutoring job, particularly those offered by the Athletic department, that could create a conflict of interest. You never want to tutor a student who is taking one of your classes.
- **Jobs For Which You Must Ask Permission:**

- Any job that requires a substantial weekly commitment (i.e. 10+ hours/week).

#### **4. How to Leave the Program Temporarily or Permanently, with a Degree or Without One**

If you are a full-time student in residence at UVA, you can apply to graduate via SIS once you have scheduled your dissertation defense. [For more information, check with Linda Newman](#). Check out [the GSAS website](#) if you want to do any of the following:

- Take a break (Leave of Absence) from graduate school
- Return to grad school after a Leave of Absence or a voluntary withdrawal.
- Pursue degree requirements (like dissertation research) while away from UVA but maintaining your full-time status.
- Leave UVA (perhaps to accept a job) but continue working on your dissertation, without having to pay full tuition
- Apply for your degree after having left UVA and abandoned full-time status
- Request an extension of the seven-year limit for completing all degree requirements
- Withdraw from graduate school

### **5. Orientation, Professionalization, and Professional Life After Graduate School**

- 5.1. **New Student Orientation:** The department holds an orientation session for all new graduate students the week before classes start. Details will be provided by email as the date approaches.
- 5.2. **GHSS 6050, Introduction to Graduate Studies:** This one-credit course provides a series of workshops meant to introduce first year students to the fundamentals of life as a graduate student. It is offered in conjunction with other humanities and social science departments, the UVA Library, and the PhD Plus program. It is obligatory for all graduate students in the first semester of their first year in the Spanish program. Students in other years are welcome to join individual sessions as needed. The department may also offer other orientation activities *ad hoc*.
- 5.3. **GHSS 7050, Professional Life After Graduate School:** This one-credit course provides a series of workshops meant to invite reflection about professional aptitudes and goals, and to develop concrete plans for professional life after graduate school, whether in the academe or outside it. It is offered in conjunction with other humanities and social science departments, and with the PhD Plus program. It is obligatory for all graduate students in the second semester of their second year in the Spanish program. Students in other years are welcome to join individual sessions as needed.
- 5.4. **Job Market Preparation:** Professionalization opportunities are not limited to the workshops offered as part of GHSS 7050. The department offers various services to students planning to enter the academic job market, including feedback on cover letters CVs and mock interviews. Please discuss your intentions with regard to the job market with your dissertation advisor early and often, and with the DGS **no later** than the beginning of the year in which you plan to graduate (preferably the spring before).

## **6. Graduate Student Governance**

**6.1.** The graduate students of our department are represented by two elected individuals: 1) the Graduate Student Representative; and 2) the GSAC Representative. Individuals hold these positions for a term of one year. Elections are held at the end of the academic year and are organized by the current office holders. The results of the election are reported to the DGS.

**6.2. Responsibilities of the Spanish Graduate Student Representative include:**

- Attend departmental faculty meetings, both to present student input and to report to the graduate students on those meetings.
- Discuss general concerns of the graduate students as a whole with the Director of the Language Program, the DGS, and the Department Chair. Graduate students with specific, personal concerns should bring those concerns directly to the Director of the Language Program, the DGS, or the Department Chair.
- Organize and run the student lecture series (once in the fall, once in the spring); this series enables graduate students to present the results of their research to the Department as a whole, and also provides valuable practice for those preparing to give papers at national meetings.
- Serve as a channel for information about upcoming conferences and meetings of interest to graduate students.
- Serve on the Departmental Sponsored Events Committee.
- Consult with the DGS in August about material to be covered in GHSS 6050 and 7050.
- Coordinate with the Graduate Student Representative in any way necessary.

**6.3. Responsibilities of the GSAC Representative include:**

- Attend all meetings of the [Graduate Student Council \(GSAC\)](#).
- Report on the activities of the GSAC to the graduate students in the department.
- Coordinate with the Graduate Student Representative in any way necessary.

## **7. The Del Greco Essay Prize:**

**7.1. The Del Greco Essay Prize** is a cash award conferred annually at the end of the spring semester for the best essay written by a graduate student on any topic having to do with Spanish and/or Spanish American language, literature, or culture.

**7.2. Requirements for Entry:**

- Essays may be written in English, Spanish, or Portuguese.
- All entries must have been written during the previous calendar year (from April 2 of the prior year to April 1 of the year of submission)
- No entry may exceed 9,000 words, including notes and bibliography.
- All entries should be formatted according to MLA or University of Chicago norms..
- The author's name should appear only on a cover page submitted with the essay and there

should be no internal references to the identity of the essay's author.

- Essays must be submitted to the DGS by April 1.

- 7.3. **Selection Process:** A three-member faculty committee appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies will judge the entries and select a winner. The membership of the Committee will be drawn from across the various fields represented by the research faculty. The results will be announced on or before the last day of classes of the academic year. The prize committee may choose a single winner, two winners, or no winners at all.

## 8. Departmental Activities

- 8.1. **The Gerszten Family Visiting Professor:** Each year, through the generosity of SIP alumni Peter and Robert Gerszten, the department hosts a noted scholar or writer for three-day visit, during which our guest teaches a graduate seminar, gives a public lecture, and meets with faculty and students on an informal basis. Graduate students are encouraged to participate in all these events.
- 8.2. **Departmental Lectures, Workshops, Symposia:** Faculty and/or graduate students often organize a variety of events that take place throughout the academic year, often in collaboration with other units like the Institute for Humanities and Global Cultures. All graduate students are encouraged to think of these events as a vital part of their education, and to attend all they can.
- 8.3. **Sigma Delta Phi** is an honor society for Spanish undergraduates and graduate students are eligible for membership. Please contact Matthew Street for information about membership and activities.
- 8.4. **The Spanish Tertulia** is held weekly at Casa Bolívar. It is designed to foster relaxed conversation in Spanish, bring together native speakers in the Charlottesville area, graduate students, and undergraduates. This is a very useful activity for language students, even in first-year courses; you are urged to persuade your students to go, and to attend regularly yourself. There is also a Mesa Portuguesa. For more information, contact Prof. Lilian Feitosa.
- 8.5. **Noche Bohemia at Casa Bolívar:** The Casa Bolívar often sponsors a Noche Bohemia, or an evening of literary readings, skits, and other entertainments by students and faculty.
- 8.6. **The Spanish Department Play:** Prof. Operé organizes and directs a play in Spanish in the spring of each year. Casting begins in the fall. Those interested in participating in any way should contact Mr. Operé directly.
- 8.7. **SIP Film Festival:** The department sponsors an annual festival of films in Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. There are also film showings at Casa Bolívar over the course of the academic year.

## 9. Resources Outside the Department

- 9.1. UVA offers all sorts of resources and services for graduate students. The following represents

a partial list of some of the most prominent ones. Remember, just because you don't see it here doesn't mean it does not exist!

- 9.2. **Student Health:** UVA health and wellness service for students, covering medical, counseling, and disability access services.
- 9.3. **Student Disability Access Center:** Part of Student Health. The place to go if you need to arrange for accommodations surrounding a disability, or simply have questions about disability access.
- 9.4. **Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights:** The place to go if you have a hostile workplace issue to report or discuss.
- 9.5. **PhD Plus:** An internship and mentoring program designed to enhance career success.
- 9.6. **Graduate Diversity Programs:** A host of programs designed to address issues of diversity and inclusion, and to support students from underrepresented groups.
- 9.7. **The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences:** The school in which you are enrolled! Lots of information about policies and funding opportunities.
- 9.8. **Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures:** Speakers, workshops, humanities labs, and funding opportunities.
- 9.9. **The Center for Global Inquiry and Innovation:** Like IHGC, but different.
- 9.10. **The Scholar's Lab:** One of the most important hubs for work in the Digital Humanities.
- 9.11. **The Center for Poetry and Poetics:** Poetry in a global age.
- 9.12. **Latin American Studies:** LAST is an undergraduate program, but it runs a lunchtime speaker series for faculty and grad students.
- 9.13. **Center for American English Language and Culture:** The place to go if you want to improve your English (speaking and writing).