Romance Languages (PhD)

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The Department of Romance Languages the degree of doctor of philosophy (PhD) in Romance languages.

The PhD program allows students to focus on a specific literary and/or cultural field of interest.

Students follow these degree programs in an intellectually stimulating and supportive environment, characterized by close personal supervision, interdisciplinary approaches to literary and cultural studies, and professional training in both research methods and foreign-language pedagogy.

The university's library resources for research in French, Italian, and Spanish support the department's graduate programs; in some fields they are outstanding. The library's holdings of learned periodicals are extensive.

The PhD program in Romance languages is designed to provide

- a thorough familiarity with several fields (e.g., a movement, a genre, a period, or a literary problem)
- the opportunity to situate the student's special interests in the wider context of Romance languages and literatures as well as in the context of trends inside and outside Western European culture
- the tools necessary to engage literary issues at a high level
- the ability to examine new and challenging literary or theoretical perspectives

Students who enter the PhD program with no knowledge of a second Romance language are required to start learning one as soon as possible during their graduate studies.

The PhD program has five components: course work, comprehensive examination, dissertation prospectus, original dissertation, and final oral defense.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge.
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in discipline-specific genres.
- Conduct independent research and analysis in their discipline.
- Demonstrate independent scientific thinking and advanced knowledge in their current discipline and in related areas of their discipline.
- Understand ethical issues and responsibilities especially in matters related to professionalism, field work, and in writing and publishing theses, dissertations and academic papers.
- Professionalization into the field of study: publications, presentations, attended conferences, funded fellowships, and professional association activities.

Course Work

The PhD degree requires a total of 84 graduate-level credits—32 credits in addition to the 52 required for the master's degree. Course work applied to the degree must be taken for letter grades, and a grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or better must be maintained.

Students must complete at least 21 graduate seminars in the department (at least 84 credits in all) beyond the bachelor's degree. PhD students must thus take at least 8 graduate courses (32 credits) beyond the 13 courses (52 credits) required for the master's. Only one of these 8 courses (4 credits) may be satisfied in the form of a Reading and Conference course (Reading and Conference: [Topic] (FR 605), Reading and Conference: [Topic] (ITAL 605), or Reading and Conference: [Topic] (SPAN 605)).

Of the twenty-one courses (84 credits), three (12 credits) must be taken in a second Romance language.

As many as three of the twenty-one courses (12 of the 84 credits) may be taken outside the department, with the authorization of the advisor, and provided that the courses bear directly on the student's program of study.

Doctoral students are also strongly encouraged to take Romance Languages Colloquium: [Topic] (RL 623) for at least two credits. Colloquium may either be taken as a 2-credit pass/no pass course (in which case it does not count toward the 52 credits required for the degree) or as a 4-credit graded course.

Students with an MA in French, Italian, Spanish, or Romance languages from the University of Oregon may count a maximum of two graduate courses completed during the MA program toward PhD course requirements, provided that these courses were not used to fulfill MA requirements.

Graduate students with an MA in French, Italian, Spanish, or Romance languages from another institution must take a minimum of 40 credits in the Department of Romance Languages. The department's graduate committee evaluates previous graduate course work and determines whether additional work is necessary to fill any gaps in a student's preparation. This may result in a student having to take more than 40 credits at the University of Oregon—up to a maximum of 68 credits. If the candidate is found to be seriously deficient or if the master's degree is in a field other than Romance languages, the graduate committee may admit the student into the master's program. In this case, the student may submit a petition to the committee to transfer a maximum of three courses toward the twelve courses required for the MA This petition may be submitted after the student has completed four graduate-level courses with grades of mid-B or better in the Romance languages master's program.

*Students typically will register for RL 601 or RL 605 during the terms that they are preparing for exams or writing their prospectus, and will register RL 603 Dissertation (18 credits) while writing their dissertation.

Comprehensive Examination

Students entering the PhD program should develop, as soon as possible but no later than the third term of course work beyond the master's degree, a field of interest that forms the basis of their research for the PhD comprehensive examination and ideally for the dissertation. This field of interest usually emerges from the selected courses and shapes the areas of concentration represented on the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination consists of two written examinations and an oral examination. Each written examination covers a subfield that pertains to the student's field of interest. The subfields should be defined and prepared with three members of the Romance languages faculty who constitute the PhD examination committee. One of these faculty members should represent the student's second Romance language. A fourth member may be added from another department. In consultation with the members of the examination committee, the student creates a reading list for each of the subfields. The reading list must be approved by the examination committee no later than four weeks before the date of the exam. Student are responsible for distributing the reading list to the committee members of the examination committee as soon as the list is approved.

The written examinations take the form of two essays that respond to questions formulated by members of the PhD examination committee. Each written examination covers one of the subfields and is a maximum of twenty double-spaced, typed pages in length. The student has two weeks to write each of the two essays.

Two weeks after the successful completion of the written essays, the student takes an oral examination. The oral examination attempts to integrate the subfields addressed in the written examinations with the other facets of the student's declared field of interest. In a two-hour conversation, the candidate and the committee members examine and elaborate on ways in which the written essays help to define a project within the student's field of interest.

Typically undertaken during the fifth term of study following the master's degree, the comprehensive examination should result in clarification of the dissertation's subject matter and possible approaches to it. The exam should, in other words, yield at least a tentative dissertation topic.

A student who fails the PhD examination in whole or in part will be allowed to take it over (in whole or in part) once. The student is encouraged to do so no later than six months after failing. A second failure results in disqualification.

It is the student's responsibility to schedule both the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination.

With the successful completion of the PhD comprehensive exam, the student will advance to candidacy and begin preparing the dissertation prospectus.

Dissertation Prospectus

The prospectus, typically completed during the sixth term of study following the master's degree, defines the scope of the dissertation and demonstrates the originality of the project. It consists of an eight- to ten-page description of the proposed dissertation project and a substantial research bibliography of primary and secondary material.

Students are responsible for putting together a dissertation committee, which typically consists of four members: one director and two readers from the Department of Romance Languages, and one reader from another department. A student may also choose to have two codirectors in the Department of Romance Languages (plus two further members of the department).

When the student has a solid draft of the prospectus, she or he schedules a meeting with the dissertation committee members for a presentation and discussion of the prospectus. Following this conversation, the student will make final revisions to the prospectus. Once the committee has given its final approval, the student submits the prospectus to the department for filing.

Students are reminded that they must have a dissertation committee in place and proper documents filed with the Division of Graduate Studies six months before the dissertation defense.

Any student making significant changes to the dissertation project after the final approval of the prospectus must schedule a meeting with the dissertation committee before proceeding.

Dissertation

The dissertation constitutes an original and valuable contribution to scholarship in the student's field of interest. It should be characterized by mature literary interpretation, informed and reasoned argument, and an awareness of the means and goals of research.

It is the student's responsibility to ascertain the rules and deadlines of the Division of Graduate Studies for proper filing of the dissertation. Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the stringent formatting and structure guidelines for the dissertation provided by the Division of Graduate Studies (available online).

A final copy of the dissertation must be distributed to the dissertation committee for final approval at least three weeks before the dissertation defense.

Final Oral Defense

When all members of the dissertation committee have approved the dissertation, a final public oral presentation and defense of the work is held.