Romance Languages and Literatures

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Degree Requirements

Students in both PhD programs take a required seminar in language teaching methodology in addition to the requirements specified below. Optional pedagogical or interdisciplinary study can be acquired by means of one of the Graduate School's certificate programs.

PhD in French Language and Literature

For the PhD in French Language and Literature, students take courses in all areas of French and Francophone studies and may take up to two courses outside of French for a total of 60 credits at the graduate level. During their third semester, students take the AM exam. During the semester after they finish their courses, students take their PhD exams, which consist of three written examinations and one oral examination by the full faculty, followed by a dissertation prospectus defense before their thesis committee of three faculty members. Students then have approximately two years to complete the research and writing of their dissertations, which they defend during the last semester of their program.

PhD in Hispanic Studies

For the PhD in Hispanic Studies, students take courses in all areas of Latin American and Iberian studies. During the fifth semester, students take comprehensive exams that are based on reading lists developed in consultation with faculty. After passing their comprehensive exams, students submit and defend a dissertation prospectus. Students then research, write, defend, and submit their doctoral dissertation. Details of the program stages and requirements are available on the Hispanic Studies Graduate Programs page of the Romance Languages and Literatures website.

Graduate Certificate in Language Instruction

To provide our graduate students with additional qualifications and formal development that will make them strongly prepared for a range of demanding academic positions, the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures offers the Graduate Certificate in Language Instruction for students enrolled in PhD programs at Washington University.

The Graduate Certificate in Language Instruction is an interdisciplinary certificate related to the fields of applied linguistics, second-language acquisition, psychology, neuroscience and other disciplines that have important implications for the way that foreign languages are taught. Study within these different fields provides a fascinating examination of how second languages are learned and how the second language is generated by learners. An understanding of second-language acquisition processes both enriches our knowledge of how the mind works and serves to better inform the ways that foreign-language teachers design and implement curricular approaches for different levels and skills.

PhD students must apply to be considered for the certificate program at the beginning of their doctoral courses. Applications will be evaluated by a faculty committee twice a year, in October and March. The certificate consists of five courses: three required courses and two electives.

The goal of the five-course sequence is to provide certificate students with a solid base in the theoretical and instructional implications of research on language acquisition across different linguistic subsystems (i.e., phonology, lexis, syntax and pragmatics) and different linguistic modalities (i.e., spoken and written). This formation will also prepare students to be involved in language program design and curricular development.

For more information, visit the Graduate Certificate in Language Instruction page, contact Professor Joe Barcroft, or call 314-935-5175.