

# Doctor of Philosophy in Spanish

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese has developed a Ph.D. to address the needs of a new generation of doctoral students in the humanities. The program provides a rigorous and comprehensive education in the traditional disciplines of Iberian and Latin American literary studies, while also allowing for engagement with larger issues relating to the role of the humanities in the contemporary world. Students admitted to the doctoral program will have the opportunity to develop research interests under the guidance of diverse faculty and to acquire the skills to teach successfully at the University level.

More information about our graduate programs can be found in our Graduate Handbook (<https://spanport.ku.edu/graduate-student-handbook/>).

## Admission to Graduate Studies

### Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

### Admission

- The applicant must hold (or anticipate completing by the time of admission) an M.A. or M.S. degree from an accredited U.S. college or university or the equivalent degree from a foreign university and must meet the general admission requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>) from the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Strong consideration is given to letters of recommendation, breadth and depth of preparation, and Graduate Record Examination scores\*, if available.

### Departmental Admissions Requirements:

- A statement of academic objectives in English describing your intellectual development, previous academic training, and areas of academic interest. The quality of this statement is an especially important factor in the decisions of the admissions committee. It would also be helpful if you identified the faculty member(s) with whom you intend to work. The statement should not exceed two single-spaced pages.
- A curriculum vitae
- Copies of official transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate programs
- An academic writing sample in Spanish (not to exceed 30 double-spaced pages)

- Three letters of recommendation with the appropriate waiver form
- A video file (mp4) or a sound file (mp3) in spoken Spanish and English. Your recording should describe your background with Spanish, your reasons for seeking a graduate degree in Hispanic Studies, and the goals you intend to achieve as a student and instructor at the University of Kansas. Please speak spontaneously and be yourself; record 5 minutes for each language. The committee is trying to get a sense of your oral communicative abilities.

Admission to the graduate program is competitive and based on an evaluation of the entire dossier of materials submitted by the student. Particular attention is paid to the student's self-presentation, so care should be taken in writing the personal statement and in choosing the essay sent as a writing sample. The Admissions Committee considers each applicant's statement, academic accomplishments, letters of recommendation, audio recording, and writing samples to assess the applicant's potential for graduate studies. The committee uses the video-sound file to evaluate candidates for GTAships.

Submit your graduate application online (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>).

\*GRE scores are not required; applicants are encouraged to include GRE scores only if available.

## Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy provides a rigorous and comprehensive education in the traditional disciplines of Iberian and Latin American literary and cultural studies, while also allowing for engagement with larger transdisciplinary and transnational approaches relating to the role of the humanities in the contemporary world.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Complete course work prescribed by the advisory committee (this course work is to include a minimum of 5 seminars, at least 4 at KU, one literary theory course, and a guideline of a minimum of 24 hours in Hispanic literatures at KU beyond the 30 hours required for the M.A. degree)</b>		<b>24</b>
Literary theory course		
SPAN 795	Literary Theory and Criticism (or equivalent)	
A minimum of five seminars in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese (repeatable for credit when content varies)		
SPAN 922	Seminar in Spanish Literature and Culture: _____	
SPAN 940	Seminar in Trans-Atlantic Literatures and Cultures: _____	
SPAN 961	Seminar: Medieval Literature: _____	
SPAN 985	Seminar in Spanish American Literature and Culture: _____	
PORT 970	Seminar in Brazilian Literature: _____	
<b>Minimum of 9 credits in a secondary area, determined in consultation with faculty advisor</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship Requirement</b>		
SPAN 780	Introduction to Hispanic Studies	3
SPAN 801	Teaching Spanish in Institutions of Higher Learning	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>39</b>

## Additional department requirements:

### Language Requirement

Students are required to have reading knowledge of two other languages as approved by the Department; students can satisfy this requirement in the following ways:

- Enroll in PORT 611 and earn a grade of B or higher in the course. Recommended by the Department.
- Enroll in one semester of an indigenous Latin American language.
- Enroll in a reading knowledge language course approved by the Graduate Studies Committee in a chosen language at KU.
- Enroll in a graduate course in a language approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. Graduate students must earn a grade of B or higher in the courses toward fulfillment of this requirement.
- Present third semester college course work approved by the Graduate Studies Committee from another institution with an average grade of B or better.
- Pass an examination in the chosen approved language administered by the corresponding department at KU.

### Teaching Requirement

Students must complete a minimum of 2 semesters of quarter-time teaching or 1 semester of half-time teaching in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

### Ph.D. Qualifying/Comprehensive Examinations

- These exams require completion of three areas: a qualifying essay (Area A), written qualifying examinations (Areas B and C), and an oral defense of the dissertation proposal. All areas must be completed after having passed or registered for the 24 hours of required coursework in the department (typically the third year of the program).
  - Paper (Area A): The student will submit a paper that shows their ability to engage in theoretical and cultural/literary analysis. This paper can be the finished form of a project initiated in any of the PhD seminars. It exemplifies the student's research interests and may be linked to their anticipated dissertation topic.
  - Examination (Area B): This section of the exam focuses on a specific field, understood as a focus on a specific region (e.g., Caribbean literature) and temporal framework (e.g., Colonial Latin America). It consists of a corpus of primary and secondary sources that illustrate the student's primary area of study, at least in part as it is recognized by scholars in that field of study. Potential areas of study may include one of the four traditional geo-temporal areas (Contemporary Latin America, Colonial Latin America, Contemporary Peninsular Spain, Medieval/Early Modern Iberia), or an emerging area of study, such as transnational study areas (e.g., Transatlantic, Transpacific, or Archipelagic Studies). The reading list should balance personalization with adherence to institutional structures shaping research opportunities. For example, while students may favor theatrical texts, they should demonstrate proficiency in adjacent genres like prose fiction or lyric poetry. This ensures alignment with scholarly standards and professional expectations in Hispanic Studies.
  - Examination (Area C): This section will focus on a theoretical framework as it relates to a specific corpus of literary and cultural expression. It consists of primary and secondary sources that engage with theoretical lines of inquiry reflecting the student's research interests. For instance, this may involve a combination of visual culture and feminist inquiry. The aim is to encourage

exploration of diverse theoretical approaches, such as queer studies, feminist studies, and performance studies, aligning with the academic interests and potential dissertation topics within Hispanic studies.

- After the student has passed all three written components of the examination (Areas A, B, and C), the Director of Graduate Studies will request the College Office of Graduate Affairs to schedule the oral defense of the dissertation prospectus. This requirement must take place during the same semester as the written portions of the Comprehensive Examination, and at least two weeks following notification to the Office of Graduate Affairs. Failure to complete the oral defense within that time period could require repetition and successful completion of all components of the written examination.

### Dissertation Defense

The dissertation is expected to be an original contribution to knowledge, demonstrating in-depth mastery of the latest scholarship in the field of study. The dissertation committee shall comply with graduate studies policy. The student should send the final draft of their dissertation to each committee member at least four weeks prior to the scheduled date of the dissertation defense to enable committee members to examine it fully as each member of the committee must read and approve the written dissertation before the degree can be awarded. The grade (honors, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory) for the defense is determined by majority vote of the five-member dissertation committee.

More details about the Ph.D. program can be found in our Graduate Student Handbook (<https://spanport.ku.edu/graduate-student-handbook/>).

See also the general requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog and in the KU Policy Library.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural and literary production of Iberia and Latin America, including their historical context and interconnectedness.
- Develop proficiency in critical and theoretical approaches essential for advanced literary and cultural analysis.
- Cultivate effective communication skills, both written and verbal, for scholarly research, teaching, and professional pursuits.
- Foster the ability to formulate, develop, and execute research projects, demonstrating originality and scholarly rigor.
- Acquire pedagogical skills necessary for successful teaching at the university level, as well as explore transferable skills applicable to

## Study Abroad

The department offers summer programs in Barcelona, Spain; Buenos Aires, Argentina, Salvador (Bahia), Brazil. KU offers semester/academic year programs in San José, Costa Rica, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Salamanca, Spain. More information is available from the Office of Study Abroad (<http://www.studyabroad.ku.edu/>).

Graduate students have the opportunity to teach and conduct research during summer sessions in Buenos Aires, Argentina; or Barcelona, Spain. The department also has a graduate exchange agreement with the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain.