

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

M.A. IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, CULTURES, AND LITERATURES

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures



Revised January 15, 2010

I. STANDARDS AND POLICIES

The policies in this manual are intended to govern the graduate educational experience of all students entering the Foreign Languages, Culture, and Literatures (hereafter abbreviated FLCL) graduate program after August 15, 2008.

The FLCL graduate program is governed by the policies stated in the *Graduate Policies and Procedures and Course Catalog of Virginia Tech* as well as those outlined in this document. The information in this document is intended only to supplement and not to replace general requirements established by the Virginia Tech Graduate School. Copies of *Graduate School Policies and Procedures* can be obtained from the Graduate School's website at <http://www.grads.vt.edu>. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the rules and procedures in both documents.

Questions about these policies should be addressed to the Graduate Studies Director of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures (hereafter abbreviated FLL).

II. STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

FLL and the FLCL graduate program do not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation.

The University is subject to titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Federal Executive Order 112146, Governor Allen's State Executive Order Number Two, and all other rules and regulations that are applicable. Anyone having questions concerning any of those regulations should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (http://www.vt.edu/equal_opportunity.php).

III. FACULTY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Graduate Studies Committee

The Graduate Studies Committee is named according to FLL departmental bylaws. It is chaired by the FLL Graduate Studies Director. The committee's responsibilities include oversight of the FLCL graduate program in regard to

establishing policy, policy enforcement, curriculum approval (prior to submission to the college and university), recruitment, admissions, and review of student progress.

B. Graduate Studies Director

The FLL Graduate Studies Director chairs the FLL Graduate Studies Committee, serves as liaison to the Graduate School, answers inquiries from potential applicants, and serves as temporary academic advisor to incoming students. The Graduate Studies Director reports to the department chair, who in turn reports to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

C. Graduate School

The dean of the Graduate School has responsibility over the administration of graduate education at Virginia Tech, including the establishment and enforcement of policies and procedures for graduate students, programs, and faculty. Each individual student is responsible for following the procedures of the department, college, and graduate school.

D. Student's M.A. Advisor and Advisory Committee

Each student's thesis or exam advisor is responsible for the following:

- providing guidance and input for designing the thesis project or exam;
- reading and pre-approving their advisees' thesis proposals or exam reading lists;
- making sure that the student is ready for the thesis defense or M.A. examination;
- contributing to a formal written progress report on each advisee at the end of the first year, and at the end of each subsequent academic year in the case of students who defer graduation. See "progress toward degree" below.

Each member of a student's advisory committee is responsible for reading proposals, exam reading lists, and thesis chapters submitted by the student, and for attending all workshops, exams, and defenses. Those serving on non-thesis committees will submit exam questions and provide an assessment of the student's exam responses.

IV. ADMISSIONS

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

An application to the M.A. in FLCL will be considered complete upon receipt of the following materials.

Formal Application

Students should apply online through the Virginia Tech Graduate School, at <http://www.grads.vt.edu>. There is a \$45 non-refundable application fee required at the time of the submission of the online application. Our department will give admission preference to applications submitted online.

Transcripts

Two sets of official transcripts should be sent from all colleges or universities where the applicant received undergraduate or graduate degrees (bachelor's level or higher) and from any other graduate work you have completed. One set should be sent to the Graduate School , Graduate Life Center (0325), Blacksburg , VA 24061. A second set should be sent to the Graduate Studies Director, Foreign Languages & Literatures, 331 Major Williams (0225), Blacksburg , VA 24061.

Test Scores

Official test scores should be sent to the Virginia Tech Graduate School , **institution code 5859**. Do not enter a department code.

GRE (required of all applicants):

GRE scores must be submitted by all applicants. Our department requires only the general test, not the subject test. For more information see www.ets.org.

In the Blacksburg area, the GRE test is administered by Thomson Prometric Test Center , Phone: (540) 344-3688, 2004 Stephenson Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24014. For other locations, please go to www.gre.org or www.prometric.com.

TOEFL (required of international applicants whose native language is not English):

Our department requires a minimum score of 600 (written) or 250 (computerized) or 100 (IBT) is required. Note that this is higher than the university requirement. For more information see www.ets.org.

Letters of Recommendation

Three letters of recommendation should be submitted either online or by mail. If you wish to ask your recommenders to submit letters online, please indicate this as you complete your own online application (see "Formal Application" above).

Usually these letters will be from professors who can predict your success in graduate study. Professors of upper-level undergraduate or graduate language courses can tell us about your most mature work in literature and culture courses.

Mailed letters should be sent directly by each recommender to the Graduate Studies Director, Foreign Languages & Literatures, 331 Major Williams (0225), Blacksburg , VA 24061.

Writing Sample

Please provide a writing sample of 5-10 pages in French or Spanish. Typically this is a course paper that reflects your linguistic and intellectual abilities. It should be sent to the Graduate Studies Director, Foreign Languages & Literatures, 331 Major Williams (0225), Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Deadlines and Admission Decisions

On February 15, the FLL department will begin reviewing completed applications for Fall 2008. Applicants who meet this initial deadline can expect an admissions decision before April 1.

Applications submitted after February 15 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For final application deadlines, see www.grads.vt.edu.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

The information requested in the application process helps the department evaluate an applicant's potential for graduate study, as well as the match of applicant interests with departmental strengths. No one component of an application, such as a GRE score, ensures admission nor precludes it. The department makes a judgment based on the entire application.

Minimum Criteria for Admission

- 3.0 GPA in undergraduate or prior graduate work.
- If the applicant's native language is not English, a TOEFL score of 600 (paper) or 250 (computer-based) or 100 (IBT) is required. For more information on the TOEFL exam, see www.ets.org.
- At least 18 hours of course credit in French or Spanish at the advanced level.
- Applicants whose undergraduate degrees were earned in other fields, or who otherwise do not meet the above requirements, but who provide evidence of capacity to pursue graduate study, may be offered admission into the program with conditional status. Applicants in this category may be asked to appear for a personal interview and to take an appropriate exam. They may also be asked to make up undergraduate deficiencies before being advanced to degree status.

V. COURSEWORK

Program Overview

The Master of Arts in Foreign Languages, Cultures & Literatures is designed to meet the needs of students seeking academic and other professional careers in contexts that require intercultural competency as well as a specialized knowledge of Spanish and/or French. The program serves the interests of students seeking an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Course work includes areas such as cultural studies, cinema, art history, translation, linguistics and business. The core of the program provides a solid foundation in Hispanic, French, and Francophone cultures and literatures. It stresses the acquisition and development of analytical abilities based on a range of critical approaches. These skills prepare students to work independently in a variety of settings. The students may be beginning or experienced teachers of secondary-level Spanish and French, those planning to work in international environments, or those considering doctoral studies at other universities.

It is expected that students enrolled full time will complete all degree requirements within two academic years. This normally includes devoting the summer between to research or reading.

FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE STUDIES

Non-Thesis Option

Required core courses — 15 credits

FL 5024 Area Studies Methods - 3 credits

FL 5114 Applied Linguistics - 3 credits

FR 5344 Writing in the Francophone World - 3 credits

FR 5404 Topics in French Studies - 2 courses, 6 credits

Electives — 15 credits

Students will choose from the following list of courses:

FL 5124 Techniques in Foreign Language Translation - 3 credits

FL 5334 Topics in French or Francophone Cinema - 3 credits

FR 5154G Composition, Stylistics, and Verbal Analysis - 3 credits

FR 5314G Advanced Studies in French Literature (may be repeated with different content) - 3 credits

FR 5164 Business and Culture in the French-Speaking World - 3 credits

Students may take elective courses in other disciplines if approved by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Thesis Option

Required core courses — 18 credits

FL 5024 Area Studies Methods - 3 credits

FL 5114 Applied Linguistics - 3 credits

FR 5344 Writing in the Francophone World - 3 credits

FR 5404 Topics in French Studies - 3 credits

FR 5994 Research and Thesis - 2 courses, 6 credits

Electives — 12 credits

Same as elective courses for the non-thesis option above.

HISPANIC STUDIES

Non-Thesis Option

Required core courses - 15 credits

FL 5024 Area Studies Methods - 3 credits

FL 5114 Applied Linguistics - 3 credits

SPAN 5334G Advanced Topics in Hispanic Life, Literature & Language - 3 credits

SPAN 5344 Hispanic Literature and the Representation of History - 6 credits

Electives - 15 credits

FL 5124 Techniques in Foreign Language Translation - 3 credits

FL 5334 Topics in Hispanic Cinema - 3 credits

SPAN 5224 Topics in Spanish Civilization (except during summer sessions) - 3 credits

SPAN 5234 Spanish-American Institutions and Concepts (except during summer sessions) - 3 credits

SPAN 5304G Advanced Studies in Medieval and Golden Age Literature - 3 credits

SPAN 5314G Advanced Studies in 18th and 19th Century Literature - 3 credits

SPAN 5324G Advanced Studies in 20th Century Literature - 3 credits

Students may take elective courses in other disciplines if approved by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Thesis Option

Required core courses - 18 credits

FL Area Studies Methods 5024 - 3 credits

FL 5114 Applied Linguistics - 3 credits

SPAN 5334G Advanced Topics in Hispanic Life, Literature & Language - 3 credits

SPAN 5344 Hispanic Literature and the Representation of History - 3 credits

SPAN 5994 Research and Thesis - 6 credits

Electives - 12 credits

Same as elective courses for the non-thesis option above.

MULTILINGUAL STUDIES: FRENCH AND SPANISH

Non-Thesis Option

Required core courses - 15 credits

Students will choose a primary language to complete the following core courses in either French or Spanish:

French as your primary language:

FL 5024 Area Studies Methods - 3 credits

FL 5114 Applied Linguistics - 3 credits

FR 5344 Writing in the Francophone World - 3 credits

FR 5404 Topics in French Studies - 2 courses, 6 credits

Spanish as your primary language:

FL 5024 Area Studies Methods - 3 credits

FL 5114 Applied Linguistics - 3 credits

SPAN 5334G Advanced Topics in Hispanic Life, Literature & Language - 3 credits

SPAN 5344 Hispanic Literature and the Representation of History - 2 courses, 6 credits

Elective courses - 15 credits

In the second language, students may choose among the elective courses below. You will need approval from the Graduate Director in order to take fewer than 15-credit hours.

FL 5124 Techniques in Foreign Language Translation - 3 credits

FL 5334 Topics in French, Francophone or Hispanic Cinema - 3 credits

FR 5154G Composition, Stylistics, and Verbal Analysis - 3 credits

FR 5314G Advanced Studies in French Literature - 3 credits

FR 5164 Business and Culture in the French-Speaking World - 3 credits

SPAN 5224 Topics in Spanish Civilization (except during summer sessions) - 3 credits

SPAN 5234 Spanish-American Institutions and Concepts (except during summer sessions) - 3 credits

SPAN 5304G Advanced Studies in Medieval and Golden Age Literature - 3 credits

SPAN 5314G Advanced Studies in 18th and 19th Century Literature - 3 credits

SPAN 5324G Advanced Studies in 20th Century Literature - 3 credits

VI. SATISFACTORY PROGRESS TOWARD DEGREE

A. Orientation for new M.A. students

At the beginning of the fall semester the FLL department holds one or more orientation meetings for all new graduate students. At these sessions, students are provided general information about the following: requirements and procedures; plans of study; office procedures and privileges; advising; thesis preparation; and timetables for meeting degree requirements. Attending departmental orientation programs is mandatory for all incoming students.

Students who receive funding from a Graduate Assistantship are also required to attend the GTA workshops sponsored by the Graduate School the week before classes begin in the fall.

All new students must meet individually with the Graduate Studies Director during the first two weeks of the semester to discuss the student's particular needs and plans.

B. Thesis or M.A. Exam advisor and advisory committee

The academic advisor for all new incoming students will be the FLL Graduate Studies Director. By the end of the second semester of enrollment, each student should select an appropriate academic advisor. The advisor should be a tenured or tenure-track FLL faculty member, and an active researcher whose interests relate to those of the student. The choice of advisor must be approved by the FLL Graduate Studies Committee.

Each student should also, in consultation with the advisor, choose two other thesis/exam committee members.

The form must be submitted to the FLL Graduate Studies Committee during the student's second semester, and prior to the scheduling of the thesis proposal defense (thesis option) or filing of the M.A. exam reading list (non-thesis option). The Advisory Committee form must be signed by the advisor, by each committee member, and by the Graduate Studies Director. The department will file the approved committee list with the Graduate School.

The FLL Graduate Studies Committee retains the right to nominate alternative or additional members to a student's thesis committee.

C. Plan of study

All graduate students must submit a Plan of Study that meets at least the minimum Graduate School requirements for the designated degree. The Plan of Study must be approved by the student's Advisor and Advisory Committee, the FLL Graduate Studies Director, and the Graduate School.

All courses on the Plan of Study, including supporting courses, must be taken on a letter grade (A/F) basis except for those courses approved to be graded on a pass-fail (P/F) basis only. Audit courses cannot be included on the Plan of Study. After being signed by the student's Advisory Committee and the Graduate Program Director, the Plan of Study must be entered and sent electronically to the Graduate School for approval.

The Plan of Study form also indicates whether the student is pursuing the Thesis or Non-Thesis option. This decision can only be changed once, and so should be made carefully, in consultation with the student's advisor and/or the Graduate Studies Director.

The Plan of Study is due by the end of the second academic semester for all Master's degree students (based on full time enrollment of 12 credits per semester).

D. Thesis topic and thesis proposal (thesis option)

During the second semester of enrollment, students pursuing the thesis option will submit a topic proposal. This should include a proposed thesis title, one to two paragraphs describing the thesis topic, a select bibliography, and a timeline for completing the research and writing. The language of the thesis should be decided at this time (English or the target language). In order to finish the degree requirements within two years, students should plan on spending the summer reading and conducting research.

E. M.A. Exam reading list (non-thesis option)

By the end of the second semester of enrollment, students pursuing the non-thesis option will be provided a reading list approved by the FLL Graduate Studies Committee. The list will then be signed by the committee members and the student, and submitted to the Graduate Studies Director for the student's file.

In order to finish the degree requirements within two years, students should plan on spending the summer reading and preparing for the exam.

F. Annual review

The Graduate Studies Committee will evaluate each student's progress during the second semester of the first year. Comments will be solicited from faculty members with whom the student has taken courses and for whom the student has worked as a graduate assistant. Student evaluations of Graduate Teaching Assistants may also be considered. Continuation of funding is contingent on a satisfactory evaluation. The committee will evaluate each student, and share the written annual review report with the student. The student may make a written response to the committee, who may choose to alter the initial report. The final report will be filed with the Graduate School.

VII. THESIS DEFENSE AND M.A. EXAM

A. Thesis option

By the spring of the second year, full-time students in the thesis option should have completed an M.A. thesis, under the direction of the thesis advisor and advisory committee.

Students are responsible for scheduling the thesis defense with their committee and with the graduate school, and for meeting all graduate school deadlines. For graduate school deadlines see www.grads.vt.edu.

Students in the thesis option will submit their completed thesis to their advisor and advisory committee members at least two weeks before the defense date. The advisor and advisory committee will meet at the mutually-agreed upon defense time and place for a discussion of the thesis, after which time the committee will decide whether or not to approve the thesis. The committee decision will be recorded and submitted to the Graduate School using the required form.

The student is then responsible for making final revisions and submitting the thesis electronically, according to Graduate School guidelines and deadlines.

Students must be enrolled at the time of the defense, according to graduate school regulations. See www.grads.vt.edu.

B. Non-thesis option

By the spring of the second year, students in the non-thesis option should have prepared for a formal examination based on an approved reading list, under the direction of the academic advisor, advisory committee, and Graduate Studies Director.

Students are responsible for scheduling the M.A. exam with their committee, the Graduate Studies Director, and with the Graduate School, and for meeting all graduate school deadlines. Note that all of this must be done well in advance of the desired graduation date. See www.grads.vt.edu.

The student's advisor will work with the Graduate Studies Director to coordinate the exam and ensure that the results are submitted to the Graduate School. Students should contact their advisor and the FLL Graduate Studies Director at least one month in advance of the scheduled exam date, so that appropriate exam questions can be solicited from committee members.

The exam questions will be kept confidential from the student until the time of the exam. The M.A. exam will be conducted in the target language.

The advisor and advisory committee members will read and evaluate the candidate's exam responses, and recommend pass or fail. The committee decision will be recorded and submitted to the Graduate School using the required form.

Students must be enrolled at the university at the time of the exam, according to graduate school regulations. See www.grads.vt.edu.

VIII. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

A. Selection criteria

Graduate Teaching Assistantships are normally awarded at the time of FLCL program admission, based on background and relevant experience as shown on the candidate's application. See "Admissions" above.

B. Duties

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are normally assigned first- or second-year language courses, and will work under the supervision of an experienced language instructor. New GTAs receive training and take a required FLL pedagogy course during their first semester, then teach one course during each subsequent semester for which they receive funding. GTAs with prior foreign language teaching experience and pedagogical training may be assigned teaching duties during the first semester.

GTAs are expected to follow procedures and requirements pertaining to all FLL classroom instructors, as outlined in the departmental policy handbook, available online or through the FLL departmental office.

GTAs are responsible for meeting all of their scheduled classes and do not have the authority to cancel a class. If extreme circumstances prevent a GTA from meeting his/her class, a substitute should be arranged, in consultation with the GTA supervisor. In cases of sudden illness when a substitute cannot be scheduled, the GTA supervisor should be contacted.

C. Evaluations and review

GTAs will conduct student evaluations for each course, in accordance with FLL departmental requirements. In addition, GTAs will be observed each semester by an experienced language instructor, who will submit a written report to the Graduate Studies Committee for inclusion in the annual review report (described above in section VI-F).