Spanish and Portuguese

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M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
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Senior Lecturer I Ame Cividanes

FIELDS OF STUDY

Fields include Spanish Peninsular literature, Spanish American literature, Portuguese and Brazilian literatures.

The doctoral program offers: (1) a concentration in Spanish specializing in a single field of study (medieval, Renaissance/Golden Age, modern Spanish Peninsular, colonial Spanish American, contemporary Spanish American); (2) a joint concentration in Spanish and Portuguese offering the student the opportunity to work in both the Luso Brazilian and Spanish/Spanish American fields, with a specialization in either of the two fields. In addition, the department participates in (1) a combined Ph.D. program in Spanish and Portuguese and African American Studies offered in conjunction with the Department of African American Studies and (2) a combined Ph.D. program in Spanish and Portuguese and Renaissance Studies offered in conjunction with the Renaissance Studies Program.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

The department requires two years of course work, sixteen term courses, a grade of Honors in at least two of these courses each year, and a minimum grade average of High Pass. Course work includes two required courses, SPAN 500, History of the Spanish Language, and SPAN 790, Methodologies of Modern Language Teaching, and four courses taken outside the department. Also required is a reading knowledge of Latin and a second language, which may be Portuguese or another language-literature. In the third year, the student is expected to pass the qualifying examination (written and oral components) and submit and receive approval of the dissertation prospectus. Upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the dissertation prospectus, students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D.

Participation in the department’s teaching and pedagogy program is a degree requirement. It consists of taking the required course SPAN 790 in the second year and teaching four courses during the third and fourth years of study. At least three of these must be courses in the beginning language sequence; viewed as an integral part of the course of study for the doctorate, this program includes supervision by the director of the language program and course directors. The fourth course may be a literature or culture course taught through a teaching fellowship.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAMS

Spanish and Portuguese and African American Studies

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese also offers, in conjunction with the Department of African American Studies, a combined Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese and African American Studies. For further details, see African American Studies.

Spanish and Portuguese and Renaissance Studies

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese also offers, in conjunction with the Renaissance Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese and Renaissance Studies. For further details, see Renaissance Studies.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) The M.A. en route is awarded upon the satisfactory completion of eight term courses and the language requirements (Latin and one other language).

COURSES

PORT 652a / CPLT 657a, Clarice Lispector: The Short Stories  
Kenneth David Jackson

This course is a seminar on the complete short stories of Clarice Lispector (1920–1977), a master of the genre and one of the major authors of twentieth-century Brazil known for existentialism, mysticism, and feminism.
PORT 933a, Brazilian Novel of the Twenty-First Century  Kenneth David Jackson
Changing narratives, themes, styles, and aesthetic ideals in current Brazilian prose and poetry. The writers’ attempts to express or define a personal, national, and global consciousness influenced by the return of political democracy to Brazil. Focus on readings published within the past five years.

PORT 964b, Machado de Assis: The Literary World  Kenneth David Jackson
A study, in translation, of the novelistic world of J.M. Machado de Assis (1839–1908), considered the master of the Brazilian novel, examining his philosophical stance (skepticism and Menippean satire), narrative innovations (use of graphics, emblems, emptying content, etc.), social critique, encyclopedic referentiality, and contributions to modern prose. We read selected short stories and novels as well as critical essays and studies of Machado’s five major novels (called “Carioca quintet”). Students with Portuguese may read in the original.

SPAN 500b, History of the Spanish Language  Oscar Martin
The evolution of modern Spanish from spoken Latin, the origin and development of philology as the foundational discipline of literary studies, the rise of linguistics as a positivist field, the separation of linguistics from literary studies, and the fracturing of Romance studies into separate language and culture fields. In Spanish.

SPAN 533a, Garcilaso and Poetry  Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria
A careful reading of Garcilaso’s brief but influential corpus of poetry to examine why and how it had such a revolutionary effect on all subsequent poetry in Spanish, particularly during the Golden Age. Garcilaso’s impact is studied in the works of San Juan de la Cruz, Fray Luis de León, Lope de Vega, Luis de Góngora, Francisco de Quevedo, Calderón de la Barca, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Concomitantly the seminar considers the current state of the study of poetry by reading the work of twentieth-century theoreticians and critics such as M.H. Abrams, Amado Alonso, Dámaso Alonso, Harold Bloom, Cleanth Brooks, Paul de Man, T.S. Eliot, Helmut Hatzfeld, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Roman Jakobson, Leo Spitzer, Karl Vossler, and William Wimsatt. In Spanish.

SPAN 658b / CPLT 960b / FREN 658b / MDVL 668b / NELC 698b, Law and the Science of the Soul: Iberian and Mediterranean Connections  Jesús Vélasco
This seminar suggests a research project to investigate the affinity between the legal discipline and the science of the soul, or, if you wish, between the science of the soul and the body of law. The point of departure for our framing argument—the existence of this affinity—is that at different moments in history, the legal science (in the form of legal scholarship, religious law, or even legislation) has toiled to appropriate cognitive processes (the external senses, for instance) and post-sensorial operations (imagination, fantasy, memory, etc.). However, this appropriation has become, at different moments in history, so naturalized, so dissolved, so automatized, that it has become invisible for us, and that, because of this invisibility, the affinity can continue doing a political work that is not always evident to us readers, citizens, and clients of the law. In this seminar we read Iberian and Mediterranean primary sources from different confessions, in different languages, and within different legal and political backgrounds—from pre-Socratic thinkers to al-Ghazali, from Averroes and Maimonides to Alfonso X, from Parisian theologians to Spinoza, etc. Likewise, we read theoretical work that allow us to conceptualize the kind of research we are doing.

SPAN 746b, The Specter of Poetry: Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Rosalía de Castro, Antonio Machado, and Juan Ramón Jiménez  Noel Valis
An exploration and close reading of four great Spanish poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, situating them within the pertinent literary traditions and movements of the period such as romanticism, symbolism, and modernism. Readings include Bécquer’s Rimas, de Castro’s En las orillas del Sar, Machado’s Soledades, Galerías, and Campos de Castilla, and Jiménez’s Diario de un poeta recién casado. In Spanish.

SPAN 812b, The Polemics of Possession in Early Spanish American Narrative  Rolena Adorno
Fundamental writings on the Spanish Indies from Columbus’s “Letter of Discovery” of 1493 to the writings by authors of indigenous American heritage in the first quarter of the seventeenth century: their observations of New World realities, their debates about the meanings and rights of Spanish sovereignty, and their literary relationships to one another. The concept of “the polemics of possession”—their varied claims to territorial, political, cultural, and/or literary authority—orients the readings of the seminar. Prose texts by Cristóbal Colón, Hernán Cortés, Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Hernán Pérez de Oliva, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala are complemented by Alonso de Ercilla’s enduring narrative epic poem. In Spanish.

SPAN 901a / CPLT 904a / FILM 617a / FREN 875a / GMAN 617a, Key Concepts in Psychoanalysis: Tools for the Critical Humanities  Moira Fradinger
Working with primary sources mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpsuses, this seminar is an introduction to key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, ending with an exploration of the afterlife of these concepts in other disciplines, focusing on one or two concrete examples. Students gain proficiency in what has been called “the language of psychoanalysis,” as well as the tools to assess how these concepts have been translated into the language of disciplines such as aesthetic criticism, political theory, film studies, gender studies, theory of ideology, sociology, etc. Concepts to be studied include the unconscious, the ego, identification, the drive, the death drive, repetition, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and jouissance. Depending on the interests of the group, others can be added (such as neurosis, perversion, fetishism, psychosis, anti-psychiatry, etc.). Commentators, readers, and critics of Freud and Lacan are also consulted (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others). Taught in-person, with a hybrid synchronous Zoom link for those joining remotely.
SPAN 913a / CPLT 940a, Realismo mágico—Magical Realism  Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria
Latin American novels and short stories from the 1920s to the 1990s in which the fantastic appears, derived from avant-garde tendencies, anthropology, and popular Afro-Hispanic religions (santería) and a Catholic tradition of miracles. Theoretical texts by Franz Roh, Sigmund Freud, Marcel Mauss, Jorge Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Arturo Uslar Pietri, Gabriel García Márquez, and Roberto González Echevarría. Prose fiction by Miguel Ángel Asturias, Borges, Lydia Cabrera, Carpentier, García Márquez, João Guimarães Rosa, and Juan Rulfo, among others. Novels such as El reino de este mundo, Cien años de soledad, and Aura, and short story collections such as Cuentos negros de Cuba, Leyendas de Guatemala, and Guerra del tiempo. Conducted in Spanish; course work for students in departments other than Spanish and Portuguese in English. Open to undergraduates.

SPAN 974b, Narrative and Journalism in Spanish America: Bicentennial Readings  Aníbal González-Pérez
A study of the narrative-journalism relation in Spanish America from the early nineteenth to the early twenty-first century. Topics include definitions of journalistic discourse; the “law of dissimulation”; journalism and the self; journalism versus genealogy; journalism and avant-garde writing; testimonial and documentary fiction. Readings from works by J.J. Fernández de Lizardi, Ricardo Palma, Heriberto Frías, José Martí, Rubén Darío, Roberto Arlt, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez, Elena Poniatowska, Tomás Eloy Martínez, Laura Restrepo. In Spanish.