UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Spanish & Portuguese Virtual Info Session for Prospective Graduate Students

October 22, 2026

Prof. Eduardo Ledesma, DGS



SpanPort

Introduction

- Prof. Eduardo Ledesma, Director of Graduate Studies
  - Research Area: Film and Media Studies
  - Default advisor to first-year MA students in literature



A Quick Glimpse…



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A Quick Glimpse...



The Quad

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A Quick Glimpse…



Literatures Cultures and Linguistics Building


LITERATURES, CULTURES
& LINGUISTICS BUILDING


LITERATURES, CULTURES
& LINGUISTICS BUILDING

University of Illinois
Literatures, Cultures
& Linguistics Building
707 S Mathews Ave, Urbana

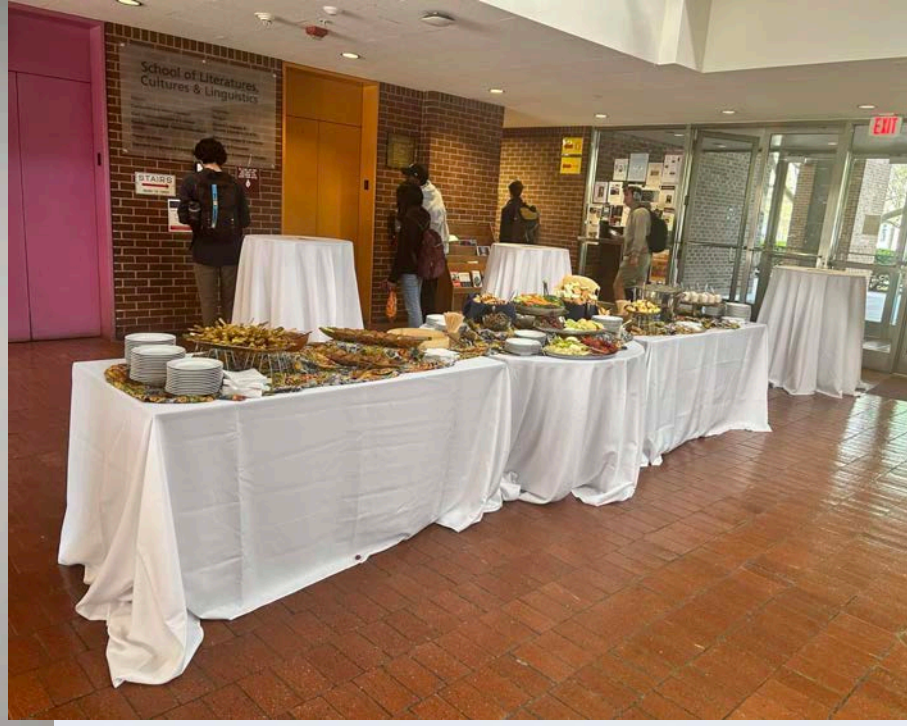


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VIOLENCE


MÁS SOBRE EL ALÓFONO [ç]


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GRAD
STUDENTS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
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School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics
STAIRS
EXIT





The Program…



General Information

- **The Spanish & Portuguese webpage**

  contains a lot of important information (especially the FAQs). If not there, you can email me eledes1@Illinois.edu

Main page

Admissions (FAQs)

Program guidelines





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Admissions

- **Dec. 1st, 2026:** Priority deadline
  - Graduate College Fellowships consideration

- **Feb. 1st, 2027:** Final Deadline
  - There still may be Graduate College Fellowships opportunities (maybe not though)

- **Important:** <u>All admitted students receive funding</u>: either TAship or Fellowship

Guaranteed Financial Support: TAships

- **2 years** at the MA level
- **4 years** (minimum) at the PhD level

- Appointment stipend, AY 2024-2025: **$23,000**
- Appointment stipend, AY 2025-2026: **$24,200**
  (See GEO website for more details)

- See Cost of Living Calculator to compare Urbana-Champaign with other locations



Summer Support

- All continuing students receive minimum summer funds: **$3,500**
  - Summer Teaching Assistantships (+/- $6,000)
  - Research Assistantships (amount depends)
  - Departmental Research fellowships
  - Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS)
  - European Union Center (EUC)



Further Support: Fellowships

- Illinois Global Institute Language Fellowship (Quechua, Portuguese, Arabic, and others)
- Lemann Graduate Fellowship (Brazil)
- Humanities Research Institute Fellowship

- Dissertation Completion Fellowships (SLCL and Graduate College)
- Darlene Wolf Fellowship (SLATE)

- And others…



Further Support: Conference Presentations

- Department offers financial support for grad students presenting their research at conferences
- In both Fall and Spring semesters
- Grad College offers additional conference presentation support in both semesters



Spanish Graduate Program Overview Academics

- MA Programs
- PhD programs



MA - Literatures & Cultures

- Coursework requirements (32 hours ~ 8 courses)

  -SPAN 571 (Proseminar in Foreign Language Teaching)

  -SPAN 572 (Theory and Literary Criticism) or equivalent

  - At least one other 500 level course in your area

  -To ensure broad knowledge of the field, at least one course from each of group:

    - Group I: Pre-18th Century Peninsular
    - Group 2: Colonial Spanish American (Pre-Columbian to 1810)
    - Group 3: Modern and Contemporary Spanish American
    - Group 4: Modern and Contemporary Peninsular
    - Group 5: Luso-Brazilian Studies

- MA Research Paper (no exam)



MA – Hispanic Linguistics

- Coursework requirements (32 hours ~ 8 courses)
  - SPAN 571 (Proseminar in Foreign Language Teaching)
  - At least 2 more 500-level courses in your area
  - One in each of the following six areas:
    - Spanish Syntax
    - Spanish Phonology
    - Spanish Morphology
    - Spanish Sociolinguistics and Dialectology
    - History of the Spanish Language
    - Second Language Acquisition Theory and Research
- MA Research Paper (no exam)



MA Portuguese – Brazilian Studies

- Coursework requirements (32 hours ~ 8 courses)
- Very flexible (individualized plan)
  - PORT 571 (Proseminar in Foreign Language Teaching)
  - PORT 572 (Theory and Literary Criticism) or equivalent
  - At least one other 500 level course in your area
  - PORT 595. Special Topics
  - PORT 599. Thesis Research (to work on MA paper)
  - Coursework within the Department of Spanish and Portuguese in Brazilian Studies and in disciplines related to the student's focus with themes relevant to Brazil, selected in consultation with advisor
- MA Thesis (Brazil focused)
- NO PhD!

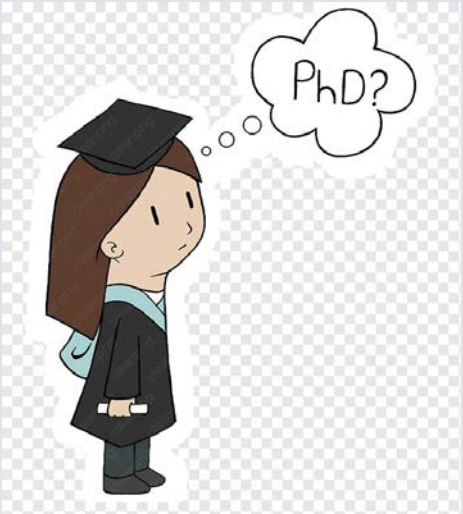


MA Timeline

YEAR 1		YEAR 2	
Fall (Semester 1)	Spring (Semester 2)	Fall (Semester 3)	Spring (Semester 4)
• Coursework	• Coursework • Decide on an advisor • Choose MA paper topic	• Coursework • Work on MA paper	• Complete coursework requirements (if not already finished) • Complete MA paper

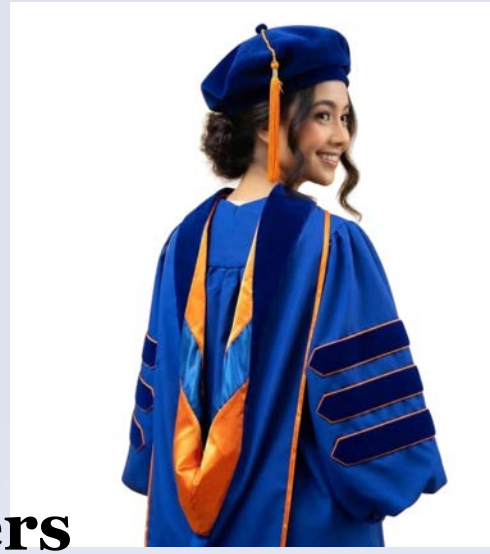


From MA to PhD…



- Simple process:
  - Required: Statement of purpose & a writing sample
  - No fees, no letters of reference required, no language tests…
- The vast majority of our MA students continue on to the PhD (with us!)

The PhD



- 64 Credit hours in total
- 32 hours (minimum) in formal coursework
- **2 Preliminary Exams/Qualifying Papers**
  - Linguistics: 2 Research Papers
  - Literature & Culture: 1 Literature Review & 1 Critical Review Essay
- Foreign language requirement
  - Reading proficiency in 2 languages (not English or the language of specialization) – Can be satisfied in multiple ways
- **Dissertation Proposal Defense**
- **Final Oral Exam: Dissertation Defense!**

The PhD Program
Our Program is UNIQUE

- The PhD portion of the program **does not have rigid coursework requirements**
- You work closely with your advisor to select appropriate coursework and set goals for completing your other milestones
- You can take courses in any Department (as long as they are appropriate)



Idealized PhD Timeline

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Fall: Coursework	**Fall:** Coursework	**Fall:** Submit 2 Qualifying papers	**Fall:** Prepare for the job market
Spring: Coursework	**Spring:** Coursework	**Spring:** Dissertation Proposal defense	**Spring:** Dissertation defense



PhD Timeline

- What if you don't complete the degree in 4 years (6 including the MA)?
  - While we don't *guarantee* a 5th year of PhD funding, historically, everyone who has requested funding for a 5th year has received departmental funding.



MA or PhD?

- If you don't have an MA, **apply to the MA program**.
- If you have an MA, but the courses in the previous MA are significantly different from the courses in our MA, **apply to the MA program.**
- If you have an MA, and there are 1 or 2 courses in our MA that you haven't taken, **apply to PhD** and make up those missing courses
- If you have an MA, and the courses completely overlap with our MA courses, **apply to the PhD**



Mentoring & Advising

- **1st year MA students**

  Prof. Eduardo Ledesma, Director of Graduate Studies
  - Default advisor to first-year MA students in lit/cult

  Prof. Jon MacDonald
  -Default advisor to first-year MA students in lit/cult

- **2nd year MA & PhD students select their own advisor**
  - Having co-advisors is a possibility
- **Annual review of graduate students**
- **SPGO Amistades**
  - pairing up of new students with current graduate students



So, what makes UIUC so GREAT?



OUR FACULTY!

Literatures and Cultures – 11 tenure track, 15 total + affiliates

Linguistics – 7 tenure track 10 total + affiliates

25 faculty members to learn from!

Literatures and Cultures



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Lit Cult

- Latin American, Brazilian, and Latinx Literature/Cultu (19th century until today)
- Colonial & Early Modern Studies
- Peninsular (Spanish) Literature and Culture
- Film, Media, and Visual Culture, Sound Studies
- Digital Humanities
- Gender Studies
- Mexico and Central America
- Southern Cone
- And more!



Linguistics

- Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Bilingualism
- Heritage Language Acquisition and Loss
- Phonetics, Phonology, and Aerodynamic Experiments
- Syntax, Semantics, and Morphosyntax
- Sociolinguistics, Dialectology, and Language Contact
- Psycholinguistics and Cognitive Processing

And more…!



What makes UIUC so great?

- Excellent research opportunities
  - Library collections Main page & Literatures & Languages Library
  - Research Labs & Research facilities
- Interdisciplinary training
  - Lemann Institute for Brazilian Studies
  - Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
  - Center for European Union Studies
  - Through other departments



What makes UIUC so great?

- Interdisciplinarity can be reflected on your transcript:
- Graduate minors, concentrations or certificates:
  - Cinema Studies
  - Gender and Women's Studies
  - Latina/o Studies
  - Medieval Studies
  - SLATE (Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education)
  - Romance Linguistics
  - Translation Studies



What makes UIUC so great?

- Valuable teaching training (**Span 571**),which will give you an edge on the job market.
- Our graduate students tend to teach an array of both introductory/intermediate language courses
  - At PhD level, content courses as well.
- Job placement
  - our students get jobs upon graduation



What makes UIUC so great?

- **Close-knit community of graduate students!!!!**



What makes UIUC so great?

- **Close-knit community of graduate students!!!!!**
- The largest public university research library in the United States
- Affordable cost of living on a graduate student budget
- Excellent, approachable faculty



Contact the Faculty!!!

- Feel free to reach out to ***any*** **faculty member** via email if you would like to schedule a virtual meeting.

- They are waiting for your emails.
  - Faculty webpages





Questions?



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