Thesis proposal guidelines for the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies

A) Thesis proposals

NOTE: Students who wish to receive an Honours degree from the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies normally submit an application to the Department no later than March 31st of the year before they expect to graduate. Approved applications must then be submitted by the Department, to the Registrar’s Office in mid-September of the student's final year.

Students who chose to write their thesis in the Dept. of Spanish and Latin American Studies must submit a proposal at the beginning of their second-to-last term. It is the responsibility of the Thesis Supervisor to advise the Academic Advisor of a student’s intent to write a thesis in our department. Honours thesis proposals are normally approved by the Supervisor and the Academic Advisor, who may choose to consult other colleagues if necessary. In the event that a proposal is found to be unsatisfactory it will be returned to the student, and approval will be delayed until a revised proposal is submitted.

Students writing a thesis in our department are encouraged to take SPAN 4990, which is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Guidelines for thesis proposals:

Each thesis proposal can take a variety of forms, depending on the field of research.

(a) In the case of students wishing to explore a literary topic, proposals should include the texts to be studied, a brief contextualization of these works, the theoretical approach/methodology to be used, the central questions to be investigated, and a preliminary bibliography.

(b) Students submitting a proposal for research on a linguistic topic would include information about the theory/methodology to be used, the data or corpus that will be the basis of the research, and a preliminary bibliography.

(c) For research projects in the field of of translation, students should understand that a translation project undertaken as a thesis must include an introduction (to situate the text culturally, linguistically, historically, and or socially, as appropriate) and conclusion (to assess the challenges of the project and their resolution). That is, a translation project as a thesis is not merely the production of a translation, but will include supporting material that makes it an academic endeavour.

A proposal for research in this field should identify clearly the text(s) to be translated and explain the student’s interest in them. Proposals should include a brief discussion of the source texts and their formal linguistic characteristics (jargon, slang, dialect, etc.), a brief reflection on the approach the students plan to take regarding the translation, and a preliminary bibliography.

(d) Students who wish to conduct research pertaining to the social sciences should state clearly in their proposals the central questions to be investigated; they should also provide a brief contextualization of these issues at hand, a description of the theoretical approach/methodology to be used, and a preliminary bibliography.

Although the details of each research project will be agreed upon between the student and his or her thesis director, every thesis proposal should state a general objective to be studied, and the method employed to develop a central argument surrounding the thesis. They should include an initial bibliography of the books, articles, journals, web materials, recordings, etc. to be consulted during the research project. Students may annotate this if they wish, but that is not required. Bibliographies should include a mix of print and non-print sources; that is, a bibliography consisting solely or primarily of websites is unacceptable.

Although not part of the thesis proposal, it is recommended that students prepare a brief (one page or less) proposed outline of the content of the thesis (MLA guide offers assistance on this), to be submitted to their thesis director before initiating the project, after which mutually agree timelines for sections of the thesis should be set. The students need to respect these at all times.

All theses should be written in Spanish and have between 25 and 35 pages in length.

The following template can be distributed to students as guideline for preparing their thesis proposal.

**Thesis Proposal Outline**

**DUE:**

Your research outline should be about 4-6 pages (single spaced) and should normally contain the following information. Your supervisor may, of course, suggest that you structure your outline differently or include other information. The following outline is intended only as a general guide.

\* What is the central question or thesis of your study? What do you wish to prove or disprove? Why do you want to undertake this particular project? Why is this subject important and how is it relevant?

\*. What corpus of material will you use in this study? Consider the relevance of its cultural, linguistic, historical, and social context and elaborate on any area that may be relevant.

\* Provide a preliminary summary of the methods you plan to use. Explain why this approach is ideal for the type of research you wish to undertake. Discuss potential limitations/problems/solutions.

\* Present a preliminary bibliography of sources that you think might be useful as a starting point.

As you move beyond the proposal, it may be useful to consider:

\* How do you intend to break down the content of your study?  How will you structure your argument? How do you intend to go about your research?  How will you structure your time and energy? Where will you go to find the information you need? What types of data will be pertinent? How will you obtain it?

**Important dates:**

- Identify a Thesis Supervisor: Before the beginning of classes of the student’s second-to-last term.

- Identify title / topic: September 15th, for students graduating in the Spring and January 15th for students graduating in the Winter.

- Submission of proposal to supervisor: September 30th, for students graduating in the Spring and January 31st for students graduating in the Winter.

- Submission of penultimate draft: One month before the last day of classes of the student’s final term.

- Submission of final draft: Last day of classes of the student’s final term.

The final grade for a thesis is decided by the Thesis Supervisor.