

## MA Assessment Reports 2019-2020

### **MLAN-French Assessment Report for 2019-2020**

We have seen four students (Jackheil Kemp, Caleb Smith, Daniel Folger, Jarek Howell) through the MLAN-Fren program this year.

Their ability to pass this exam attests to their broad knowledge and advanced critical understanding of French and Francophone culture, civilization, and literature, as described in our first Program Goal. Our MA reading list is lengthy and students are responsible for a number of texts that are not taught in classes. We are adamant about their developing the ability to read and analyze independently of our classes. It bears mentioning that our MA candidates are responsible for every period in the history of French literature, medieval through twenty-first century; they are not allowed to narrow their focus on certain periods for their comprehensive exams.

Thanks to our emphasis on discussions in graduate classes and on using the target language in the classes they teach, not to mention a course that includes a heavy phonetics component, these students are able to correctly pronounce French and to express themselves effectively in that language. The pedagogy and technology classes they have taken as part of their graduate curriculum have exposed them to a wide range of teaching methods and language teaching-related technologies. Those who complete our degree are effective oral and written communicators and problem-solvers (Program Goals 2 and 3).

Our MA students write lengthy analytical papers in our literature courses; we work with them closely on these, from the choice of a topic through the remaining stages (outline, first draft, subsequent drafts). These papers are entirely in French (as are their comprehensive exams).

The French faculty meet frequently to discuss every individual student's progress through the curriculum. We share our impressions about this and about their teaching with the students during the spring graduate reviews. We are very pleased with our students' achievements and feel strongly that we are more than meeting our program goals. Our students are well prepared to go on to PhD programs, to continue teaching in other contexts, or to work in the business world.

At this juncture we believe that our student learning outcomes are right where they should be; we foresee no changes to our process of assessment. Though our teaching supervisor, Doug Miller, has stepped down, we plan to maintain the status quo in terms of how we train our graduate students to teach and to succeed in their classes. We are excited by the possibility that our new hire, Dr. Annie Doucet, may want to take over coordinating our first and second year language sequence and supervising TAs; she has been doing that at the University of Oklahoma. We look forward to the fresh ideas she will bring with her.

## **German Section - MA Program Assessment 2019-20**

Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Brett Sterling

Overview:

Number of students enrolled in Fall 2019: 5

Number of graduating students in Spring 2020: 2

Number of new students accepted for 2020-21: 1

Projected number of students for Fall 2020: 4

Graduate courses offered in Fall 2019: 3

Graduate courses offered in Spring 2020: 3

Number of students taking the comprehensive exam in Spring 2020: 2

Program Description:

The German MA program is one centered on the traditional literature canon, and it provides an excellent foundation both for those of our graduates going on for study in a Ph.D. program and for those who will be teaching upon completion of the program. Students should gain in-depth knowledge of the masterpieces of German literature from the Middle Ages through the present day. Reading works in the original German and participating in seminars conducted entirely in German also allow our MA candidates to improve their language skills substantially. At the beginning of their studies, students are given a reading list in preparation for the MA exam; most of these works are also read and discussed in the 36 hours of graduate coursework taken in the program. Students additionally take six hours of technology/pedagogy classes selected from WLLC 4023--Language, Culture and Web 2.0 Technologies; WLLC 4033--Language, Culture and Video Development; WLLC 5063--Teaching Foreign Languages on the College Level), which allows them to be both more effective in the classroom and to offer more to potential employers in technology skills.

Assessment Results:

Students are required to maintain a C average in their graduate coursework in order to remain enrolled in the MA program. In their last semester of study, MA candidates sit for six hours of written exams. One hour is composed of the brief identification of important terms, time periods, and authors. The remaining exams consist of five essays (one hour allotted for each), in which students discuss both literary periods and the works of specific authors. Students are also required to take part in a one hour oral exam after the examining committee has had the opportunity to read over the written portion of the exam in order to further discuss and elucidate

their answers. \*NOTE: During the exceptional period of the COVID-19 outbreak, the faculty chose to administer comprehensive exams remotely in a one hour question and answer format.\*

Additionally, MA candidates are encouraged but not required to take the C1 level of the Goethe Institute Exams, which is an international standardized proficiency exam given by the German government in 118 countries around the world as part of the Common European Framework.

AY 2019-20:

During the academic year 2019-20, the German MA program (MLANMA, German track) added three new graduate students, making a cohort of five including our returning grads (Julia Smith and Michael McLaughlin). These new students (Danielle Erlandson, Caleb Lowdermilk, and Matthew Elliott) all received teaching assistantships from the department, with each graduate student teaching two courses at the beginning level (GERM 1003-1013) while enrolled in courses offered within the MA program; our returning grads each taught two courses at the intermediate level (GERM 2003-2013). Each graduate student met weekly with faculty to coordinate their language teaching, which included in-course observations administered by the faculty members responsible for language program coordination (Dr. Kathleen Condray and Dr. Brett Sterling). On the basis of these observations, as well as the course evaluations for the teaching assistants' courses, the faculty judged each student to be a successful teacher in the classroom.

Our graduate students also completed coursework within the program, covering a wide variety of topics within German literature, history, culture, and media. All students performed well and made good progress toward the MA. During the spring semester, Smith and McLaughlin passed their comprehensive exams and were awarded their degrees. Mike McLaughlin has been accepted to the Ph.D. program in German Studies at Pennsylvania State University, where he will begin study in the fall. In addition to Penn State, Mike also received an offer from Arizona State University. Julia Smith will be teaching in the department during the summer session, while she is exploring options for high school teaching in Rogers, AR for the fall.

Our graduate students were also engaged in research and professional development during the academic year 2019-20. Mike McLaughlin was accepted to present a paper on nationalism and Islamophobia in the work of German politician Thilo Sarrazin at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19). Matty Elliott and Caleb Lowdermilk were accepted to an AATG summer seminar in Leipzig, Germany, which was likewise cancelled.

In Fall 2020, one new student—Carter Wallace—will join the German MA program on a teaching stipend. Carter is an internal candidate, who has shown great promise throughout his undergraduate career in courses with faculty, leading us to expect high performance from him.

The faculty continue to follow promising graduates and rising seniors, but are mindful of the difficulties involved in recruiting during these uncertain times.

## Spanish MA Program Assessment

Learning outcomes for the Master of Arts Program in Spanish at the University of Arkansas are evaluated by two main criteria, coursework and a comprehensive examination.

### A. Coursework

Students in the program must successfully complete 36 hours of coursework (12 courses) in which they are evaluated in the following manner:

1. Required exams testing ability to read novels, poems, plays and other works in Spanish
2. Required research papers demonstrating ability to conduct research, critical writing skills, advanced Spanish writing skills, and critical concepts in literary and cultural theories
3. Participation in class activities and discussions is necessary to be successful in the program.
4. Oral presentations demonstrating competence in selected topics related to the program, public speaking skills, Spanish oral proficiency, and effectiveness of communication.

### B. Comprehensive Examination

A comprehensive exam is a degree requirement for the Master of Arts program in Spanish. The exam has a written and an oral component taken on the fourth semester of study that test students on the expected learning outcomes outlined above.

Students in the MA program take a variety of courses on the literary and cultural history of the Hispanic world as well as courses on language learning pedagogies. In the 2019-2020, the following courses were offered:

FALL 2019	SPRING 2020
SPAN 5203 Medieval Literature SPAN 5943 US Latino/a Lit & Culture WLLC 5193 Teaching FLAN college Level	SPAN 5223 Colonial Lit. and Culture WLLC 5723 Language Learning Research & Theory SPAN 5343 Survey of 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Spanish Literature SPAN 5703 The Latin American Essay

In addition to coursework taken, SPANMA students have to take a comprehensive exam at the end of the program, demonstrating familiarity with the literature and culture of the Hispanic world during five historical periods. In April 20 and 21 2020 3 students took the comprehensive exams, all but one passed the exam, the student that failed will have to present a make up exam in June.

Three of the SPANMA graduates were admitted into doctoral program in Spanish at the University of Oregon, University of California, Riverside, and Michigan State university. One student presented a paper at a national conference.