

## Ph.D. in Second Language Studies Description

Interdisciplinary in nature, the Ph.D. in second language studies promotes state-of-the-art research and practice, preparing future academics and professionals for the realities of a multicultural and multilingual society. Second language studies uniquely prepares individuals to be global leaders in various cultural contexts in multiple languages through rigorous course work and investigation in areas including, but not limited to, second language structure, language in use, language and culture, language learning and acquisition, language teaching, and language policy and planning. As experts in one or more of these fields, graduates of the program are able to work in academia, business, industry, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, media, journalism, and other fields requiring linguistic and cultural competencies.

### Minimum Total Credit Hours: 54 Course Requirements

To fulfill the degree credit requirement, the student must have completed 54 hours of study beyond the bachelor's degree. Of these, at least 30 hours must consist of formal, nonremedial course work, and at least 18 hours must consist of dissertation credits. A maximum of 9 hours of course work from the student's M.A. degree may count toward the Ph.D. requirement with the approval of the student's advisory committee. Students must have completed a minimum of 18 hours of graduate work in continuous residence. Separate descriptions of course requirements for applied linguistics and Spanish follow.

### Other Academic Requirements

**The Ph.D. committee:** The faculty and student will collaborate to compose a dissertation advisory committee, consisting of a minimum of three members of the Department of Modern Languages holding graduate faculty status and one University of Mississippi faculty member external to the student's major field or to the department. A student with a subfield should have at least one committee member from that subfield. The Ph.D. committee will administer and evaluate the comprehensive exam, supervise and approve dissertation work, conduct and evaluate the oral defense, and recommend the conferral of the degree.

**Comprehensive exam:** Students will take the comprehensive exam after they have completed all core course requirements, submitted a term paper from a graduate class, and met the language proficiency requirement. The written exam consists of two parts, taken one week apart, or up to a semester apart. Part 1 is a two-day exam (cloistered), answering questions based on the Ph.D. reading list. Part 2 is a take-home question based on the student's research interest. The student has one week to answer the question, and the answer (usually 40-50 pages) counts as the student's dissertation proposal/prospectus. A one-hour defense for each part may be taken at the same time, or as two separate defenses if parts 1 and 2 are taken in different semesters. Upon successful defense of Part 2, the student is admitted to candidacy and may begin earning dissertation credits.

**Dissertation:** The candidate is required to complete a book-length research project that makes an original and significant contribution to the field. Candidates must successfully defend their dissertation before the Ph.D. committee.

Specific Requirements for the Emphasis in Applied Linguistics:

1. Proficiency in other languages: Before advancing to comprehensive exams, students must demonstrate reading proficiency in two languages other than English through advanced course work or an agreed-upon assessment.
2. Required core courses will be chosen from the following (a course may be replaced by another course with permission of the director of graduate studies, if the equivalent was taken at M.A. level):
  - One pro-seminar (Lin 701)
  - An introduction to linguistics (Lin 600)
  - Two courses on second language acquisition (Lin 650 and Lin (651)
  - Two core theoretical courses: Phonology (Lin 603), Morphology (Lin 604), Syntax (Lin 605, or Pragmatics (Lin 606)
  - One additional applied linguistics course: Sociolinguistics (Lin 610), Linguistic Anthropology (Lin 672), Advanced Methods (Lin 655), Critical Issues (Lin 670), or Second-Language Literacy (Lin 657)
  - Two Research Methods (Lin 690 and 691)
  - Research Methods (TESL 694)
  - One 700-level research seminar (Lin 721)
  - An optional subfield (6-12 hours), subject to departmental approval.

Specific Requirements for the Emphasis in Spanish:

1. Reading proficiency in a language other than Spanish and English: Before advancing to comprehensive exams, students must demonstrate reading proficiency in a language other than Spanish or English through advanced coursework or an agreed-upon assessment.
2. Required core courses will be chosen from the following (a course may be replaced by another course with permission of the director of graduate studies, if the equivalent was taken at M.A. level):
  - Classroom Research and Practice (Span 672)
  - Two core courses: one literature and one linguistics (sections designated for graduate students only)
  - One pro-seminar (Span 701)
  - Research Methods (Span 671)
  - One 700-level research seminar (Span 721)
  - An optional subfield (6-12 hours), subject to departmental approval.

## Specializations

- [Emphasis - Applied Linguistics](#)





- [Emphasis - Spanish](#)

**Modern Languages | Fall 2025-26**  
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The University of Mississippi is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award certificates and baccalaureate, master's, specialist, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, call 404-679-4500, or visit online at [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org) for questions about the accreditation.

<https://catalog.olemiss.edu/2026/fall/graduate/liberal-arts/modern-languages/phd-sec-lang>

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