Ph.D. Program in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages

The Graduate Center, CUNY

Assessment Review Report

First Examination

SPRING 2015

FIRST EXAMINATION LEARNING GOALS

Hispanic linguistics subspecialty

In preparation for the First Examination, it is expected that students will acquire intellectual and professional skills in four core areas that will provide the base on which to develop more specialized knowledge and conduct high-level original research. It is expected that students will critically engage with the previously established topics and bibliographies for each core area in order to develop an advanced ability to point out and accurately describe problems relevant to the current debates within the discipline. It is also expected that students will develop the ability to collect and analyze data pertinent to the main concerns of the core areas.

Hispanic cultural and literary studies subspecialty

In preparation for the First Examination, it is expected that students will acquire broad and contextual knowledge of the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian literatures, and general knowledge of questions and methods related to research within the field of literary and cultural studies. It is expected that students will develop the ability to use critical and theoretical concepts in the analysis of literary texts. It is also expected that students will engage in a critical dialogue with existing criticism of those same texts.

DATA AND INFORMATION

In order to conduct the First Examination review, we developed a questionnaire for each subspecialty (see appendixes) and distributed it among students immediately after they took the exam and were notified of the result. In addition to the student feedback we received through the questionnaire, we reviewed student exams. The information was collected during 2013-14 and 2014-15.

FINDINGS

Hispanic linguistics subspecialty
After reviewing the examinations, we conclude that the assessment appropriately evaluates the degree to which students have reached the desired goals in the four core areas of Spanish Syntax, Spanish Phonology, History of Spanish and Sociolinguistics of Spanish. Examination review and questionnaire responses show that students may benefit from greater support in preparing to meet the desired goals, in particular in the core areas of Spanish Syntax and Spanish Phonology.

**Hispanic cultural and literary studies subspecialty**

Considering the examinations and the answers to the questionnaire, it is evident that students were able to attain the learning goals. We believe that the exam serves its main purpose well, allowing students to acquire general knowledge on the eight areas covered. From Peninsular literature, those are: 1) Medieval literature, 2) Renaissance and Baroque periods, 3) XVII and XIX centuries, and 4) XX and XXI centuries. In Latin American literature those are: 1) Colonial literature, 2) XIX century, 3) Modernismo to Avan-Gardes; 4) XX and XXI centuries. Upon reviewing students’ commentaries and assessing their overall performance, there seems to be a need for greater guidance and mentorship in the process of understanding the goals and preparing the exam.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Hispanic linguistics subspecialty**

We intend to increase the frequency with which we offer courses in which the phonology and syntax of Spanish are covered. This will provide students with further help to reach the First Examination learning goals in the core areas of Spanish Syntax and Spanish Phonology. We also intend to organize specialized First Examination workshops coordinated by faculty specialists in each of the four core areas.

**Hispanic cultural and literary studies subspecialty**

We intend to organize specialized First examination workshops coordinated by faculty in order to offer students key strategies to prepare for and reach the established learning goals. These workshops will focus on study methods and on general guidelines for the structuring of responses.

**NEXT STEPS**

**Hispanic linguistics subspecialty**

A Spanish Syntax course has been scheduled for Fall 2015. We will also organize one workshop per core area consistently every semester.

**Hispanic cultural and literary studies subspecialty**

A specialized workshop has already been offered for all students anticipating to take the first examination in August 2015. This workshop explained the learning logic of the examination, offered sample questions and suggested potential writing structures for successful responses. This type of workshop will be offered consistently every semester.