

Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies

Introduction

Graduate Portfolio Programs are opportunities for students to obtain credentials in a cross-disciplinary academic area of inquiry while they are completing the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree in a particular discipline. The concept of a portfolio program was developed to enrich the research experience, increase the breadth of training, and expand the scholarly credentials of graduate students. Visit the following web page for more information on the graduate portfolio programs offered at The University of Texas at Austin.

The **Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies** provides graduate students with a credential that recognizes their work as they explore Mexican American or Latino cultural practices, historical development, and socio-economic conditions. The program brings together graduate students and faculty from all over campus, and fosters cross-disciplinary dialogue, research, and study. While the portfolio program supplements the degree program a student is pursuing, it does so by providing a cohesive structure for graduate work in Mexican American or Latino studies. General areas of focus include communication studies, cultural studies, history, the humanities, education, performance studies, public and social policy, and the social sciences.

Students in the Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies come from such institutions as the University of New Mexico, Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Chicago, The University of Texas at Austin, and Yale University. Since 2002, the portfolio program has produced over forty Ph.D.'s within a rigorous and supportive intellectual environment.

Eligibility

The Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies is not a degree program; however, it allows graduate students to obtain a credential in a cross-disciplinary area of inquiry while completing the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree in their home department.

To participate in the Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies, prospective students must be newly admitted or currently enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Texas at Austin with a minimum 3.00 grade-point average.

Requirements for Master's Students

Over the course of their graduate studies, master's students participating in the Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies must complete a minimum of 9 hours of graduate course work with a clear Mexican American or Mexican Studies content. The Graduate Advisor or Program Coordinator reviews these courses, which are taken in at least one department outside of the student's home department.

Portfolio requirements are independent of the requirements for a master's degree. However, with the approval of a student's supervising professor and graduate studies committee (in the student's home department), portfolio courses may be included in the program of work.

Master's students are encouraged, but not required, to plan their thesis/report on topics in Mexican American or Latino studies, and to include at least one member of the Graduate Studies Committee in Mexican American Studies on their thesis/report committee.

Requirements for Doctoral Students

Over the course of their graduate studies, doctoral students participating in the Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies must complete a minimum of 12 hours of graduate course work with a clear Mexican American or Mexican studies content. The Graduate Advisor or Program Coordinator reviews these courses, which are taken in at least one department outside of the student's home department.

Portfolio requirements are independent of the requirements for doctoral degrees. However, with the approval of a student's supervising professor and graduate studies committee (in the student's home department), portfolio courses may be included in the program of work.

Doctoral students are encouraged, but not required, to plan their dissertation on topics in Mexican American or Latino Studies, and to include at least one member of the Graduate Studies Committee in Mexican American Studies on their dissertation committee.

Courses

Course work for the portfolio program may be chosen from a variety of fields of study but must have at least 25% content in Mexican American or Latino studies. Graduate courses offered by MALS may also be counted. Courses taken for the portfolio program may not be taken pass/fail or credit/no credit. Students should contact the Program Coordinator each semester to find out about the graduate course offerings of MALS faculty.

Pláticas

Graduate students are required to participate in pláticas, semi-formal presentations of research by graduate students. The plática can be based on the work conducted for a master's report or thesis, or a doctoral dissertation. The Program Coordinator schedules the plática before a student completes graduate degree requirements.

Certification

Upon graduation, after the completion of degree and portfolio requirements, the Graduate School awards certification in the Graduate Portfolio in Mexican American Studies. This certification is noted on the student's official transcript. Graduate students can earn the certification in this specific portfolio program only once in their graduate careers. Graduating portfolio students are also recognized by MALS at our annual graduation ceremony.

Admissions

Students seeking admission to the Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies may be newly admitted to the Graduate School or currently enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Texas at Austin with a minimum 3.00 grade-point average. Applicants must submit the following items:

- Graduate Portfolio Application and Records Form (PDF, 67K)
- **One-Page Statement** (outlining interests and goals in the Graduate Portfolio Program in Mexican American Studies)
- **Letter from the Departmental Graduate Adviser** (approving the application to the graduate portfolio program, which can be sent via e-mail to the Graduate Advisor in Mexican American Studies)

Print the form and submit all materials to:

Natasha Saldaña, Program Coordinator
Center for Mexican American Studies
University of Texas at Austin
Burdine Hall 548, Stop F9200
Austin, Texas 78712

Questions regarding the Graduate Portfolio in Mexican American Studies can be directed to Natasha Saldaña, MALS Academic Advisor, at (512) 471-2134 or nvs@austin.utexas.edu.