

# **ELA Master's Programs General Student Policies**

**Revised Summer 2015**

## ELA Master's Programs Student Policies

- ❖ The Department utilizes a cohort model in which students in each admitted cohort take all of their ELA classes together. The department has chosen this model because it has been shown to be related to higher student completion rates (e.g. Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood, & Wright-Porter, 2011).
- ❖ After admission, you should become familiar with the ELA department policy that students who miss taking a course with their cohort will have to wait to take the course when it is offered to the next cohort, which may be up to a year later. Additionally, you should be aware of the ELA department policy that no courses in which a grade of less than a "B" will be accepted toward graduation. **Beginning with the FALL 2014 cohort**, students who receive a grade of "C" or below will be required to retake the course and earn a grade of "B" or higher in order to graduate. Again, it may be up to a year before that course is offered again.

### Communication

- ❖ While individual instructors may be willing to use students' personal email accounts for communication, **any official NMSU communication is always sent to a student's NMSU email account.** Please check this account weekly. Information about registration, financial aid, comprehensive exam verification, graduate school status, etc. is always sent by the respective NMSU office to the student's NMSU email account. Failure to check this account will not be an excuse for missing deadlines, etc.

### Graduate Assistantships

- ❖ Students may be interested in the opportunity to teach or perform research as a departmental graduate assistant. Eligibility criteria, pay schedules and permitted length of assignment for graduate assistantships are consistent with those listed in the Graduate Catalog or online at <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga/index.htm>
- ❖ To apply for an assistantship, pick up an ELA Graduate Assistantship Application from the department office or online at <http://education.nmsu.edu/emd/studentResources.html>. This form must be completed and returned to the department office by January 15<sup>th</sup> for a spring graduate assistant position. Graduate assistant positions are awarded in an official offer provided on ELA letterhead. If you receive an official offer, you will be required to accept or reject the offer by signing

and returning the form in a timely manner. For further information or questions concerning the application process, please contact Alma Meza, ELA Department Administrative Assistant by email at [almeza@nmsu.edu](mailto:almeza@nmsu.edu) or by phone at (575) 646-3825.

- ❖ By accepting a graduate assistantship, students are obligated to enroll for and maintain enrollment in a minimum of nine credits of graduate coursework per semester for the fall and spring semesters. As the ELA master's program only offers six credits of coursework per semester, it is the responsibility of the student to select and enroll for the additional three credits for each semester in which the student receives a graduate assistantship. A graduate assistant need not be registered during the summer, so long as they were registered for the previous full semester and/or the following full semester.
- ❖ As a graduate assistant, students will be assigned to teach courses or support instructional activities for professors according to the needs of the department and your personal expertise.

### **Incomplete Grades**

- ❖ Students may request an instructor to assign an Incomplete grade only if the student is unable to complete the course due to circumstances beyond the student's control that develop after the last day to withdraw from the course (see Important Dates & Deadlines link at <http://registration.nmsu.edu/>). Examples of appropriate circumstances include documented illness, documented death or crisis in the student's immediate family, etc. In no case is an Incomplete to be used to avoid the assigning of D, F, or Unsatisfactory grades for marginal or failing work.
- ❖ To assign an "I" grade, the instructor will state in writing the steps necessary to complete the remaining coursework. The student will sign this document and a copy will be provided to the student and a copy will be placed in the student's departmental file. The agreed-upon work must be completed in a manner satisfactory to the instructor. The work must be completed within 12 months of the last official day of the course, otherwise the grade turns into an "F."

### **Textbooks and Course Materials**

- ❖ The NMSU Barnes and Noble bookstore requires all faculty members to submit book orders before the beginning of each semester. To find the book(s) for a course, go to the Barnes and Noble website, look up the course to see the listing of books. Students are free to purchase these books from any venue. Please save all receipts for book purchases until receiving confirmation from the instructor that the book listed by the

bookstore is the correct book and edition. ALWAYS be flexible and ready to return or exchange textbooks as needed.

## Academic Standing

- ❖ ELA adheres to all NMSU Graduate School policies. Commonly referred to policies include the maintenance of a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to remain a graduate student in the department. **Beginning with the Fall 2014 cohort, students who receive less than a "B" grade will be required to repeat that course and earn, at minimum, a "B" grade in the repeated course.** Courses in which a student earns a "C" grade or below will not be counted toward graduation. **Please note that the next offering of any course may be a semester or more away.** Courses are scheduled annually to meet the upcoming cohort's Program of Study.
- ❖ Additionally, students who have less than a cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of any semester will be so informed and placed on probation by the Graduate School. If, during the next enrollment period, a student fails to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or to show substantial improvement in the quality of work, the student will be suspended from courses for one semester by the Graduate School. Students must re-apply to the Graduate School and to the ELA department if the student wishes to continue in the master's program after the semester suspension. If the GPA remains below 3.0 after readmission, the student will be suspended for one year, and again, must reapply to both the Graduate School and to ELA for readmission. Please see the Graduate School Handbook for complete details.
- ❖ If a student feels that a grade was incorrect, the student may appeal the grade. Please see the Graduate School Handbook for the seven-step process to appeal a grade. Each step must be followed as described for the grade appeal to be considered by the Appeals Board.

## Withdrawing from Class(es)

- ❖ Students are encouraged to take all courses with their cohort. In rare circumstances, a student may need to withdraw from a course or courses. If a student needs to withdraw from courses in the **first semester** of the degree program, he or she may, **with permission** from the ELA Department Head and faculty, be **allowed to join the next accepted cohort** and begin again then. To do so, the student **must**, before taking leave, **submit a letter of request to return**. If the student did not request to be included in the next admitted cohort at the time that he or she left the first semester, then the student will need to reapply to the program as a new student. There is no guarantee that students who

reapply will be selected again. The number and quality of applications are different each year, and the application will be considered in the same way as all new applications.

- ❖ If a student needs to withdraw from one or more courses once he or she has finished the first semester, **the student must communicate this to the instructor of the course(s) and the student's advisor**. The student may be allowed to continue taking courses with the cohort in subsequent semesters but **will need to wait to take the missed course(s) until offered to the next cohort**. This may mean that in a future semester, the student will need to enroll in more courses than other cohort members in order to make up missed course(s). Please note; ELA only schedules courses to provide the program of study to existing cohorts. **Make-up courses beyond these regularly scheduled cohort courses are not offered**. Additionally, please note that, according to Graduate School policy, students must finish all regular coursework before taking the comprehensive exam. Students who have not completed all coursework, even though their cohort colleagues have, will not be able to take the two internship courses that are tied to the final semester's comprehensive exam.
- ❖ Students who do not enroll in coursework for two or more regular semesters (fall and spring) will be considered to have dropped out. If the student wishes to resume studies, he or she must reapply to the Graduate School and formally petition the ELA department to return to the program.
- ❖ If a student needs to withdraw from the university for a calendar year or more, he or she should **request a leave of absence**. The student must **submit a formal letter** through her or his department head to the Dean of the Graduate School. Emails will not be accepted. The request should include the beginning date and the anticipated ending date for the period of absence. A graduate student on leave of absence will be expected not to use university facilities and place no demands upon the university faculty and staff, and therefore will pay no fees. Time spent on leave of absence status will not be counted toward time limits. **A graduate student who fails to register for one calendar year without obtaining a leave of absence from the Graduate School will be considered withdrawn from the university and must make a formal application to the Graduate School for readmission at least 30 days prior to the semester that the student plans to enroll.**
- ❖ When considering leave, please note that the Graduate School will not accept any master's level coursework that is **more than seven years old** at the time of the comprehensive exam.

## **Internships**

- ❖ The internship is required of all master's degree programs in the department. All programs require two semesters of internship. Internships are approximately 120 hours (Pk-12 master's students may have different requirements). The internships are tied to the final comprehensive exam.

## **Comprehensive Exam**

- ❖ In the semester of the second internship, the student is eligible to take the comprehensive exam. If the student does not pass the comprehensive exam, he or she will be eligible to retake the exam in the following semester. The student must pass the comprehensive exam in order to earn the master's degree.

## **Transfer of Credit**

- ❖ The ELA department does not accept credits earned at other universities.

## **Academic Conduct of Graduate Students**

- ❖ Students should consult the "Student Code of Conduct" section in the Student Handbook (see below for links) for information regarding definitions of misconduct. If the standards of conduct are deemed to have been breached by violations such as plagiarism, fabrication of data, etc., then the policies and procedures detailed in the Student Code of Conduct will be followed. If a student is unclear about the definition of plagiarism, cheating, etc., he or she should speak to his or her ELA advisor and/or course instructors. The burden of understanding falls upon the student.