

Latin American and Latino Studies

Senior Exit Requirement 16-17

Every LALS major must complete a Senior Exit Requirement in order to graduate.

The preparation and completion of this requirement is structured into the senior year. LALS majors only* have **four options** to choose from:

- 1 – Senior Seminar (LALS 194 series)**
- 2 – Senior Paper**
- 3 – Senior Thesis**
- 4 – Senior Project (either a Creative Project or Community Action Project)**

All of these options to complete your Senior Exit Requirement must be evaluated and approved by the faculty advisor supervising that requirement. You should make this decision by your junior year.

* Combined majors have limited SER options, please check your specific combined major.

Senior Thesis, Senior Project or Senior Paper

If you wish to pursue a senior thesis, senior project, senior paper or student-taught seminar, you must first submit a petition to the LALS Department, with the approval of a faculty advisor. Petition forms are available at the LALS Department Office.

Independent Study

When working on your Senior Exit Requirement (if you are writing a thesis, expanded paper, working on a senior project or student taught seminar) you are expected to be enrolled concurrently in an independent study course with your faculty advisor.

For students taking a Senior Seminar, enrollment in the seminar itself is sufficient to satisfy this requirement as long as the teacher knows you are taking the class as a senior exit requirement.

Faculty Advisor

Your faculty advisor should provide guidance during the research and planning phase, encouragement and feedback during the execution phase, and evaluation of the finished project, which must be submitted by the last day of the quarter in which you intend to graduate.

Your obligation when completed

After your senior exit work (senior thesis, senior project or expanded paper) has been reviewed and approved by your faculty advisor, the **"Senior Exit Requirement Completion Form" must be submitted to the LALS Department Office along with the "Faculty Advisor Form"** (completed with all signatures from your visits with your faculty advisor).

There is no need to fill out an SER completion form if you completed a senior seminar with a passing grade ("C" or better).

Additionally, if you have completed a thesis you must provide one bound copy to the LALS Department **by the last day of the quarter.**

Senior Exit Requirement Options

OPTION ONE: SENIOR SEMINAR

The Senior Seminar option entails the successful completion of a Latin American and Latino Studies senior seminar (194 series) with a grade C or better. Senior standing and completion of LALS 100A and 100B are required before taking a LALS 194 course for fulfillment of the senior exit requirement.

OPTION TWO: EXPANDED PAPER

The expanded paper builds on related course work. Generally, students choose to develop research initiated in an upper division course taken for their major, under the supervision of the instructor for that course. The expanded paper is at minimum 20 pages in length and requires faculty approval. Eligibility to graduate will not be granted until this requirement is complete. **This option can be taken only with faculty approval.**

OPTION THREE: SENIOR THESIS

Seniors who would like to write a thesis must submit a detailed proposal to their faculty advisor for approval **by Fall quarter of their senior year**. A senior thesis is a minimum of 40 pages and is the result of two or more quarters of sustained independent research under the supervision of the faculty advisor. Students may take up to three 5-unit independent studies to complete this paper. **This option can be taken only by petition to LALS and with the faculty approval.**

If the thesis option is selected by a combined major, it should be planned in consultation with an advisor from each department, completed under the supervision of a faculty member from either department, read and approved by both advisors; one advisor is sufficient if this faculty member belongs to both departments. This option is recommended for those students seeking to enter graduate school.

OPTION FOUR: SENIOR PROJECT: CREATIVE AND COMMUNITY/CAMPUS ACTION

A senior project can be either a Creative Project or a Community Action Project. **Creative Projects** include web site design, video, performance, slide show, photo exhibit, or other media work. A 10-page description and analysis of the project is required. **Community/Campus Action Projects** often involve sustained research and/or fieldwork conducted in a community/organization or public interest group, usually stemming from an internship. A 10-page description and analysis of the project is required. **This option can be taken only by petition to LALS and with faculty approval by Fall quarter of their senior year.**

For the senior thesis and expanded paper, students may undertake full or part-time field study in their junior year to form the basis of their academic research. Field placements in Latino/a communities on the Central Coast are numerous, and national and international organizations also support full-time field study opportunities. Students are required to take LALS 186 Field Research Methods (or similar training) prior to their field study to develop methodology for conducting and processing fieldwork.