

Grad Certificate in Spanish Heritage Language Education (SHLE)
Department of Modern & Classical Languages
George Mason University
FAQs

Q1. How long does it take to earn the certificate?

A. The certificate requires 15 credits (five 3-credit courses). Students typically take 1 or 2 courses per semester, and can also take courses over the summer. You can complete the certificate in 1 year by taking 2 courses (6-credits) in the Fall semester and 2 courses (6-credits) in the Spring semester, as well as 1 Summer course (or any variation of that plan). Alternatively, you could choose to take just one course per semester and one course (or no courses) in the Summer. New students have six (6) years from the date of admission to complete the graduate certificate program. Course offerings vary by semester but generally include 2 core courses or restricted electives; in Summer, we plan to offer at least one core course or restricted elective and additional electives are typically also available.

Q2. When can students begin the SHLE certificate?

A. The SHLE certificate welcomes new students Fall, Spring, and Summer. You can take the core and elective courses in any order.

Q3. What is the application procedure?

A. Students can complete the SHLE certificate as either a stand-alone program or as an “add-on” to another graduate degree. If you are NOT currently a Mason student and you would like to apply for the stand-alone certificate, you can find additional information and instructions on the [SHLE Certificate Application](#) page and the [Grad Admissions FAQs](#) page. Deadlines the stand-alone certificate are: August 1 for Fall (**extended until Aug 15 for Fall 2021**); November 15 for Spring; and April 15 for Summer. **NOTE:** the SHLE certificate can be completed fully online but is listed under the “on-campus/hybrid” programs because students have the option to take one course on campus.

If you are NOT currently a Mason student and you would like to apply for both the MA and the SHLE certificate, you should [apply for the MA in Foreign Languages](#) first, and then add the certificate once you enroll (all SHLE certificate courses also count towards the MA in Foreign Languages – see Q4 below). Deadlines for the MA are August 1 for Fall and November 15 for Spring.

Students who are already enrolled in a Mason graduate degree program can add the SHLE certificate by submitting the secondary program form (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/GSCA.pdf>) to shle@gmu.edu. You should consult with your graduate advisor and/or the SHLE Director to determine which courses can count towards both programs. You must add the certificate at least one semester prior to graduation.

Q4. Does SHLE coursework count towards the MA in Foreign Languages?

A. Yes! Graduate students completing the MA in Foreign Languages with a concentration in Spanish, Spanish Bilingual & Multicultural Education, or Spanish & French can ‘add on’ the SHLE certificate; all SHLE certificate coursework can count towards both programs. **NOTE:** The certificate must be added at least one semester prior to graduation.

Q5. Can students enrolled in other Mason graduate degrees add the SHLE certificate?

A. Yes! Moreover, in most cases, students in a graduate degree program in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) can ‘double count’ one of their CEHD courses as an elective for the SHLE certificate (see the list of pre-approved electives on the [SHLE requirements page](#)). Graduate students in other programs should consult with their primary department to see whether the SHLE coursework can be applied to their primary degree as well as check with the SHLE Director to see if any courses in their primary degree can count as an elective for the SHLE certificate.

Q6. Can students who have already taken relevant graduate coursework at Mason retroactively apply those credits toward the SHLE certificate?

A. Yes! However, you need to add the certificate at least one semester PRIOR to graduation.

Q7. Can students in Bachelors/Accelerated Masters (BAM) programs add the SHLE certificate?

A. Yes! Once you transition to the MA, you can add the SHLE certificate by completing the [secondary program form](#) and submitting it to shle@gmu.edu. NOTE: no course can be applied to more than two programs. For example, SPAN 502 (Hispanic Sociolinguistics) **cannot** be applied toward your undergraduate degree, graduate degree, and the graduate certificate. Consult with your advisor to plan your coursework.

Q8. Is it possible to enroll in individual courses without applying to the certificate program?

A. Yes! Students who meet the admissions requirements for non-degree students are welcome in the SHLE courses. More information is available here: <https://chss.gmu.edu/admissions/nondegree-graduate-study>. Students who take individual courses in non-degree status and subsequently apply and are admitted to the SHLE program can count a maximum of 6-credits taken in non-degree status towards the certificate. NOTE: non-degree students who wish to apply for the certificate are not required to pay an additional application fee but they **MUST** complete the application procedure. Completion of non-degree coursework is not a guarantee of admission.

Q9. Can students at institutions in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area take SHLE certificate coursework and/or earn the SHLE certificate?

A. Students in the Consortium are welcome to enroll in SHLE coursework, in accordance with the policies of their home institution. More information, and links to participating institutions’ policies are available here: <https://www.consortium.org/cross-registration-calendars>. However, Mason courses taken through the Consortium are treated as courses taken at the home institution (rather than as Mason courses) and thus can only be applied to the SHLE certificate as transfer credit. A maximum of 3 credits taken at another institution (including at Mason via the Consortium) can be transferred and applied to the SHLE certificate.

Q10. Can SHLE certificate coursework be applied to degrees at other institutions?

A. In many cases, yes! Students already enrolled in a degree program at another institution should check with their advisor in order to seek permission in advance, and then apply to enroll at Mason as a [non-degree student](#). NOTE: Students enrolled in degree programs at an institution in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area can register directly through their home institution.

Q11. Do courses in the certificate program count towards professional development or Continuing Education Units (CEU's) requirements?

A. In most cases, yes! College credit is one form of professional development recognized by the Virginia Department of Education (as well as many other states) and George Mason is a regionally accredited university. Each semester credit hour is typically worth 30 professional development points, but teachers are advised to consult with their schools or districts. More details about teacher licensure renewal in Virginia can be found here: <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/>.

Q12. How much does the program cost?

A. Both in-state and out-of-state tuition and related fees can be found on the Student Accounts page: <https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/tuition-fees/>. Please note that 'regular' CHSS tuition rates apply, rather than the 'online program' rates. Fall 2021 tuition and fees can be found at <https://studentaccounts.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Fall2021CHSS.pdf>; "other programs" rates apply.

Q13. Are students in the SHLE certificate eligible for federal financial aid?

A. Students in the stand-alone certificate program are not eligible for federal financial aid. However, students simultaneously enrolled in the MA program and the certificate ARE eligible for federal aid (for more information, see: <https://www2.gmu.edu/financial-aid>). For more information regarding grants, tuition waivers, and other merit aid, please visit <https://provost.gmu.edu/academics-and-research/graduate-education/awards-and-grants>.

Q14. If a student withdraws from their MA or PhD program before graduating, but completes all certificate requirements, are they still able to earn their SHLE certificate?

A. Yes!

Q15. Can course credit earned at another institution be applied toward the certificate?

A. Yes! A maximum of 3 transfer credits can be applied to the stand-alone SHLE certificate even if they have already been applied toward a degree issued by another institution. However, credits already applied to a degree cannot be counted towards the MA degree. More information about transfer credit policies is available here under "AP.6.5.3 Transfer of Credit": <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-3>.

Q16. Is it possible to pursue two Mason graduate certificates at the same time?

A. Students may enroll in only one graduate certificate program at a time while they pursue a master's or doctoral degree. Students that are NOT enrolled in a MA or PhD program may enroll in two graduate certificate programs at the same time. However, for each graduate certificate they must complete a minimum of 12-credits that apply only to that certificate and not to another.

Q17. What courses are offered?

A. Course offerings vary by semester but generally include 2 core courses or restricted electives (additional electives are typically also available). In Summer, we plan to offer at least one core course or restricted elective; additional electives are typically also available. The courses are planned for 2021-2022 are listed on the following page.

SHLE core course offerings 2021-22 (other electives also available)

Fall 2021

SPAN 503 DL3: Spanish Linguistics for Educators. Thursdays 4:30-7:10 PM

Dr. Esperanza Román-Mendoza, eromanme@gmu.edu

Online synchronous, taught in Spanish

This course explores the linguistic dimensions of Spanish in order to understand the pedagogical needs of heritage and second language learners. Covers the key areas of linguistics: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics with an emphasis on sociolinguistic variation. Includes analysis of learner speech, discussion of learner challenges, and the application of key concepts to language learning and teaching. Taught in Spanish.

FRLN 575 Heritage Language Education. Tuesdays 4:30-7:10PM

Dr. Jennifer Leeman, jleeman@gmu.edu

Online synchronous, taught in English

FRLN 575 provides an overview of heritage language education in the US, including the ideological and policy contexts in which it is situated. Students learn about the linguistic and sociocultural characteristics of HL speakers as well as key issues in HL educational policy and practice, including the most prominent pedagogical models and approaches. We'll discuss a wide range of approaches to HL research, as well as the pedagogical implications of that research. The course is also designed to promote students' critical analytical ability regarding the underlying assumptions of HL research studies and pedagogical proposals. For their final project, students can choose to focus on HL research, policy or pedagogy. Taught in English but students may submit written work in Spanish.

Spring 2022

SPAN 574: Critical Approaches to Teaching Spanish-Language Culture. Wednesdays 4:30-7:10PM

Dr. Lisa Rabin lrabin@gmu.edu

Online synchronous, taught in Spanish

Critical approaches to teaching culture in K-16 bilingual, heritage Spanish and mixed classrooms. Students will study critical perspectives on culture's role in social identity construction in the disciplines of Spanish-language linguistics and literary | cultural studies, and apply these to the creation of task-based, technology-enhanced and differentiated learning materials.

SPAN 575: Teaching Spanish for Social Justice. Mondays 4:30-7:10PM

Dr. Ellen Serafini eserafi2@gmu.edu

Online synchronous, taught in Spanish

Introduction to teaching world languages within a social justice framework with a focus on Spanish. Students examine the intersections between language and race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality in language education and apply principles of critical pedagogy to design materials and assess outcomes for heritage and second language learners.

Summer 2022

SPAN 502/551: Hispanic Sociolinguistics/Spanish in the US)

Online synchronous, taught in Spanish

Dr. Jennifer Leeman, jleeman@gmu.edu

Introduction to the macro-sociolinguistics of Spanish including both sociolinguistic theory and empirical research on Spanish, and in particular, Spanish in the US context. We will focus on the interaction of language and other social, cultural and political systems, exploring the ways in which language both reflects and constitutes social categories, as well as the ways in which specific social meanings are linked to specific ways of using language. Topics covered in this course include social and regional language variation in Spanish, language attitudes and ideologies, the relationship of Spanish to various kinds of identity categories (including ethnicity, race and nation), language policy, and patterns of language maintenance and shift.

More information on the [SHLE program page](#). Please do not hesitate to write to shle@gmu.edu with any further questions!