At age 29, Alejandro (Alex) Osorio-Hernandez is already an accomplished international graduate student and traveler. But then, with a BA, two MAs — one each from universities on two different continents — and scholarly research interests covering medieval travel writing, Spanish travelers to the Holy Land, and medieval monasticism, it sort of goes with the territory.

Currently an MSU PhD student and teacher in the Department of Romance and Classical Studies, Osorio-Hernandez grew up in Malcocinado, Spain, a small town of fewer than 500 people located 80 miles north of Seville.

“In high school, I applied to eight colleges and was accepted by five, including the very famous University of Salamanca,” he said. “There, I earned a BA in English Language and Literature and an MA in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language). I also studied History and English language, learned to speak Persian, and lived two months in Iran.”

By the time Osorio-Hernandez graduated, the world recession had driven Spain’s unemployment levels above 25 percent. And while undergraduate education is quite affordable in Spain, graduate school is expensive. A former high school teacher suggested he apply to graduate school in the United States.

Two years later, he earned his second MA in Spanish Literature from the University of Mississippi, and then applied to Michigan State University, in large part due to the outstanding reputation of its Department of Romance and Classical Studies. He began the PhD program in Hispanic Cultural Studies at MSU in August 2014. His main research interests are Medieval and Golden Age Literature of Spain.

“MSU is the largest university I’ve attended, and there are many foreign students here,” he said. “It may seem, at first, that you’re on your own, but you just need to make the effort to engage with faculty and other students.”

As for the future, Osorio-Hernandez would like to teach at a university, but says high school would be fine, too. He will take his comprehensive exams this fall, and will defend his dissertation in two years.

“I’ve been doing well in my coursework, so I feel I’ll definitely be ready,” he said.

He added that he loves to travel whenever and wherever he can and has already been to 38 countries and several U.S. states including California, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, and the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

“Whether my love of travel sparked my research interests in medieval travel writing and Spanish travelers to the Holy Land, or the other way around,” he said, “I’m truly glad my journey has taken me to MSU.”