

SPAN 331E CONTEMPORARY SPANISH SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Course Description

Which social, political, cultural and both national and international phenomena define Spain as it enters the 3rd decade of the 21st century? To answer this question, this course aims to analyze, debate and understand the challenges which Spain faces in the context of a globalized world: the government model and its monarchy, peripheral and centralist nationalism, its linguistic and cultural diversity, migratory movements in search of the European dream, along with other hot topics such as the effectiveness of the educational system, the health system, gender issues, politics of historic memory or the change of the model of production which will be greatly affected by the effects of climatic change on the Iberian peninsula.

Course goals and methodology

The main goal of this course is to increase the students' knowledge and appreciation of Spanish culture and its people. Accordingly, Spain's richness and diversity will be explored through the critical analysis of the most relevant socio-cultural phenomena which constitute its present identity.

The methodology of the course will be based on an eclectic and complementary academic and experiential approach to culture teaching by virtue of which theory and practice feed one another bidirectionally. In other words, class work will both anticipate and help contextualize out of class experiences in as much as out of class experiences will also serve to confirm and/or question scholarly discussions previously held in the classroom. In-class and discussion board participation is crucial in this type of classes.

Learning objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Understand the latent and patent ideological substrates governing Spanish culture.
- Analyze socialization practices, customs and rituals as they are experiencing them themselves.
- Understand the complexities of contemporary Spain, from a critical point of view.
- Describe and evaluate candidly and critically the degree of depth, width and breadth of their immersion experience.
- Demonstrate that culture differences can always be handled successfully.

Course contents

Unit 1

The geographical, climatic, linguistic and sociocultural diversity in Spain. The different 'peoples' of Spain. Autonomous communities, regions and nationalities (Stanton, ch. 1; Hooper, ch. 31).

Unit 2

Spain after 1975. The Transition from dictatorship to democracy. The 1978 Constitution. The King: a controversial figure nowadays. The policies of 'memory' and the debate in present-day Spain. (Chislett, WP; Chislett, 42-73; 92-93, 149-153, 160-163; Radcliff, 250-261; Hooper, ch. 2; A-Z, "Corona")

Unit 3

The Spanish political landscape: the 17 autonomous communities and the new parties in Parliament. Political parties and the different media (current issues). (Chislett, WP; Nuñez Xeiasas)

(The pillars of the 'welfare state' in pandemic times: the educational system, the healthcare system and retirement pensions. (Chislett, WP))

Unit 4

Economic structure and its circumstances: social and cultural implications in different Spanish economic sectors. (Chislett, WP)

Unit 5

Faith, religion and popular religiosity: rites, festivals and peculiar festivities in Spain.

Unit 6

The Arts in Spain and its connection with historical periods; important figures in painting, literature and cinema. 'Toros' and 'matadores' (bullfighting and festivities around the Iberian fighting bull).

Unit 7

Music and popular tradition: flamenco, a UNESCO cultural world heritage. The singularity of the 'movida madrileña' within the framework of the new democratic Spain.

Unit 8

Socializing in Spain, tradition and the present-day. Eating and drinking: the table, the bar, 'tapas' and its origin, wine and spirits ('sobremesa' and 'siesta'). Politeness issues in social behavior.

Final conclusions: Challenges for Spanish society in the next decade (an ageing society, climate change, migration, the youth).

Class Schedule (first date is the Monday of each week)

May 22th: (Friday 26th, essay+presentation-1)

May 29th: (Friday, June 2nd, Test-1)

June 5th: (Thursday, June 8th is a local holiday in Sevilla; Friday, June 9th day off)
(Monday, June 5th, essay+presentation-2). *June 7th: make-up class at 6:00pm downtown Seville.*

June 12th : (Friday 16th, Test-2). *June 14th*: make-up class at 6:00pm downtown Seville.

Holidays

- Thursday, June 8th: "Corpus Christi." No classes will be held.
- Friday, June 9th: No classes will be held.

Readings and course material

Readings will be assigned daily by the professors and they will be available online.

Additional bibliographical, audiovisual and online sources:

William Chislett, [*Forty Years of Democratic Spain. Political, economic, foreign policy and social change, 1978-2018*](#), Working Paper, Real Instituto Elcano - October 2018.

William Chislett, *Spain: What Everyone Needs to Know*. (2013)

Gies, David (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. CUP, 1999.

Hooper, John. *The New Spaniards*. (2nd edition). Penguin Book, 2006.

Richardson, Bill. *Spanish Studies: An Introduction*. London: Arnold, 2001.

Brenan, Gerald. *The Spanish Labyrinth*. (new ed. of 2nd revised edition). CUP, 1990.

Kamen, Henry. *Imagining Spain: Historical Myth and National Identity*. YUP, 2008.

Payne, Stanley. *España: Una Historia Única*. Temas de Hoy, 2008.

Phillips W. and Phillips C.R., *A Concise History of Spain*. CUP, 2016.

Pilar Orti, *The A to Z of Spanish Culture: Beyond Toros and Flamenco*, (2018)

Pamela Beth Radcliff, *Modern Spain: 1808 to the Present*. (2017)

Edward F. Stanton, *Handbook of Spanish Popular Culture*, (1999)

Arteseros, Alfonso. *España en la Memoria: Intereconomía TV*, 2009.

García de Cortázar, Fernando (coord.) *Memoria de España: RTVE*, 2004.

Prego, Victoria. *Historia Audiovisual de la Transición: Tiempo*, 2003.

[Instituto Cervantes](#)

Spain's [Department of Education and Culture](#)

Spanish [National Public Broadcaster](#)

[Acción Cultural Española](#)

Materials in Spanish if the student is interested:

Balea, A., Ramos, P., 2007, *¡Viva la cultura! en España*, Clave-Ele.

Cantarino, V., 2005, *Civilización y cultura de España*, 5^a. Ed. Prentice-Hall.

García de Cortázar, F., 2002, *Historia de España*, Barcelona, Planeta.

Marias, J., 2000, *Ser español. Ideas y creencias en el mundo hispánico*, Barcelona, Planeta.

Evaluation criteria

The final grade is divided as follows:

- Participation and Homework (20%)
- Test-1 (20%)
- Essays (2 x 10=20%)
- Presentation (2 x 10=20%)
- Test-2 (20%)

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation and Homework (20%): The whole course is structured around class discussion based on reading assignments, teacher instruction and in-class debates. Class participation will be graded in accordance to the frequency, quality and relevance of the students' contributions to discussion (see rubric below). Within this block, the handing in of weekly tasks (paragraphs, readings, etc.) is also included. Similarly, it should be noted that keeping with the General Course Policies and Behavior Policies listed below will also condition the students' participation grade.
- Tests (2 x 20%= 40%): This test is aimed at evaluating the students' knowledge of the different topics covered until then with a focus on detail. It will hinge around the information from the readings and the material presented and discussed in class.
- Essays (2 x 10=20%) + Presentation (2 x 10=20%): The students will have to conduct some research and write a 2-3 pages paper whose topic they will have to choose from a list given by the professor. Then, the student will give a 10 presentation based on his/her essay and chosen topic.

General Course Policies

Leaving the classroom: Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the 10-minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Punctuality and tardiness: Arriving late to class is disruptive to both the professor and your classmates. Please be punctual as your professor may count your late arrival as half of an absence or simply close the door, not let any late students in and consider it as one full absence.

Communicating with instructor: Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

Attendance and Absentee Policy

Attendance is mandatory at all classes. As we understand that you might fall ill or be unable to come to class (e.g. due to a religious holiday, a flight delay, a family wedding/ reunion, a graduation, a job interview, etc.) at some point during the semester, this is the attendance policy:

One absence: no consequence although we encourage you to avoid missing any classes due to the short session.

Two absences: 1 point off of your final grade (Spanish scale of 1-10).

Three absences: 3 points off of your final grade (Spanish scale of 1-10).

Four absences: Failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

Learning accommodations

If you require special accommodations, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Marta Carrillo (Faculty coordinator: mcaroro@acu.upo.es) to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. Marta will explain the options available to you.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class. Cell phone use is not allowed and animals (except seeing-eye dogs) are not permitted in the classrooms.