

SPAN 317E Culture and Society in Spain

Course Description

Which social, political, cultural and both national and international phenomena define Spain in the 3rd decade of the 21st century? To answer this question, this course aims to present Spanish social and cultural heterogeneity, analyzing the main aspects that vertebrate present-day Spain (for example, its religious/religiosity background, the variety of festivities, the new family types, migratory movements in search of the European dream, the educational and health systems, gender issues, new political trends or the change of the energy model in the face of climatic disruption). Thus, this course will also have a closer look at the realities of the different autonomous communities with all their peculiarities and specificities.

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. Through said comprehensive overview of defining themes and topics, students should be able to make the most of their immersion experience. 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.

Open discussions of present-day topics (politics, race, gender issues, cultural differences, etc.) is widely encouraged in this type of class.

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.
- 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.

Required Texts

All the required material will be available on the course online platform; new materials can be added every week (newspaper articles, etc.) ('Aula Virtual', BlackboardLearn platform or 'BBL').

Additional bibliographical, audiovisual and online sources:

- Brennan, Gerald. *The Spanish Labyrinth*. (new ed. of 2nd revised edition). CUP, 1990.
- Chislett, William. *Spain. What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: OUP, 2013.
- Gies, David (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. CUP, 1999.
- Hooper, John. *The New Spaniards*. (2nd edition). Penguin Book, 2006.
- Kamen, Henry. *Imagining Spain: Historical Myth and National Identity*. YUP, 2008.
- Richardson, Bill. *Spanish Studies: An Introduction*. London: Arnold, 2001.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Student's engagement (20%):

Student engagement policy

Student's engagement will account for 20% of the final grade for every course, thus highlighting its significance for high-impact learning.

Students will receive two engagement grades: a mid-term grade (at least 10%) and an end-of-semester grade (at least 10%).

An engagement rubric is provided to ensure transparent and consistent grading (below).

Absences and lack of engagement:

Absences during the add/drop period do not count against students' engagement grade, but may impact their performance in the course.

As a consistent lack of academic engagement may raise concerns about a student's overall academic performance, the following steps will be taken in order to support students' success:

Initial outreach – after missing 3 classes

E-mail from professor reiterating engagement policy and consequences for additional absences.

Second outreach – after missing 4 classes

E-mail from professor and notification of academic staff at the International office.

Academic probation – after missing 6 classes

Student is called in for a meeting with academic staff at the International office. Automatic notification of home institution and further academic consequences.

Any additional absences will result in a failing grade.

RUBRIC:

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10)	Proficient (7-8)	Passing (5-6)	Poor (0-4)
Attendance	Arrives on time and stays for the entire duration of class. No absences, or if absent once, demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses no more than two sessions or is occasionally late. Demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses 3 or 4 sessions or frequently arrives late/leaves early; exhibits little knowledge/interest regarding course material missed.	Misses 5 or more sessions and does not demonstrate knowledge of course material missed.
Preparation	Consistently well-prepared; demonstrates deep understanding of readings and completes assignments.	Usually prepared; completes readings with some understanding and usually completes assignments.	Occasionally prepared. Demonstrates limited understanding of materials and occasionally completes assignments.	Rarely prepared; minimal effort to engage with course materials.
Participation	Actively participates in discussions with thoughtful comments/questions; demonstrates knowledge of the material and critical thinking skills.	Participates often demonstrating knowledge of material and critical thinking skills.	Participates once in a while or contributions lack depth or relevance.	Does not participate or is disruptive during discussions.
Attentiveness & Respect	Fully engaged and attentive during all sessions; respectful to professor and fellow students. Use of laptop/tablet for notetaking only; no cellphone use.	Generally attentive, with very infrequent lapses in focus and use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Respectful to professor and fellow students.	Occasionally inattentive or disengaged. Use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.	Rarely attentive, focused or responsive. Repeated use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.
Collaboration & Feedback	Effectively collaborates with peers in group or in-class activities following professor's instructions. Incorporates feedback to improve learning & performance.	Collaborates frequently with peers or in in-class activities. Incorporates feedback and makes moderate efforts to improve learning & performance.	Occasionally works well with peers but does not contribute substantially to in-class or group assignments. Responds to feedback inconsistently with minimal improvement.	Does not collaborate with peers, does not complete in-class or group assignments. Ignores feedback.

IMPORTANT: Use of laptops/tablets during class time: students have to understand that most of class time your electronic devices are NOT allowed (they need to be put away); thus, paying attention to teacher/presentations/videos/other students' comments IS the necessary attitude. You are in class to pay attention, participate and learn, not to do other things related to your personal life.

- **Handwritten homework (5%):** The students need to hand in short handwritten homework or participate in our discussion board answering and commenting questions or pieces of news about topics suggested by the professor. Any of this has a deadline to hand in.
- **Mid-term Exam (20%):** 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 and will feature true/false questions, definitions, multiple choice activities, short questions and a longer essay question at the end.
- **Mid-term Project (10%):** The students will have to write/present a short research project whose topic they will have to choose from a list that the professor will provide beforehand; this project needs to include some interviews with locals and/or visiting some organizations/clubs/stores/NGOs, etc. in Sevilla. Its grade will depend on parameters such as thematic pertinence and coherence, appropriateness of language use, quality of the cross-cultural reflections included and reliability of the sources explored. Handwritten and emailed projects will not be accepted.
- **Group Presentations (15%):** Towards the end of the term, students will be expected to deliver interactive group presentations about one of the topics proposed by the instructor related to cultural traditions/festivities or an aspect of current affairs. Each group will be formed by a maximum of 5 members, each of whom will have to present an aspect of the topic selected (a few minutes per member of the group). Previously, the groups will be required to hand in a neat outline of the overall presentation to the instructor and their classmates. The overall grade will be based on each student's presentation along with the overall quality of the group performance.
- **Final Exam (30%):** This test will measure the students' ability to critically react to the material covered in class, with a focus on establishing thematic links among topics. The structure of this final test will be similar to the Mid-Term Exam; guidelines will be announced beforehand.

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.

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.

About using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI tools such as grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc. and automatic translation tools is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the instructor to enhance the students' learning experience. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of these tools to create content submitted as one's own. If the use of any of these tools is suspected, the instructor may request notes and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students must retain these materials until final grades are posted. Failure to produce these materials when requested may negatively impact the student's grades.

Learning Accommodations

If you require special accommodations, or have any other medical condition you deem may affect your class performance, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Coordinator to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. Marta Carrillo 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.

Course Contents

- **Unit 1:** Introduction: Understanding Spain.
- **Unit 2:** Dictatorship, transition to democracy, monarchy, political parties, social agents. Cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity: autonomous communities. Health and education.
- **Unit 3:** Spanish Society and its evolution into the 21st century: demography, economy. The 'empty Spain'. Immigration and current challenges.
- **Unit 4:** Social changes: family types, civil unions, homosexual marriage and gender-related issues.
- **Unit 5:** Faith and Religion: popular religiosity, main confessions. Catholicism in Spain: beliefs and popular rites.
- **Unit 6:** Festivities, festive spirit. Fall, winter, spring and summer celebrations: Christmas, Carnival, 'Fallas' in Valencia, May Crosses, Pilgrimages, Easter, 'San Juan', Moors and Christians and many others.
- **Unit 7:** Bullfighting: its components and rituals. Meaning and controversies. The running of the bulls: 'San Fermín' in Pamplona and similar celebrations.
- **Unit 8:** Flamenco: origins, features and evolution. Main singers, guitarists and dancers.
- **Unit 9:** Eating and drinking habits in Spain. Socializing in Spain. 'Tapas', wine, beer and their social component. Sports: practice, 'soccer' addiction and important achievements.
- **Unit 10:** Spain, Europe and its main challenges for the 21st century. Reverse cultural Shock. Final conclusions.

***This program is subject to some minor changes.**