

Contemporary Spanish Politics and Culture PLSC 390

- 3 credits / 45 contact hours
- Elective taught in English

□ Course Description

The aim of this course is to give the student an in-depth study of Spain's Political system during the XX, and the XXI century, and its impact upon the production of culture.

□ Contents

1st Part: The case of Spain

The first part will analyze the turn of events that have shaped the dynamic history of Spain's political ideologies from the early part of the XX century up to the XXI.

2nd Part: Spain's new challenge: the reshaping of regional identities

The second part will present an in-depth study of the outgoing struggle for the redefinition of the regional aspects that make up Spain's identity. It will discuss the different points that are taking part in this new shaping of Spain.

3rd Part: Pre and post March 11: Spain's and the new world order

The third part will study the effects of Spain's involvement in world politics in the pre and post March eleventh terrorist attacks.

□ Course Objectives

The student will gain from the study of the political situation that governs Spain today an insightful look at how some of the major historical events have shaped the political and cultural map of Spain today. Students will obtain an understanding of the long road to democracy from the early part of the twentieth century, to the formation of the Constitutional government after the dictatorship. From their readings, students will be able to determine how the political forces affected all creative activity, and how these try to manipulate the masses by means such as literature, art, film, music, and theater. The student will learn to read between the lines of the propaganda machine that dominates all cultural expression from one period to the next. Thus, he would be able to discern between the historical facts and the political motivated interpretation of history.

□ **Instructional Approaches**

The instructional approach is to foster critical thinking through lectures, readings, and discussions of the texts assigned for the course, as well as the extra readings that the students will investigate on his or her own. Its main goal is to teach students to interpret the historical documentation, and to question the perspectives offered in some of the historical texts presented for discussion.

The class setting will imitate that of a professional colloquium where students will discuss their readings, and present to the class their conclusions about the topics discussed in the course. He or she will be submerged in the actual political situation in Spain through the reading of the major national and local newspapers. The class discussions will have a format that would allow students to debate in an open forum their conclusions, and present their arguments to the rest of the class in a clear and concise way. This will foster the students ability to think critically, thus enhancing his or hers communicative skills in front of their peers.

□ **Course Requirements, Assignments**

Students must come to class prepared with all the readings done, and ready to engage in discussion with the rest of their peers. There will be a group project, a midterm and a final exam.

- Group project and Presentations

Students will be required to research an area discussed in the class, and write a 10-page paper. They will present to the class the results of their findings. The class, then, will engage on a discussion by asking questions, or presenting different points of view about the topic.

Each student in the group will be responsible for their work, and will present it separately. But, there must be a consistency between the different parts of the project. In other words, the team will present an outline to the instructor, and who is responsible to develop each part. They will be graded on their individual work and the project as a whole.

The project will be an outgoing activity in the classroom. Students will report weekly about the state of their findings, and research.

- Midterm and Final Exam

The exams will evaluate the student's ability to read critically historical documents. The exams will have a section in short essay questions, and a long essay section.

□ **Course Policies**

It is required that the student participates in all class discussions. It is their responsibility to read assigned reading before each meeting, and to keep notes on the discussions. Failing to do so will affect the final grade.

Assignments must be handed on time, and they will **not** be accepted late.

Students must attend all meetings. Unexcused absences will **not** be accepted, and they will affect the final grade. For each unexcused absence, the student will lose half a letter grade. Absences are only excused with a medical note.

There will not be extra credit or make ups. Any student who leaves the program early without notification will receive an "F" for their final grade. Students will not receive a letter of Incomplete. All work must be completed before leaving the program.

<p>Grading and Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group project 30% • Midterm Exam 25% • Final Exam 25% • Participation 20% 	<p>The breakdown for the grades will be as follows</p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td>A</td><td>90-100</td></tr> <tr><td>B</td><td>89-80</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>79-70</td></tr> <tr><td>D</td><td>60-69</td></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>59-0</td></tr> </table>	A	90-100	B	89-80	C	79-70	D	60-69	F	59-0
A	90-100										
B	89-80										
C	79-70										
D	60-69										
F	59-0										

Texts / Resources/ Readings

- Gies, David T. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. **(MSC)**
- Jordan Barry and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas. *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*. London: Oxford UP, 2000. **(CSCS)**
- Graham, Helen, and Jo Labanyi. *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. **(SCS)**

Program

Week 1	Day 1 "What does it mean to study modern Spanish culture?" Day 2 "Culture and modernity: The case of Spain"
Week 2	Day 1 "History Politics and Culture, 1936-1975." Day 2 "The Cultural Politics of the Civil War"
Week 3	Day 1 "History Politics and Culture 1975-1996." Day 2 Cultural Control
Week 4	Day 1 "Narrative in Culture 1936-1975." Day 2 "Popular Culture in the Years of Hunger"
Week 5	Day 1 "Narrative in Culture 1975-1996." Day 2 "The Collective memory, the nation-state and post Franco Society"
Week 6	Day 1 Review Day 2 Midterm Exam
Week 7	Day 1 "Theater and culture, 1936-1996." Day 2
Week 8	Day 1 "Culture and cinema to 1975." "Back to the future: Cinema and Democracy." Day 2 "Culture and cinema 1975-1996." "The Mass media"
Week 9	Day 1 "Spanish Music and cultural identity." Day 2 "The Politics of Popular Music"
Week 10	Day 1 "Spanish Literature (after 1936)" Day 2 "Postmodernism and the Problem of Cultural Identity."
Week 11	Day 1 "The visual arts in Spain." "How Spanish is it? Spanish cinema and national identity" Day 2 "Spectacle, trauma, and violence in contemporary Spain"
Week 12	Day 1 "The visual arts in Spain." ; "Screening the past: history and nostalgia in contemporary Spanish cinema" Day 2 Final EXAM