



Course title

Historical and Cultural Foundations of Modern Spain

Course taught by

Alejandro Prada Vázquez

Holding a doctorate in art and musicological history, combined with graduate work in history and socio-cultural analysis, Alejandro Prada Vázquez is a writer, journalist, and art historian. Alejandro is currently conducting research in art history while also writing columns for the Spanish version of *Huffington Post*, *El País*, and other publications. In 2016 he won the University of Oviedo Literary Prize, and his first novel, *Venus*, was published in 2017.

Purpose of the course

The purpose of the course is to provide a grasp of fundamental Spanish realities from an historical perspective as a way to prepare students to participate more fully in local and national society, especially once they take up duties as full-time interns. Students become thoroughly familiar with Asturian realities and their ties with the national history of Spain. The course results in knowledge of the interaction between Spain's political sphere (institutions, laws, politics) and social dimensions such as values and mores. Finally, students become able to place Spanish history in its European and international contexts.

As an element in the IFE preparatory session in Asturias, the course – like all IFE preparatory courses – is intended for non specialists as they prepare for integration in and participation in their internship regardless of their subject of concentration. By the end of the course students will have acquired a coherent, analytical but practical view of Asturias and Spain, both historical and contemporary. They will also be acquainted with the basic academic literature on the topics of the course.

Description of the course

The approach of this course is pluridisciplinary and thematic, highlighting key past events, movements and patterns of thought as specifically useful for generalists seeking a basic understanding (“informed citizen”) of the roots and causes of the current Spanish political, social and cultural reality. After a general overview as introduction, the course leads students through a series of “moments” in the development of modern Spain, from hegemonic Spain, through Spain of the Ancien Régime and its crisis, to the birth of the liberal state, etc. Each thematic moment is illustrated by a look at the dominant contemporary cultural expression.

This course meets approximately 48 hours, including mandatory site visits.

Outcomes

1. In addition to the fundamental outcomes relative to the course subject matter per se, as listed in the rubric “Purpose of the Course” above, this course is designed to enable students to develop the following “applied outcomes”:
 - grasp the reality of semi-autonomous regions comprising the Spanish State
 - recognize the main events, movements and figures of modern Spain and Asturias
 - acquire a functional understanding of Spanish politics and governance
 - become familiar with political and social challenges faced by contemporary Spain (regional separatism, rise of the extreme right, weight of the Catholic Church...)
 - become familiar with Spanish including local news media
 - develop oral skills of presentation, debate and exchange, in Spanish
 - master the use of Spanish for the specific purpose of being able to engage professionally with the issues of the day and to produce useful texts in a work setting
 - learn the use of European methodology for structuring argumentation and marshaling relevant information.

2. Contribution to outcomes of an integrated program of study

The IFE semester is a fully integrated whole, academically. An important set of outcomes of this and every course comprising an IFE preparatory session is the repertory of skills and knowledge acquired in order to succeed in the next phase of the semester. Students as they enter the internship phase will know how – in Spanish – to make oral presentations, write essays, organize material according to a standard methodology, comprehend oral material, take notes in a meeting, discuss the issues of the day, understand the work of their host organization in its societal context, and so forth. The result is a student-intern's readiness to take fuller advantage of the field experience opportunity including as a research terrain thus enhancing the final academic exercise, the 30-page guided independent field research paper (qv), the keystone of the IFE integrated semester.

3. Outcomes in the context of a program of experiential learning

Outcomes are essentially seized learning opportunities. Experiential learning outcomes result from the opportunity to study a subject both in situ as well as in words and in theory. At IFE, cultural and linguistic otherness enhances both factors of the experiential education equation, yielding the final, fundamental intended outcomes of comparative knowledge strengthening a student's grasp on a particular subject and discipline, along with robust language skills, and the knowledge of the world and of oneself that comes from having learned to operate effectively with and in otherness.

Pedagogical methods

1. Lecture-seminars whereby each two-hour class meeting is devoted to a specific theme, including lecture presentation of new material reinforced by in-class tools such as powerpoints, videos and readings (including some materials to be reviewed by students in preparation for class). Small class size allows for questions and some discussion.
2. Discussion or "workshop" sessions (*tutorías*, a standard part of European university pedagogy), designed to assist students in assimilating the information and knowledge transmitted during the lecture-seminar sessions and applying it to current events and issues. Typical exercises include:
 - a review of national press on specific subjects linking course material with current events
 - short student oral presentations on selected subjects
 - a detailed draft outline as if for an essay on a topic of current debate.
3. Site visits, encounters with civil society actors, and other activities; these may include, for example:
 - guided visit of the Roman baths of Gijón
 - lecture-visit to the home of Jovellanos (major Spanish intellectual figure and native of Gijón)
 - guided visit to the Covadonga Sanctuary and the Roman city of Cangas de Onís.

Participation in these course-related visits and activities is mandatory. These activities are prepared in advance and debriefed and commented afterwards, in workshop sessions. Material presented during these activities is part of the body of material on which students may be tested.

Course outline

Introduction: The historical foundations of contemporary Spain

- 1
 - 1.1. Spain, Crossroad of Civilizations: Roman heritage – Visigoth kingdom (507-711) – al-Ándalus (8th – 15th centuries) – the first Christian kings (8th – 15th centuries)
 - 1.2. Culture: Pre-Roman Asturias and the Route of Santiago de Compostela
- 2 The Modern State: From the Catholic kings to the Habsburgs
 - 2.1. Spanish hegemony; Spanish institutions; conquest of America; Charles I; Philippe II, expansion and economics of empire; decline.
 - 2.2. Culture: Art and Literature of the Golden Age; Spanish humanism; 21st century representations of the conquest of America.
- 3 Spain of the 18th Century
 - 3.1 Spain's Bourbon kings; absolutism and reform; economy and society in the Ancien Régime.
 - 3.2 Culture: Goya and Spanish painting at the turn of the 18th/19th century; Jovellanos and illustration.
- 4 1788-1833: The Ancien Régime in crisis
 - 4.1 Charles IV; the war of independence; The Cortes of Cádiz and the Constitution of 1812; Fernand VII.
 - 4.2 Culture: What is the Inquisition?

- 5** 1833-1868: Birth of the Liberal State
 5.1 The Carlist Wars; liberal revolution and variations on a liberal theme; the “Moderate Decade” and the Progressive Biennium (1854-1856); Isabelle II.
 5.2 Culture: Asturian mythology
- 6** 1868-1874: The six democratic or revolutionary years (Sexenio Democrático)
 6.1 Revolution of 1868; growth of republicanism; Amadeo de Saboya; the First Spanish Republic (1873-1874).
 6.2 Culture: Spanish and Asturian art in the 19th century
- 7** Labor movements, agrarian reforms and industrial growth, in the 19th century
 7.1 Estates and classes in Spanish society; agricultural transformation; democratic changes and the beginning of industrialization (railroads, taxation, banking).
 7.2 Culture: Socialism and Anarchists in Spain.
- 8** 1875-1898: Restoration of the Monarchy
 8.1 Political system of the Restoration; alternation of power; nationalisms and regionalisms; colonial wars and the disaster of 1898.
 8.2 Culture: Literary movements: romanticism, realism, and modernism.
- 9** Economy and Society – the beginning of the 20th century
 9.1 The Restoration in crisis: dynastic reform and the unraveling of the system; demographic and economic trends; the dictatorship of Primo di Rivera (1923-1930)
 9.2 Culture: Asturias at the beginning of the 20th century
- 10** 1931-1936: The Second Spanish Republic
 10.1 Proclamation of the Second Republic; The Reformist Biennium (el Bienio de Izquierdas - 1931-1933); the Popular Front.
 10.2. Culture: the Revolution of 1934 in Asturias and women’s right to vote.
- 11** 1936-1939: Civil War
 11.1 Causes of the Civil War; Republicans and insurgents; major military engagements; the war in Asturias.
 11.2 Culture: Intellectuals and artists in the war; the Generation of 27 and the avant-garde.
- 12** Francoist Spain (I): The establishment of a dictatorship (1939-1959)
 12.1 Dictatorship and repression; structure of the new State; rationing and self-sufficiency; international relations.
 12.2 Culture: The exiles.
- 13** Francoist Spain (II): Growth and stasis (1959-1975)
 13.1 Spanish economic development; demographic growth; social conflicts.
 13.2 Culture: Official culture and counter-culture.
- 14** The Spanish transition
 14.1 Dictatorship in crisis and the beginnings of transition; economic crisis, society and violence; the consolidation of democracy (1978-1982).
 14.2 Culture: Adolfo Suárez and the Transition today.
- 15** Spanish democratic governments (1982-2018)
 15.1 Felipe González, José María Aznar, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Mariano Rajoy: their policies and impact.
 15.2 Culture: Contemporary social protest.
- 16** Challenges, stakes, and hopes: social-political debate in Spain in the 21st century
 16.1 Two-party system and new parties.
 16.2 Culture: The Spanish press

Suggested bibliography

- VV.AA., *Historia de España de la Edad Media*, Ariel, Barcelona, 2008
- MOLTAS RIBALTA, Pere, *Edad Moderna (1474-1808)*, Espasa - Calpe, Madrid, 1989
- VV.AA., *La España de los Austrias, Historia de España. S. XVI-XVII*, Cátedra, Madrid, 2003
- VV.AA., *La España de los Borbones, Historia de España, S. XVIII*, Cátedra, Madrid, 2002
- VV.AA., *Historia contemporánea de España (S. XIX)*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1988

VV.AA., *España bajo la dictadura franquista (1939-1975)*, Labor, Barcelona, 1980
 VV.AA., *Historia de Asturias*, KRK, Oviedo, 2005
 CASTAÑÓN, Luciano, *Supersticiones y creencias de Asturias*, Ayalga Ed., Salinas, 1982
 ALONSO, Celio, *Historia de la literatura española, 1800-1900*, vol. 5, Crítica, 2010
 ARIAS PÁRAMO, Lorenzo, *Guía del arte prerrománico Asturiano*, Trea, Gijón, 2008

Grading methods

There are two in-class written examinations:

- a one-hour examination mid-way through the preparatory session comprising multiple-choice and short-answer questions (20% of the final grade)
- a two-hour final examination taking the form of an essay in which the student – on the subject given for the examination – first constructs a specific question to be examined and then proceeds to do so in a formal, well-structured manner, drawing on and thereby demonstrating a certain master of course material (30% of final grade).

A sample examination subject for this course: *Define the stages in the development of the Al-Ándalus State and society (13th-14th centuries)*

Class preparation and participation in the lecture-seminar sessions are taken into account in assessing the grade for this part of the course.

Grades for the various exercises of the workshop section, taking into account active participation in all class sessions and course-related visits and activities, are averaged to assess a grade for these aspects of the course (50% of final grade).

A note on grading – IFE teachers use a standard grading system based on a scale of 10. The final grade is also transposed into an American letter grade according to a scale of equivalence, and both grades are displayed.

The grade assessed for written work reflects the degree of acquisition of the information and knowledge presented during the course as well as how well the extent to which the methodology is followed. Since the language of instruction and examination is not the student's own language, the quality of the written expression only enters into account in cases of noteworthy progress or, on the contrary, repeated and avoidable errors and carelessness.

Those who grade IFE students' work are guided by the principle that this course – in its several parts – is not intended to train specialists in modern Spanish history. Therefore, evaluation of student work pays particular attention to knowledge gained during the six weeks of the preparatory session, demonstrated curiosity and a student's motivation to apply this knowledge to their experience and to gaining new perspectives, including on their home culture and society.

Grading scale

A+	9 - 10	B+	7 - 7,5	C+	5 - 5,5
A	8 - 9	B	6,5 - 7	C	4,5 - 5,5
A-	7,5 - 8	B-	5,5 - 6,5	C-	4 - 4,5

Equivalent in American university course offerings

History of Modern Spain, Cultural History of Modern Spain