



## IFE course syllabus

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### Course title

#### **The Asturias Seminar: Spanish Socio-economics in Europe and the World**

### Course taught by

Natalia Quintanal Fernández

Holding degrees in Labor Relations and Theory, Natalia Quintanal Fernández is also a certified coach for executive and strategic roles, with twenty years experience consulting to businesses on human resource management and talent development. Natalia's clientele is a reflection of the Asturian economy: local metallurgy firms, multinationals in heavy industry, technology firms and startups.

### Purpose of the course

This course aims to:

- Introduce students from abroad to the socio-economic realities of Asturias and of Spain;
- Examine the European objectives for sustainable development in the local context;
- Analyze and evaluate each student's skills and professional development in the context of their internship.

### Description of the course

The course provides an introduction to the dynamics of the Spanish economy and the web of entrepreneurial activity in Asturias. The socio-economic development of this region and the significant changes it has undergone is placed in its national, European and international contexts. A particular attention is focused on the European Union framework.

In addition to a formal analysis of local economic realities, the course includes personalized professional coaching for each student-intern as a member of a work team in their host organization.

### Outcomes

- 1.** In addition to the fundamental outcomes relative to the course subject matter per se, as indicated in the rubric "Purpose of the Course" above, this course is designed to enable students to develop the following "applied outcomes":
  - understand the place and role of Spain internationally
  - grasp the diversity of the economic fabric of Spain and of Asturias, and the main elements of the links between local and global economies
  - become familiar with the main Spanish economic actors as well as with current political economy issues in Spain
  - define and develop one's professional goals
  - define and develop one's professional skills such as teamwork, time management, stress management, conflict management, communication and empathy
  - gain exposure to the mainstays of Spanish academic literature on issues in political economy
  - acquire Spanish vocabulary in political economy and current economic issues
  - master the use of Spanish for the specific purpose of being able to engage professionally with and in a European framework.
- 2. Contribution to outcomes of an integrated program of study**

The IFE semester is a fully integrated whole, academically. A principal objective of this seminar that accompanies the student during the internship period is to provide a space of reflection apart from the student-intern's professional setting and to address important contextual topics not feasibly included in the preparatory session. The result is that a student-intern continues to strengthen their capacities to take advantage of the field experience opportunity by feeling at home with contextual issues and conversations. The additional context serves the student well in addition as they develop 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**

The course comprises twelve lecture-seminars of 2.5 hrs whereby each session is thematically distinct. Knowledge is imparted through a mix of lecture, discussion, readings, slide presentations, audio-visual material, and students' oral *exposés*.

The course is held weekly during the internship period and attendance is required.

### **Course outline**

- 1** Introduction / Defining professional skills I
- 2** Asturias and its entrepreneurial network / Defining professional skills II
- 3** A typology of business organizations and institutions comprising the local and national economies / Working as part of a team
- 4** The labor market / Time management
- 5** The social economy / Communication in the workplace
- 6** The firm: innovation and equality / Managing conflicts
- 7** The public sector / Empathy in the workplace
- 8** European objectives for sustainable development I
- 9** European objectives for sustainable development II
- 10** Review in preparation for the final examination
- 11** Written examination in class
- 12** Oral presentations of conclusions and lessons from the internship

### **Suggested bibliography**

*La economía del Principado de Asturias. Diagnóstico Estratégico.* CaixaBank Research

<https://www.ine.es/>

<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1978-31229>

<https://www.asturias.es/gobierno>

<https://www.gjjon.es/es/directorio/agencia-local-de-promocion-economica-y-empleo-alpee>

<https://www.cepes.es/>

<https://ffes.org/>

<https://www.ceei.es/>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>

### **Grading methods**

A grade is assessed on the basis of a two hour written examination taking the form of a case study of an enterprise that the student has created throughout the course, presenting the firm in detail (name, mission, products, business model,...) and analyzing its viability.

This final grade is a weighted average of the examination grade and a grade assessed for class attendance, participation and preparedness.

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 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 Spanish economics. Therefore, evaluation of student work pays particular attention to knowledge gained during the twelve weeks of this course, 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**

The Modern Spanish Economy, Economics and Entrepreneurship,