CIEE Seville, Spain

Course title: Academic Writing and Critical Thinking
Course code: SPAN 4001 CSCS
Programs offering course: Communications, New Media and Journalism Spanish, Liberal Arts
Language of instruction: Spanish
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

This course is designed for students with at least six semesters of university level Spanish. The primary objective of the course is to reinforce and improve students' capacity for written and spoken expression, through the study of texts regarding the social, political and cultural reality of the world that surrounds us. In order to do so, students will be provided with the grammatical tools necessary for the elaboration of various types of texts: expository, argumentative, narrative and descriptive. This will not only reinforce the basic grammatical contents addressed in previous courses, but also allow students greater discursive fluidity in his/her spoken and written capabilities. It is an advanced level Spanish Course for native English-speaking students who want to achieve maximum competence linguistically, communicatively, pragmatically and socio-culturally during their sojourn abroad. The aim of the course, in direct connection with students' experience abroad, and through various activities inside and outside the classroom, is for students to progressively and continuously learn and acquire skills throughout the semester, specifically, the linguistic, communicative and pragmatic functions and socio-cultural norms that guarantee real success in the use of the Spanish language. Also, it sets the objective of the course that the students end their stay as competent, Spanish-speaking individuals who can continue to develop in the future in different areas of Spanish. In this way, the class will also serve as a basis for other classes where students are required to debate, give presentations and write essays, in which they can employ their language resources in description, narration, exposition, and argumentation, which are objectives of this course.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Reinforce and expand the grammatical resources necessary for the use of Spanish in an academic environment
- Deconstruct texts of a socio-political, historic, cultural, and literary nature
- Widen students' lexicon as well as analyse and correct false cognates, collocations, synonyms and antonyms, and replacing verbs such as *ser*, *estar*, *haber*, *poner*, and *tener*
- Strengthen writing techniques by developing and applying writing techniques to produce academic writing: descriptive, narrative, expository, and argumentative
- Develop and apply techniques for oral expression related to academic texts: descriptive, narrative, expository, and argumentative
- Stimulate critical analysis and expression among students, both in an oral and written context

Course Prerequisites

Registration is limited to certain students based on the results of the on-site language exam or the recommendation of the Intensive Session professor. 4 semesters of college-level Spanish (or equivalent). Students need to have a GPA of at least 2.5.

Methods of Instruction

According to the necessities of the students throughout the different stages of their study abroad experience, each session will present real and relevant material (contemporary texts, video news clips, debates, advertisements, movies and television shows, etc.). The linguistic structures, morphological, syntactic and lexical forms, communicative functions and pragmatic and socio-cultural norms will be practiced and analyzed in a clear and repetitive way to allow the student to communicate and interact correctly and properly in Spanish. This way, the student will discover, formulate, and test hypotheses and enjoy opportunities that facilitate learning and understanding.
Practical activities will take place in and outside the classroom. In-class activities (dialogues, role plays, debates, meaningful and motivating oral presentations). These will allow the students to understand society’s communicative behaviors permitting them to contextualize various social situations by showing them the importance of the location and time of communication, to appreciate the attitudes and the interactive models of speakers, and to be sensitive to the ways, resources, and linguistic elements used to organize speech. Out-of-class (individual and group) activities are directly related to the specific moment they are experiencing in their journey as a study abroad student and are structured to apply what they have learned in class thus far. They will interview native Spanish speakers about current events, produce reports (about different socio-cultural aspects of Seville) which will be presented in class (with the use of a video) for later viewing, understanding, analysis, commentary, discussion and evaluation of the linguistic, communicative, pragmatic, historical, social and cultural aspects.

Out of Classroom Activities

This course will complete several out of class activities, which will be indicated at the beginning of the semester, depending on the cultural offering and activities of the cities at the time.

Linguistic Resource Center

Since this course’s learning objective is to learn different language skills, the use of the LRC is NOT PERMITTED. All class assignments will be returned with commentary, graded by the professor, and for this reason any correction prior to the professor’s will interfere with the process and objectives of this course. The professor has office hours in which the student may come to resolve issues with the subject material. On the other hand, the use of the language tutorial service is recommended.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Weekly Assignments (4) 15%
2. Essays (3) 15%
3. Individual Project 15%
4. Midterm Exam 20%
5. Final exam 25%
6. Participation 10%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Weekly Assignments (4)

A total of 4 short essays, about 350 words each (Times New Roman, size 12 font, and 1.5 spacing). To be handed on the dates specified in the weekly schedule.

Grammatical correctness and level, meeting the due date.

Grammar exercises to be completed individually.

Essays (3)

A total of 3 long essays, about 700 words each (Times New Roman, size 12 font, and 1.5 spacing). Due dates outlined in the weekly schedule.

Grammatical correctness, adaptation to the textual typology, lexical variety, spelling competence (coherence and cohesion), textual organization.

Individual Project

The student will choose a topic and give an oral presentation, with an audiovisual format, stressing the concepts learned in class related to the descriptive, narrative, and expository/argumentative texts. This project will have an audiovisual format and will be presented in class according to the dates on the syllabus. Title: A look at Seville. In addition to the grammatical and textual adaptation in oral form, the student’s creativity and originality in the creation, development and presentation of the project will be assessed.

The student’s language skills and textual adaptation in oral format will be evaluated, as well as originality and creativity in the selections and that development of the subject incites subsequent group discussion.

Midterm Exam
Final exam

Both exams will have the same structure. They will consist of two parts, one designated to grammar with questions that are similar to those in the workbook and the other that will consist of a written essay.

Also, both exams will include a short (5 minutes) speaking part where the student should demonstrate his or her knowledge of the techniques and strategies practiced and developed during the course in relation to the text type in question.

Participation

Attendance, interest, active participation connected to the topic and assignment dealt with in class, completion of the assigned homework, as well as the preparation of the material assigned for each class.

Attendance

Students are not allowed to miss class for unjustified reasons. For each unexcused absence, the participation portion of the grade will be lowered. Hence, it will be very difficult to receive a 100 in the class. Please keep this in mind. If a student misses class twice without a valid excuse (a note from a physician in the event of an illness), then the professor will automatically lower the final grade by 5 points (on a 100-point scale) for each class missed thereafter. Students with 6 or more absences will fail the course.

Students should arrive to class on time. Arriving more than 15 minutes late for a class will count as an unexcused absence. Please note that an excused absence is one that is accompanied by a doctor’s note: signed stamped and dated. Travelling and/or travel delays are not considered valid reasons for missing class.

*Notes from a physician will only be valid and admitted by the Program Manager if the doctor confirms that the visit could not have been arranged at another time, or that the student was too ill to attend class that day.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to act in accordance with their university and CIEE’s standards of conduct concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Use of online translators for work in Spanish will result in an automatic failure.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, and local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1

Course Introduction. Objectives, contents, methodologies and grading.

Description: introduction. Useful vocabulary: vocabulary related to spatial reality and places

Class: 1.2

Vocabulary related to the description of people: physical aspects. False cognates. Miscellany of typical mistakes made by English speaking learners of Spanish as a L2.


Week 2

Class: 2.1


Class: 2.2

The gender of certain nouns. The plural of some nouns: problems (To hand in 1st weekly
Week 3  
Class:  3.1  
*Ser* vs. *estar* distinction with adjectives  

Class:  3.2  


Week 4  
Class:  4.1  
Relatives clauses: pronouns and structure. Relatives clauses with preposition. Stylistic aspects: uses of the verbal tenses when narrating: previous situation (past perfect), background (imperfect), action (preterite)  

Class:  4.2  
*Tener* + nouns used when describing. Unipersonal verbs: possibility and evaluation locutions. Existential *haber*. Verbs to describe the weather. Other copulative verbs. Useful vocabulary: vocabulary related to a chronology of events  
*(to hand in 1st composition)*  


Week 5  
Class:  5.1  
Narration: two different aspects connected with a tense: contrasts and differential aspects of the imperfect: middle of the action preterite vs. preterite: beginning or fulfillment.  

Class:  5.2  
Contrasts with stative verbs: saber, conocer, poder, querer, tener, etc. Verbs of emotional reaction: syntax and structure. Different subjects. Mood. Preterite and Imperfect *(to hand in 2nd weekly assignment)*  


Week 6  
Class:  6.1  
Review general description and narratives *(to hand in 1st essay)*  

**Mid-Term Exam**  

Week 7  
Class:  7.1  

Verbs of becoming (ponerse, quedarse, hacerse, volverse, etc.). Useful vocabulary when referring to a dialogue in any narration. Indirect speech when narrating. The past of subjunctive vs. the present of indicative.

Class: 7.2.

Clause versus infinitive infinitive. The adverbs of time and manner. The adverbs in the narration. Adverbs of manner (to hand in 3rd weekly assignment).


Week 8
Class: 8.1.

Adjective + mente = adverb. Adverbs of time and logic relationship. Adverbs of sequence and Order. Adverb, preposition and conjunction.

Class: 8.2.


Week 9
Class: 9.1.


Class: 9.2.

Neuter vs. nominalization. Lo to determine the grade of modification. Nominalization in the relative pronouns with el que, lo que, quién and cuando.

(to hand in a draft of the individual project)


Week 10
Class: 10.1.


Class: 10.2.

Other usages of lo. Argumentation: introduction. Useful vocabulary to introduce reasoning (to hand in 4th weekly assignment)


Week 11
Class: 11.1.


Class: 11.2.
Week 12
Class: 12.1

Review
Hand in Essay 3

Class: 12.2

FINAL EXAM

Course Materials
Readings

Recommended:
- Clave. Diccionario de uso del español actual. Ediciones SM
- “Webgrafía”. Direcciones electrónicas de páginas en Internet para la práctica autónoma de temas gramaticales (en el cuademillo de trabajo)

Additional references:
- Cassany, D. Expresión escrita en L2/ELE. Cuadernos de didáctica del español/le. Arco/Libros. Madrid, 2005