

## **Advanced Topics in Spanish Language**

### **Course Description 2018/2019**

Advanced Topics in Spanish Language is a course that focuses on the student's interaction with authentic materials, which include electronic print, audio and video media as well as full length feature films and documentaries. We also study literary genre including poetry, short stories, a three act play and selections from a novel. Through his/her interaction with these materials, the student will reinforce and assimilate key language skills as well as examine the point of view of the language sample. Our goal will be to equip the student to examine and evaluate various authentic media sources, synthesize valuable cultural and historical information and inform his/her own point of view on topics relevant to the Spanish speaking world and the greater global community. In concrete form, the student will create a final portfolio project in which he/she demonstrates the mastery of these skills. While this course is not designed to prepare students for the AP exam in Spanish language, with some additional test preparation and practice, our students should be very successful on the AP exam. Because the AP exam is based on language skills rather than specific content, such as a particular set of readings, many of the activities and assessments used in our AT Spanish will be excellent practice for the exam. Moreover, through the use of authentic materials and a systematic grammar review, AT Spanish will synthesize and assimilate many of the grammar structures from prior years of language study. In addition, we seek to encourage the student to critically evaluate various authentic language sources in order to arrive at the articulation of his/her own world view. Finally, we hope to illustrate how particular themes may be specific to a particular culture or historical period as well as highlight how other themes are universal to the human experience.

#### **Quarter 1**

Our course may be viewed in two distinct geographic or cultural units, which alternate among the four academic quarters: Latin America and Spain. We begin with the year in provincial southern Spain of the 1930s as we study selected works of Federico García Lorca. As an introduction to his works, we start with an examination of gender roles in society. Our first literary reading begins with his poetry, particularly his *Romancero Gitano* (1924-1927). After studying his poetry we move on to his classic drama *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. This universal drama will serve as an open window into the lives of a family of women living in southern Spain. Students examine how political repression and societal values can stifle the individual and destroy family relationships. Also, students analyze specific gender roles for women and men in provincial Spanish society. Our theater study will be punctuated by a trip into New York City to see the Spanish Repertory Theater's production of *Bernarda Alba* if scheduling permits.

#### ***Sample Project on Gender Roles***

*Our introductory group presentation will be on gender roles in contemporary society, with authentic electronic print and audio sources selected by the students. The students will focus the point of view articulated in the sources and formulate their own viewpoint to be articulated in the presentation.*

Our first feature film studied in class will be *El laberinto del Fauno* by Guillermo del Toro which tells the story of resistance fighters opposed to Franco's dictatorship in Northern Spain. Del Toro's film focuses on a girl, Ofelia, fascinated with fairy tales during 1944 in fascist Spain. When Ofelia and her mother relocate to a military barracks in northern Spain, Ofelia's interest in fairy tales leads her into her own fantasy story in which she chooses good over evil. Not only does the use of allegory provide ample material for discussion, but Ofelia's self-sacrificing example also serves as a stark contrast to the historical events that unfolded in Franco's Spain. Many other characters such as Vidal, a mini-Franco, or Mercedes, a rebel-servant, help students to enrich and expand their understanding of the combative time period. In addition, there will be ample opportunity to revisit the topic of gender roles in Franco's Spain.

In order to examine the Spanish Civil War in a more historical context, we examine clips from a documentary by Katie Halper called *La memoria es vaga* which is the latest film to join the *Imágenes Contra el Olvido* (Images Against Amnesia), a film series that is committed to recuperating Spain's historical memory. *La Memoria es Vaga* tells the story of El Valle de los Caídos. Constructed after the Spanish Civil War under the pretext of reconciliation, Spain's largest monument was built by political prisoners in concentration camp conditions. These documentary clips will enhance our understanding of historical memory through interviews with the remaining ex-political prisoners who built the monument and current members of Spain's fascist party.

#### *Sample Presentation on the Unit on Spain:*

*Students will examine lesser known details from the Spanish Civil War by using primary source documents included in the book They Still Draw Pictures, which is a collection of drawings done by children who were evacuated to different refugee camps in various locations in Spain and France. Some of the drawings present violent images from war time while others demonstrate a desire to recuperate a lost period of peace. All of them reflect the child's perspective. Some of the images also reflect specific political ideology. The collection of drawings is organized by city. Students will choose a drawing from the book They Still Draw Pictures and do some research into what happened in that part of Spain at the time that the drawing was completed. Student presentations will include interpretation of the drawing, actual photos of the area from the time period, newspaper clippings from the time period and an analysis of the events that occurred.*

#### Quarter 2

After studying Spain, we head to the Americas with an examination of the relationship between the United States and Latin America, discussing the movie assignment, the feature length film, *Motorcycle Diaries*, as our point of departure to complement a non-fiction reading that detail the historical relationship between the United States and Latin America. We study some poems by Pablo Neruda to complement this perspective on the history of US and Latin American relations. We also review some stories studied last year by García Márquez and look

a bit closer at the Latin American reality that they depict. We also examine two Nobel lectures, one by Neruda in 1971 and the lecture that García Márquez delivered in 1982 in which he defines for the Swedish Academy how it is that the brutality and violence suffered by so many in Latin America inspired his literary masterpiece. Our first full length feature film studied in class will be *Viva Cuba*, which portrays the life of two young children in present day Cuba struggling to overcome obstacles that involve problematic family relationships, the political and economic situation as well as presenting the notion of exile. The film provides fertile opportunity for discussion and exploration of family relationships, human rights, friendship as well as life in Cuba. By highlighting individual memories particularly through examples from *Diarios* and *Viva Cuba* we explore the formation of individual identity. Our reading of excerpts from the contemporary novel *Soñar en cubano*, by Cristina García further explores the notion of individual identity, exile and the effect of exile on family relationships. Students examine individual identity and the effects of separation on relationships through the creative writing project, the “diario epistolar”. Additionally, students explore the nuances of family relationships and compare and contrast social and political differences between the US and Cuba. A highlight of our unit on Cuba is a visit from native Cubans to talk to students about many of the topics we have discussed in the films and readings as well as their own personal experiences.

### *Sample Presentation on Cuba*

*Our project during the unit on Cuba will be a presentation on a topic of the student’s choice, such as education, healthcare, etc. The student will select electronic media sources in print and audio, analyze them and present them to the class along with her own personal point of view.*

### Quarter 3

Delving deeper into the theme of human rights, we travel to Argentina. We consider the literary heritage of Argentina by studying some short stories by literary giant Jorge Luís Borges . In particular we examine the notion of individual identity and national identity as well as the limits between fiction and reality. Later we examine social issues of the Argentina of the late seventies and early eighties, the era of the Dirty War. We examine a feature film, either *Cautiva* or *La historia oficial*, which fictionalizes a human interest story relating to the disappeared. Later, if time permits, we view clips from a documentary by Juan Mandelbaum called *Nuestros desaparecidos* in which a native of Argentina returns after thirty years living in the US to document what happened to a former girlfriend as well as other friends from childhood. Mandelbaum’s film is balanced and informative and provides a valuable historical perspective. With this documentary we continue our focus on historical memory as a means by which we can compare and contrast important cultural values and the abuses of power. We seek to empower students to articulate contrasting points of view and examine the actions of individuals and governments. We can also compare and contrast the similarities and differences in political structures and how the forces of political power shaped history in Spain and Argentina.

*At this point in the academic year, we will begin research related to the final portfolio project and encouraging students to identify the topic that they would like to explore. We will focus on identifying authentic print and audio sources as well as discerning the point of view expressed.*

#### Quarter 4

Our last quarter will be devoted completing and presenting the final portfolio projects. The final portfolio assessment will be the creation of each student's GOOGLE SITE on a topic of their choice with written and audio sources as well as student generated written and speech samples. Students will present their portfolio projects to their peers while their peers take notes identifying the essential questions and engaging in a discussion of the topic.

Throughout the year, the course will focus on perfecting the four language skills.

#### 1. Reading:

(Poetry)

Pablo Neruda, "United Fruit Co."

Federico García Lorca, "Romance sonámbulo", "La monja gitana," "Romance de la Guardia Civil Española"

(Short Story)

Jorge Luís Borges, "El sur" "Borges y yo" "La intrusa"

(Play)

Federico García Lorca, La casa de Bernarda Alba

#### 2. Writing

Students will write numerous in class essays as well as informal email type correspondence. In addition, we will be reviewing and reinforcing numerous grammar topics as well as differentiating between various idiomatic uses.

### 3. Listening

Students will listen to authentic materials such as films, news and audio clips from the web as well as interacting with native speaking guest speakers in person and via satellite.

### 4. Speaking

Spanish will be the language of class discussions and content will be delivered in Spanish. Students will participate regularly in digitally recorded phone conversations in Spanish, impromptu skits, moral dilemmas, round table discussions in which they present (orally) themes or current events topics of their own choosing.

#### **Additional Resources:**

##### **Books:**

Fuentes, Carlos. *El espejo enterrado*. (Madrid: Santillana Ediciones Generales, S.A., 1997)

Galeano, Eduardo. *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*. (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1971)

García Márquez, *Cien años de soledad*. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1996)

García Márquez, Gabriel y Apuleyo Mendoza, Plinio. *El olor de la Guayaba, Conversaciones con Gabriel García Márquez*. (Bogotá: Editorial Oveja Negra, 1982)

Gijs van Hensbergen. *Guernica*. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004)

Rodríguez, Rodney. *Momentos cumbres de las literaturas hispánicas*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2004.

Schlesinger, Stephen. *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (New York: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005)

##### **Recent News Articles:**

Cohen, Roger. "The End of the Revolution" *New York Times Magazine*. December 5, 2008

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/07/magazine/07cubat.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=Fidel%20Castro%20NYT%20Magazine&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/07/magazine/07cubat.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Fidel%20Castro%20NYT%20Magazine&st=cse)

Luhnow, David and De Córdoba, José. "The Cult of the Caudillo" *Wall Street Journal*. Saturday July 11, 2009

##### **Documentary Films:**

*Fidel!* (2009) Directed by Saul Landau

*Fidel* (2002) Directed by Estela Bravo

*Gabriel García Márquez: La magia de lo real*. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2004.

*Which Way Home* (2009) (HBO documentary)

##### **Feature Films:**

*El Norte* (1983) Directed by Gregory Nava

*La historia oficial* (1986) Directed by Luis Puenzo

*Cautiva* (2002) Directed by Gaston Biraben

*Cría cuervos* (1975) Directed by Carlos Saura.

*La lengua de la mariposa* (1999) Directed by José Luís Cuerda

*Fidel (The Castro Project)* (2002) Two part miniseries directed by David Attwood

### **Nobel lectures**

Gabriel García Márquez (1982):

[http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1982/marquez-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1982/marquez-lecture.html)

Pablo Neruda (1971):

[http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1971/neruda-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1971/neruda-lecture.html)

Camilo José Cela (1989)

[http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1989/cela-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1989/cela-lecture.html)

### **Selected electronic media sources:**

#### **Listening:**

Radio Naciones Unidas: <http://www.un.org/radio/es/>

Nuevos horizontes: <http://www.un.org/radio/es/>

BBC: <http://bbcmundo.com>

CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/español>

#### **Reading:**

[www.thepaperboy.com](http://www.thepaperboy.com)

[www.prensalatina.com](http://www.prensalatina.com)

[www.prensaescrita.com](http://www.prensaescrita.com)

[www.elmundo.es](http://www.elmundo.es)

[www.bbcmundo.com](http://www.bbcmundo.com)