

SPA 323 Spanish Study Abroad in Costa Rica (Culture & Civilization)

3 credits

I. Required materials:

1. Handouts that are given in class will be available for download at our class webpage.

II. Course Description:

This course aims to further develop students' target language skills through engaging activities of conversation, reading, writing, and listening. Since all instruction will be only in Spanish, students will achieve a greater understanding of the target language. This course will explore topics such as culture, politics and economy, health, entertainment, migration, and other aspect of the daily life to help learn about Costa Rica' while enhancing their Spanish skills. Topics will be explored through authentic texts, short films, documentaries, and discussions. Students will be expected to critically analyze and further research some of these issues. Students will be expected to actively participate in class and are strongly encouraged to participate in activities outside of class.

III. Course Objectives:

Students will increase their level of proficiency in everyday use of the target language and exploring Costa Rica's culture. At the end of the semester, the students will have improved their ability to organize and express their thoughts in their oral and written communication as well as increase their vocabulary and listening comprehension. Students will also be able to address relevant topics related to the Study Abroad experience and Costa Rica.

IV. Intended Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop fluency on Spanish oral communication. Increase the vocabulary to be able to communicate in more complex contexts.
2. Understand the political and social ends of the culture as manifested on different aspects of the study abroad experience.
3. Understand the history and value systems behind some of the Latin-American cultural beliefs and social behaviors.

V. Assessments of Learning Outcomes:

No late work will be accepted.

1. *Homework:* Your instructor will assign specific homework assignments. Homework assigned, is expected to be completed for the next class day. No credit will be considered after the due date.
3. *Video Blog (4):* During this course, in groups, students will create video blogs to further develop your speaking abilities. There will be a total of 4 video blogs based on the questions and scenarios provided by instructor in order to explore further Costa Rica's places, history, culture, food, and more. Each video blog will be due on **Mondays before class starts**. Be ready to share your video to the class and answer specific questions regarding your exploring and discovery. This is a pair activity to practice your speaking skills while exploring Costa Rica. Instructions are provided in our class website.

VI. Formal Evaluations

1. *Reflection:* Students must prepare and give a self-reflection presentation in Spanish in front of the class. The topic should be related to Latin-American culture, history, and/or society. It can also be a reflection of your study abroad experience learning. This presentation should be fully in Spanish, minimum of 10-15 minutes long. You are allowed to bring keynotes but reading directly from your presentation is not allowed. You can use a PowerPoint presentation with short texts (phrases) and pictures or any other methods of presenting that engage the audience.
2. *Journal:* Write a journal on the specified topics (see journal instructions). There will be a total of 5 entries. Each entry has a minimum of two paragraphs. Journal entries are due **every Thursday**

by 11:59pm in our class website. Errors will be highlighted. It is your responsibility to correct them. You can use images, videos, etc. Check our class website for more detailed instructions. This journal is not a “private space”. It will be shared with other students and presented every week as your oral exam.

3. *Interviews (3)*: You will perform 3 interviews to native speakers based on our current class topics, culture, news, etc. You must have at least 5-10 questions per person. This activity is to help you practice your listening skills as well as your speaking skills. This activity may be done individually or in pairs. Pairs will be completing a self-evaluation form of the work they have done and the work of their partner. A short oral summary of each interview should be submitted as an entry in this section or posted on YouTube (as a private link) and posted on this section. **Check the due dates for the interviews on the course plan.** (Further instructions will be on our class website).

4. *Topics presentations (1-2)*: Students, individually or in groups of 2, will select 1-2 topics in advance from the “course plan” in order to research, interview, explore and present it on the corresponded topic week. Other topics may be considered with prior instructor approval. Presentations need to be minimum of 20 minutes in Spanish. These presentations may include videos, audio, photos, interesting facts, history, and/or information collected from interviews and/or small surveys. In addition, it must include one or more activities to engage the audience. The student presenting must be prepared to answer questions from classmates or instructor. It will be graded based on the following:

a) Full information, b) lead the conversation, c) fluency, d) accurate use of vocabulary, e) syntax, and f) duration of the conversation.

Grading System

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|------------------------------|-----|
| Participation and homework | 12% |
| Video Blogs (4) & reflection | 20% |
| Journals (5) | 10% |
| Interviews (3) | 18% |
| Topic presentation (5) | 40% |

Your grade for this course will be based on the following: 100-90 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; below 60 = F

VII. Classroom conduct and Classroom policies.

1. *Cellphones and other electronic devices*: Cellphones are not allowed out of your backpacks unless we are using them for an activity given by the instructor. The use of cellphone during class time (unless it is an emergency) will result in the loss of participation points. If it is an emergency, please step out of the classroom to take your call. Emergency calls include: medical emergencies either for you, a friend, or a relative. Text messaging during class time is not tolerated. If you are expecting a call please let the instructor know before class.

2. *Attendance*: Daily attendance to class is required, not optional. Students are expected to attend every class session and to make up all missed worked because of legitimate absences. In case of an absence, the student is responsible to seek the information and/or materials from fellow students before seeking it from the instructor. After 1 unexcused or unexplained absence, your

final grade will be automatically lowered by 10%, after 2 absences 20%, after 3 absences 30%, and after 4 absences 40%. Instructors are under no obligation to make special arrangements for students who have been absent or who miss assignments, deadlines, and/or examinations. For every 4 absences, the teacher reserves the right to drop student's grade down a whole letter grade. You are responsible for any material that you missed.

3. *Tardies*: There is a 10-minute toleration. Four tardies will count as 1 absence. In the event students are late, enter as quietly as possible and take a sit. You are responsible for any material that you missed.

4. *Academic dishonesty*: Specific actions will be taken against students caught cheating on test or examinations forging and altering forms or documents, and engaging in plagiarism on any written work. Sanctions for students found guilty in matters of academic dishonesty could include receiving an F for the course. **Take note that use of any online translators are strictly forbidden and is considered plagiarism.**

VIII: Course Plan

| Semana | Tema | Fechas de vencimiento |
|--------|--|---|
| #1: | Orientación Tema: Las familias y comunidades 1. el choque cultural 2. la comida 3. desafíos (observaciones) | Jueves Journal entry 1 |
| #2: | Tema: Población, demografía e inmigración 1. Población y demografía 2. Geografía (recursos naturales) 3. Percepciones de la inmigración | Lunes: Interview 1 Lunes: Video blog 1 Jueves : Journal entry 2 |
| #3: | Tema: La política y economía 1. Los partidos y su historia 2. Ventajas y desventajas de las propuestas políticas 3. Salario, profesiones más comunes, los empleos que prevalecen, importaciones y exportaciones, empresas extranjeras, etc. | Lunes: Video blog 2 Jueves: Journal entry 3 |
| #4: | Tema: Las tradiciones, los valores e interacción social. 1. El rol de la mujer en el hogar, trabajo, religión y la comunidad. 2. El rol del hombre en el hogar, trabajo, religión y la comunidad. 3. La educación en la región. | Lunes: Interview 2 Lunes: Video Blog3 Jueves: Journal entry 4 |
| #5: | Tema: La salud y medicina 1. El rol del hospital en las familias y el seguro médico 2. La medicina natural y automedicación | Lunes: Video Blog 4 Jueves: Journal 5 |

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| | 3. los desafíos médicos 4. Concientización nutricional (externa e interna) | |
| #6: | Tema: Entretenimiento 1. La música y baile 2. Las telenovelas 3. El deporte | Lunes: Interview 3 Miércoles y jueves: Reflexion presentations: |

Journal Topics

Instructions: Read each set of questions below for each week. Journals are due every Thursday by 11:59pm.

You will be graded on (see the rubric):

- Content: Writing a minimum of 2 paragraphs for each section.
- Correctly using the vocabulary and grammar structures.
- Showing creativity in design and presentation of the final blog (use images, videos, drawings, maps, audio!!!!).

Note: This writing project should reflect your own work, showing the progression throughout the course of your ability to write in Spanish. You may use a dictionary – I recommend [wordreference](#) or [Spanishdict](#) to look up a word, but using a translator (such as Google translate or any other) to translate phrases (two or more words) is plagiarism and will result in no credit.

Week 1: Introduce yourself. Explain where you come from and some of the most relevant characteristics of your town/city/state. Describe what career have you chosen and explain what are your professional and personal goals?

Week 2: Talk about your family in CR and your family back home, describe how are they different and the impact that those differences have in the dynamics/ethics/economy of the family.

Week 3: Compare your home and your house in Costa Rica; tell us about what causes those differences and how they have an impact in your life. (Construction materials, space, privacy, etc.)

Week 4: Describe what you typically eat in each country and tell us about some of your thoughts on regards to food, food preparation, gender roles on food preparation, food industry, etc.

Week 5: Describe what worries you about your country and tell how do you expect it to evolve or what would it be necessary to change to be like the place of your dreams.

Week 6: Describe what is important for you when it comes to friendship or a romantic relationship. Describe personality, values, talents, projects or material things that would be relevant to you in a relationship.

Final Turn-In Instructions: Your final blog posts will be due on _____.

Please do not copy content or media from the examples. Be original and creative.

You must post your link to your blog or website on our class website under “Journal” and your name. You can use any of the following links (or any other site you are familiar with) to create your online blog/website:

www.tumblr.com www.blogger.com www.webs.com www.tripod.lycos.com