

SPAN 203

Intermediate Spanish

General Description

Introduction

Why study

Spanish?

Why should you be interested in studying Spanish? Aside from the obvious reason of obtaining college credit, there are other reasons. Spanish is now the third most commonly spoken language in the world. Of the approximately 360 million Spanish speakers worldwide, 22 million live in the United States. Learning Spanish will enable you to meet new people, to explore different cultures, and to participate in growing business opportunities.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide you with a solid review of Spanish grammar and to introduce you to a wide range of Hispanic literature. Instead of learning Spanish through a study of its grammatical rules, you will be learning grammar while analyzing some of the many rich stories and plays written by Spanish and Latin American authors. The primary function of language, after all, is to aid in communication, not to conform to a set of rules. Through the study of the readings in your textbook, you will learn Spanish as it is used.

Unfortunately, this correspondence course has no oral component. If you need to improve your speaking skills you should take a resident course with an instructor and a language laboratory. Tapes, while useful aids in pronunciation, cannot take the place of real conversation. We encourage you to seek any and all opportunities to speak with Hispanics living in your area!

While Spanish 203 by correspondence will not directly improve your ability to speak Spanish, it will prepare you well in grammar, reading, and writing, all of which are essential skills in effective communication. You will also learn a great deal about the cultures of different Spanish-speaking countries

through reading the literature found in your text. By the end of the course, you should be able to read and write in Spanish, as well as to understand and analyze short works of fiction.

Textbooks

The text for Spanish 203 is *Graded Spanish Reader, Segunda Etapa*, by Justo Ulloa and Leonor Álvarez de Ulloa (5th edition, 1996). This book can be purchased from Higher Grounds online at <https://s4.its.unc.edu/HigherGrounds>, in person, or by using the book order form located in this course manual.

This text includes short stories, poems, and plays by Hispanic authors from many different countries. The book is divided into five units, and each unit contains an introduction to the stories contained within it. You should always read these introductions as they provide useful tips about how best to approach the readings. Each story is preceded by a section entitled “Prereading Activities.” Some of these activities will be assigned, but others will not. Even if an activity is not assigned, however, it is a good idea to do it, especially if your reading skills are weak.

In addition to the textbook, you should have access to a Spanish/English dictionary. While we do not recommend any particular edition, we do suggest that you use one more thorough than most pocket dictionaries. (Sometimes trying to use a tiny pocket dictionary can be more frustrating than not having one to use at all!) Keep in mind that the Spanish alphabet has four more letters than the English (ch, ll, ñ, and rr) and that these letters always follow their English equivalents (curso and then charco; luna and then llamado; canto and then caña).

You may also find it necessary to refer to a grammar book such as the one you used in Spanish 101 and 102. Since our text reviews rather than teaches grammar, it will be especially helpful to have such a reference if you feel unsure about certain grammar points. Feel free to write down any grammar questions you have in the written assignments themselves or on the cover sheet you turn in with each of them.

Study Suggestions

The course is divided into twenty different lessons, each one containing a reading, several grammar exercises, and a brief writing assignment. Each lesson is prefaced by objectives to help guide you in your preparation of it. Be sure to read the objectives and the notes before you begin the assignment itself and remember to read the introductions to the units in the textbook.

Before attempting the grammar exercises, you should first read the assigned passage(s). Even if you are under time constraints, you should always take the time to read each passage thoroughly. Learning to read in a foreign language is quite difficult because the tendency is to stop at each new word and to look it up. This is not a good idea! Stopping so frequently will actually impede your reading comprehension. Before attempting to read a new story, try to answer the questions in the section “Anticipating the Story” found before each new story in the text. Think about the title and what it might mean. Look at the picture on the title page and try to form an impression of what it represents. Only after you have considered these questions should you begin to read.

Your first reading should be very general: try to form a basic impression of what the author wants to convey. Who are the characters? What perceptions do you now have about the reading? Skimming (even if only for a few paragraphs) will help to orient you to what you are about to read. Only after skimming the passage should you try to begin reading with more attention to detail. Although you will be tempted to look up every unfamiliar word, try to resist the impulse and instead, to make inferences about the content of the work based on what you do understand. Often we learn more by focusing on what we do understand rather than on what we don't. If you have done the vocabulary exercises at the beginning of each story, you will not need to pull out your dictionary very often. If you find that you still do not understand the passage because of a few words, look them up, paying special attention to context (media hora, for example, does not mean “stocking hour” but “half hour”). Never write the English word over the Spanish one, but rather underline the word in question and define it at the bottom of the page. The extra effort required by

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moving your eyes will help you to remember the word better.
You will also find that your text will still be clean enough to
read later!

Written Assignments

Each lesson will require you to read, to complete grammar exercises, and to write. You will be asked to answer reading comprehension questions about the stories, to use certain grammar points in a variety of exercises, and to write about what you have read in a short composition. Some of the writing assignments will ask you to summarize what you have read while others will ask you to write about a particular theme brought up in the reading. Always think carefully about what you are going to write before beginning. Organization and content are just as important as grammatical accuracy! The writing assignments will help you to use the grammar in context and to improve your writing skills. By the end of the course you should find it much easier to express yourself in Spanish.

On the submission cover sheet for each lesson, please indicate how much time you spent on preparing the assignment. If your background is good, that is, if you have recently completed the prerequisite courses (UNC-Chapel Hill Spanish 101 and 102, or their equivalents), perhaps two or three hours per lesson will be enough. If, as is often the case, a year or more has passed since your last exposure to Spanish, you will need to spend a few more hours. Spending a lot of time on the first few lessons will help you to re-familiarize yourself with Spanish and the time required to complete each assignment should diminish.

Grading and Final Exam

Your written assignments will count 75 percent of your final grade; your final exam will count 25 percent.

The final exam will contain parts that are very similar to the sections that make up the twenty assignments: reading passages with comprehension questions, grammar review exercises, and brief writing assignments. A careful, thorough review of each lesson will be very profitable in reviewing for the final. No reference materials (dictionaries, grammar books, verb conjugation books) may be used during the final exam.

Self-paced Courses policy requires that you must pass the final exam in order to receive credit for the course.

A Final Word

I hope you enjoy Spanish 203 and find it to be a wonderful introduction to Hispanic literature and culture. ¡Buena suerte!