



Spanish | 2015-2016 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the assessment data you collected this year.

For the period of 2015-16, we assessed the cultural competencies of students who have declared a major in Spanish. For this assessment we evaluated two spring 2016 classes: SPAN 358 LATIN AMERICAN TODAY and SPAN 360 SPAIN TODAY.

For LATIN AMERICAN TODAY, the goals proposed for this class in the syllabus are:

“The primary goal of the Latin America Today course is to enlarge the knowledge of Hispanic/Latino cultures while developing an awareness and appreciation of communicative skills in Spanish. This course addresses the role of and convergence of sports, entertainment and the media in Latin American society and culture. The focus is on the analyses of the various factors which led to sports becoming a key part of Latin American society and culture while simultaneously examining the role of the media as a facilitator of such institutionalization. The course addresses socio-cultural factors that shape how people perceive, experience and relate to sports. Much attention will be paid to various individual iconic teams and athletes and the symbiotic relationship with fans and cultural identity.”

The evaluation of targeted students consisted in three exams and a final presentation focusing on a cultural aspect. The exams evaluated students’ capacity to link the material/information learned in class with their own analysis about three topics in the context of Latin America: Sports and media, sport and violence, and sport social heroes/idols. The cultural presentation the students gave consisted in a 15 min demonstration of knowledge on a topic related to the main content of the class, but that was not covered or was not included as part of the syllabus. This required students researching their topic, learning and understanding, and giving a brief public lecture.

For the course SPAIN TODAY

The SPANISH 360 (Spain Today) course provided a panoramic view and analysis of Spanish Cultural History from the first decades of the 20th century until the present. Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes were: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to identify important developments in Spain’s history, institutions, economy, society and culture; describe and discuss unique cultural aspects of the different regions of Spain and analyze and evaluate everyday cultural traits and specificities and compare them to similar traits in the US.

In addition to the required books assigned as reading material, this course also used several films and a telenovela that chronicle the *transición* from dictatorship to democracy in Spain after Franco’s death. As part of the assessment of their knowledge, students were given exams and had to create a blog on a particular topic.

Benchmark	Comments	Summary
<p>“Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.”</p>	<p>As this standard focuses on the practices that are derived from the traditional ideas and attitudes (perspectives) of a specific culture, students were asked to look analyze similarities and differences in a variety of topics in relation to their own culture.</p>	<p>Over all students demonstrated a reflective and solid knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural importance of the cultures Latin America. Most of the students are capable of understanding nuanced variations among different countries of the Spanish speaking world.</p>
<p>“Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.”</p>	<p>This standard focuses on the products of the culture studied and on how they reflect the perspectives of the culture. For Latin American Today students explored the socio-cultural impact of Sports in daily life in Latin American through the study of TV sport shows, documentaries, articles from newspapers, etc.</p>	<p>Cultural presentations reflected students’ research and understanding around topics not covered in class. Through their presentations, students showed an understanding of how sports are intertwined with the cultural identity of people in Latin America.</p>
Benchmark	Comments	Summary
<p>“Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.”</p>	<p>For the Spain Today course, students were tasked with maintaining a group blog in which they would analyze episodes from various popular Spanish TV shows, comment on a particular program’s relation to Spanish history/society and discuss the key points from class readings (<i>Spain: What Everyone Needs to Know</i> by William Chislett; <i>The Ghosts of Spain</i> by Giles Tremlett and various articles from <i>El País</i>, Spain’s highest-circulation daily newspaper). Students were also required to visit their classmates’ blogs and comment on them on a weekly basis. In order to better assess students’ understanding of Spanish culture, the instructor asked students to write about stereotypes from Spain and other information they knew about the country as part of the introductory blog post for the semester. At the end of the semester, the instructor took time out of the class period to have students reflect on those initial questions regarding Spanish stereotypes and cultural history.</p>	<p>At the end of the semester, the senior Spanish students displayed a much more nuanced view of contemporary Spanish society than what they had at the beginning of the term. Students were able to discuss different historical processes of Spain including the Civil War, the Franco dictatorship, the Transition and the current period of economic and political crisis. In addition, these students were also quite capable of comparing and contrasting cultural differences between Spain and the United States.</p>

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected?

Recommendations:

While the great majority of Spanish majors showed an ability to analyze and understand Latin American and Spanish cultures and interpret cultural products in relation to Latin American and Spanish perspectives, nevertheless it was noted that some students continue showing deficiencies in areas of factual knowledge (geographical facts). Thus, the Spanish faculty will continue reinforcing geographical information in culture courses. In addition, Spanish faculty will continue recommending Spanish majors to enroll in other courses outside the discipline yet related to the Spanish major such as GEOG 370 Geography of South America or HIST 358 Political History of Latin America to reinforce the information learned in Spanish courses.