



Course title

Historical and Cultural Foundations of Modern Spain

Course taught by

Alejandro Prada Vázquez

Holding a doctorate in art and musicological history, combined with graduate work in history and socio-cultural analysis, Alejandro Prada Vázquez is a writer, journalist, and art historian. Alejandro is currently conducting research in art history while also writing columns for the Spanish version of *Huffington Post*, *El País*, and other publications. In 2016 he won the University of Oviedo Literary Prize, and his first novel, *Venus*, was published in 2017.

Purpose of the course

The purpose of the course is to provide a grasp of fundamental Spanish realities from an historical perspective as a way to prepare students to participate more fully in local and national society, especially once they take up duties as full-time interns.

As an element in the IFE preparatory session in Asturias, the course – like all IFE preparatory courses – is intended for non specialists as they prepare for integration in and participation in their internship regardless of their subject of concentration. By the end of the course students will have acquired a coherent, analytical but practical view of Asturias and Spain, both historical and contemporary.

Description of the course

The approach of this course is pluridisciplinary and thematic, highlighting key past events, movements and patterns of thought as specifically useful for generalists seeking a basic understanding (“informed citizen”) of the roots and causes of the current Spanish political, social and cultural reality. After a general overview as introduction, the course leads students through a series of “moments” in the development of modern Spain, from hegemonic Spain, through Spain of the Ancien Régime and its crisis, to the birth of the liberal state, etc. Each thematic moment is illustrated by a look at the dominant contemporary cultural expression.

Course format

The format of this course has been designed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness in light of the constraints of a course offered intensively over a short period of time. Accordingly, the course comprises two types of sessions, with lecture/seminar meetings alternating with discussion sections. Students are expected to participate in both informal debate and discussion as well as formal presentations (oral exposés, press reviews, and the like).

Each course of the preparatory session also includes appropriate local site visits.

This course meets approximately 48 hours, including mandatory site visits. In addition the course is linked to two multi-day mandatory excursions with lecture-visits, to two other sites in northern Spain (Bilbao and Santiago).

Course outline

Introduction: The historical foundations of contemporary Spain

- 1** 1.1. Spain, Crossroad of Civilizations: Roman heritage – Visigoth kingdom (507-711) – al-Ándalus (8th – 15th centuries) – the first Christian kings (8th – 15th centuries)
1.2. Culture: Pre-Roman Asturias and the Route of Santiago de Compostela
- 2** The Modern State: From the Catholic kings to the Habsburgs
2.1. Spanish hegemony; Spanish institutions; conquest of America; Charles I; Philipp II, expansion and economics of empire; decline.
2.2. Culture: Art and Literature of the Golden Age; Spanish humanism; 21st century representations of the conquest of America.

- 3** Spain of the 18th Century
3.1 Spain's Bourbon kings; absolutism and reform; economy and society in the Ancien Régime.
3.2 Culture: Goya and Spanish painting at the turn of the 18th/19th century; Jovellanos and illustration.
- 4** 1788-1833: The Ancien Régime in crisis
4.1 Charles IV; the war of independence; The Cortes of Cádiz and the Constitution of 1812; Fernand VII.
4.2 Culture: What is the Inquisition?
- 5** 1833-1868: Birth of the Liberal State
5.1 The Carlist Wars; liberal revolution and variations on a liberal theme; the "Moderate Decade" and the Progressive Biennium (1854-1856); Isabelle II.
5.2 Culture: Asturian mythology
- 6** 1868-1874: The six democratic or revolutionary years (Sexenio Democrático)
6.1 Revolution of 1868; growth of republicanism; Amadeo de Saboya; the First Spanish Republic (1873-1874).
6.2 Culture: Spanish and Asturian art in the 19th century
- 7** Labor movements, agrarian reforms and industrial growth, in the 19th century
7.1 Estates and classes in Spanish society; agricultural transformation; democratic changes and the beginning of industrialization (railroads, taxation, banking).
7.2 Culture: Socialism and Anarchists in Spain.
- 8** 1875-1898: Restoration of the Monarchy
8.1 Political system of the Restoration; alternation of power; nationalisms and regionalisms; colonial wars and the disaster of 1898.
8.2 Culture: Literary movements: romanticism, realism, and modernism.
- 9** Economy and Society – the beginning of the 20th century
9.1 The Restoration in crisis: dynastic reform and the unraveling of the system; demographic and economic trends; the dictatorship of Primo di Rivera (1923-1930)
9.2 Culture: Asturias at the beginning of the 20th century
- 10** 1931-1936: The Second Spanish Republic
10.1 Proclamation of the Second Republic; The Reformist Biennium (el Bienio de Izquierdas - 1931-1933); the Popular Front.
10.2. Culture: the Revolution of 1934 in Asturias and women's right to vote.
- 11** 1936-1939: Civil War
11.1 Causes of the Civil War; Republicans and insurgents; major military engagements; the war in Asturias.
11.2 Culture: Intellectuals and artists in the war; the Generation of 27 and the avant-garde.
- 12** Francoist Spain (I): The establishment of a dictatorship (1939-1959)
12.1 Dictatorship and repression; structure of the new State; rationing and self-sufficiency; international relations.
12.2 Culture: The exiles.
- 13** Francoist Spain (II): Growth and stasis (1959-1975)
13.1 Spanish economic development; demographic growth; social conflicts.
13.2 Culture: Official culture and counter-culture.
- 14** The Spanish transition
14.1 Dictatorship in crisis and the beginnings of transition; economic crisis, society and violence; the consolidation of democracy (1978-1982).
14.2 Culture: Adolfo Suárez and the Transition today.
- 15** Spanish democratic governments (1982-2018)
15.1 Felipe González, José María Aznar, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Mariano Rajoy: their policies and impact.
15.2 Culture: Contemporary social protest.
- 16** Challenges, stakes, and hopes: social-political debate in Spain in the 21st century
16.1 Two-party system and new parties.
16.2 Culture: The Spanish press

Suggested bibliography

- VV.AA., *Historia de España de la Edad Media*, Ariel, Barcelona, 2008
- MOLTAS RIBALTA, Pere, *Edad Moderna (1474-1808)*, Espasa - Calpe, Madrid, 1989
- VV.AA., *La España de los Austrias, Historia de España. S. XVI-XVII*, Cátedra, Madrid, 2003
- VV.AA., *La España de los Borbones, Historia de España, S. XVIII*, Cátedra, Madrid, 2002
- VV.AA., *Historia contemporánea de España (S. XIX)*, Ariel, Barcelona, 1988
- VV.AA., *España bajo la dictadura franquista (1939-1975)*, Labor, Barcelona, 1980
- VV.AA., *Historia de Asturias*, KRK, Oviedo, 2005
- CASTAÑÓN, Luciano, *Supersticiones y creencias de Asturias*, Ayalga Ed., Salinas, 1982
- ALONSO, Celio, *Historia de la literatura española, 1800-1900*, vol. 5, Crítica, 2010
- ARIAS PÁRAMO, Lorenzo, *Guía del arte prerrománico Asturiasno*, Trea, Gijón, 2008

Grading

Student work is evaluated on the basis of a mid-term essay and a written examination at the end of the course, the grades for which are averaged with the participation grade based on oral presentations, press reviews and discussion participation.

Equivalent in American university course offerings

History of Modern Spain, Cultural History of Modern Spain