

Course Syllabus for SPAN 307-002, Spanish Conversation and Film**Course ID:** 28997**Term:** Spring 2020**Class Times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30AM - 10:45AM, (January 14 - April 30)**Academic Credit:** 3 hours**Location:** Hibbs Building 424**Prerequisite:** SPAN 202, 205 or 300**Instructor:** Anton Brinckwirth, Ph.D.**Email:** *abrinckwirth@vcu.edu***Office Phone:** 804-827-1149**Office Location:** Hibbs 423**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30PM -1:00PM for walk-ins, and Wednesdays 10AM - 4PM by appointment**Textbook:** Cinema for Spanish Conversation 4th Ed, Mary McVey Gill; Deana Smalley; Maria-Paz Haro, eISBN-13: 9781585107940**Course Description**

The course will provide students with a general overview of Spanish and Latin American culture and civilization through the aesthetic lens of cinema. The course aims to help students develop oral fluency skills through rich discussion and analysis of the films. With each film, students learn new vocabulary and verb structures, which they must use immediately to articulate their ideas and opinions about the film themes.

The Latin American films tell moving stories that shed light on widespread poverty and economic disparity in Mexico and Central and South America. The recurring themes of illegal immigration, gang violence, corrupt systems of government, gender inequality, and marginalization of indigenous peoples provide a wide range of topics to discuss throughout the course. Students will develop oral fluency skills in Spanish through rich discussion and analysis of the selected films while building new vocabulary and articulating complex thoughts and opinions in Spanish.

Each student will be assigned a conversation partner from Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo in Pachuca, Mexico. Students will discuss the films with their partner from early September to late November. This direct collaboration will provide students with authentic and meaningful immersion and practice to build self-confidence while making real connections with learning peers abroad.

Method of Instruction

Class sessions will be conducted in Spanish. Instruction will be in the form of lively class discussions, small group activities, reflection through Blackboard, 2 voice threads, 6 to 8 lab-based Teletandem sessions with native speakers of English, and 2 to 4 sessions conducted outside of class and self-initiated by students.

Course Objectives

To develop conversational skills, oral comprehension ability, and knowledge of contemporary culture through discussion of selected Spanish and Latin American films. Emphasis is placed on building vocabulary and practice, practice, practice to achieve conversational fluency in Spanish.

Learning Goals

- 1) Demonstrate enhanced fluency in conversational Spanish at an intermediate-mid level on the ACTFL scale.
- 2) Articulate complex ideas and opinions with an expanded vocabulary in Spanish.
- 3) Be able to intelligently discuss films, social issues, and cultural topics in Spanish.
- 4) Heightened awareness of the Spanish-speaking world.
- 5) To identify social injustice, cultural bigotry, and manipulative messages intended to create and proliferate stereotypes about Hispanic culture, native Spanish speakers, citizens of the Spanish-speaking world, and all people of all races, ethnicities, and identities. The selected films will provide compelling lessons on the ideals of diversity, equity, inclusivity.

Grading Scale

- A 90-100%
- B 80-89%
- C 70-79%
- D 60-69%
- F 59% or below

Grading Rubric

- Participation: 20% (Non-tandem classes are 10 points, tandem classes are 20 points)
- Quizzes (Six 40 point Pruebas): 20%
- Oral midterm exam (100 points): 10%
- Homework, external tandems, and VoiceThreads: 15%
- Student project and final presentation 15%
- Oral Final 10%
- Online Final Exam 10% (On films 5-8, mostly on *Volver*)

Class Participation

Students will receive ten participation points for each day of class discussion. Students must attend class and be engaged in the class activities and discussions to earn all 10 participation points. The teletandem meetings in the lab are worth 20 points each. Non-tandem class meetings are worth 10 points each. All absences result in zero participation points. Building fluency in a foreign language requires daily immersion and practice. Therefore, attendance and preparation are essential for this class and will factor into the final grade. One or two absences will not hurt your grade. More than 4 total absences will begin to adversely impact the total weighted average (See attendance policy).

Testing and Assessment

There will be one quiz (Prueba) per film. The quizzes will be delivered online and formatted in the following manner:

- One matching section with 15 items (15 points)
- Ten multiple-choice questions with 4 possible answers to choose from, 2 points each (20 points)
- Five *true/false* questions worth one point each (5 points)
- One fill-in-the-blank section in paragraph form with 5 blanks worth 2 points each, and a list of ten word, terms, or expressions from which to choose (10 points)

Quizzes are timed at 45-minutes. Once an online quiz begins, you must complete the entire quiz without returning to the previous screen. If a technical glitch occurs, you will need to set up a time to take the written quiz. With each new film, the quizzes will be more challenging. The occasional vocabulary-based pop quiz will be done in class and will **not** be online. Vocab quizzes are announced and unannounced.

There will be an oral midterm exam, but no written mid-term. The final exam will have both oral and online components. The online final will be delivered in the quiz format. It will cover the films 4-8 with emphasis on the final film, *Volver* (Almodovar). The online final will be worth 100 points and the oral component, 50 points.

Students must be present on their scheduled exam day to present their final project.

Final exam date and time: April 30, 8:00 A.M - 10:50 A.M, Hibbs Hall 424.

Film list

- 1a. Cortometraje: *Salar* (2011, Nicholas Greene), Bolivia
 - 1b. *Al otro lado* (2004, Gustavo Loza), México, Cuba, Marruecos, España
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2. *Sin nombre* (2009, Cary Joji Fukunaga), El Salvador, Mexico, U.S.
 3. *Arráncame la vida* (2008, Roberto Sneider), México
 4. *También la lluvia* (2010, Icíar Bollaín), Bolivia
 5. *Diarios de motocicletas* (2004, Walter Salles), Argentina, Chile, Peru
 6. *Mar adentro* (2004, Alejandro Amenábar), Spain
 7. *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999, Pedro Almodóvar), Spain
 8. *Volver* (2007, Pedro Almodóvar), Spain

IMPORTANT *** Viewing the Films *******
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Students will view all of the assigned films outside of class. Films must be viewed before class activities and discussions. Students who have not viewed an assigned film in time for a class activity or discussion

about the film will lose participation points. At least one DVD of each assigned film will be available in Cabell Library's Course Reserves.

Blackboard

Please check Blackboard often to see announcements, course information, and grades. When there is not enough time in class to cover all of the planned activities, students may be asked to complete activities on Blackboard.

Tutoring Support

University College offers a free tutorial service to students of foreign languages at VCU. A list of tutors and available times will be posted in the Campus Learning Center, located on the first floor of Hibbs Hall.

Attendance policy

Absences from class adversely affect student performance and the ability to earn a high final grade. It is the student's responsibility to remain current with coursework when absent from class and keep track of their attendance. Per the school policy, the maximum allowed number of absences for 3-credit courses that meet twice weekly is four absences. There is no distinction between "excused" or "unexcused" absences. Students cannot make up lost participation points unless they miss for a pre-approved activity (e.g., athletics, military, jury duty, or religious holidays). These students will be allowed to make up the lost participation points through other activities, verified in writing or with a VoiceThread recording.