

Culture, Politics and Economy in Contemporary Spanish Society (3 US Credits)

DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:

This course offers an introduction to Spanish culture and civilization so that students can become familiar with the social, economic and political structures of Spain today. Our study will be focused on some specific aspects which make Spain both appealing and richly varied: its ancestral monarchy recently restored, its organization in autonomous areas which may be a solution to historical conflicts, the fact that it is one of the main tourist destinations in the world and, at the same time, the country of Don Quijote, Don Juan, Lorca, bullfighting and soccer. All these features of life, history and politics will be analyzed all through the course, both in the lectures and in the tour that will take students to some of the most historically relevant cities in Spain.

SYLLABUS

Week 1

1. SPANISH GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

- A privileged strategic position?
- Geographical situation of the country and its influence in history
- Relief, rivers, climate and countryside

Week 2

2. LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN SPAIN

- Spanish or Castilian?
- Vocabulary building
- Official languages
- Dialects

Week 3

3. SPANISH POPULATION

- Distribution of population
- Demographic development
- Immigrant population

Weeks 4-5

4. SPAIN SINCE 1975

- The reign of Juan Carlos I
- Transition governments
- Spanish Constitution
- Separation of powers
- A democratic country

Weeks 6-7

5. POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SPAIN

- The Spain of Autonomies
 - Autonomous Communities
 - Competences of the State and Autonomous Communities
 - Political parties
 - Labor unions

Parliamentary Monarchy

- Head of State and symbols: the Royal Family

Roles of the King

Weeks 8-9

6. ECONOMY SECTORS

The primary sector:

- Agriculture, livestock farming and fishing
- Active population of the sector
- Crisis of the rural world, solution attempts and impact of the country's entry in the E.U.

The secondary sector:

- Industry and mining
- Energy sources
- Regional imbalance in the distribution of industry

The tertiary sector:

- Services
- Commercial balance: imports and exports
- Tourism

Week 10

7. SPAIN: FROM A RURAL TO AN "URBANITE" SOCIETY

Large population centers

Week 11

8. SPANISH SOCIETY

The society of democratic Spain

The state of wellbeing: education, health system, pensions

Weeks 12-13

9. A COUNTRY OF ART

Major figures of painting, literature, show business, fashion and sports

Week 14

10. MAIN EVENTS IN SPANISH HISTORY

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ASSESSMENT:

The final grade will be calculated according to the following percentages:

- Regular tests throughout the course: 50%
- Participation: 10%
- Final exam: 40%

■ Notes:

1. The absence of an asterisk indicates that this course is open to students of all levels of Spanish. Therefore, the course will be taught in Spanish, but the instructor will resort to the English language occasionally to make the integration of the students enrolled in Spanish I easier.
2. Class attendance is essential in all courses. Therefore, it will be checked daily. Missing classes will negatively affect the student's final grade.