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Spring 2016

### **Making Connections: Conversation, Composition and Culture (SPAN300A) Syllabus**

John Day

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# **SPAN 300-A: Making Connections: Conversation, Composition and Culture (CENG-community engagement)**

spring 2016  
MWF, 9:10-10:10 am  
Boyle Hall 113

Professor: John Day, PhD  
Office: Boyle 321  
Office phone: 403-3450  
E-mail: john.day@snc.edu  
Office hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, 1:00-2:00 pm; and by appointment

Textbook and other course materials:

*Cuentos hispanos de los Estados Unidos*, ed. Julián Olivares

Course packet

Recommended: a good Spanish-English/English-Spanish dictionary, such as the unabridged *Harper-Collins Spanish Dictionary* or the *Oxford Spanish Dictionary*

## **I. Course Description**

SPAN 300 is the first course in the Spanish major. As the foundation for all the other advanced courses in Spanish, the goal for students in this course is to significantly improve their Spanish language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) through exposure to a variety of texts, and through ample opportunities to communicate in speaking and writing about those texts and the themes they suggest. A second goal is to expand students' knowledge about Hispanic culture. You will pursue this through the readings and class discussions, and also through the community engagement (CENG) project that forms a large part of this course. It is important to understand that the texts, community engagement project, class conversations, and other course materials are relevant not only to the major but also to any other application students may make of Spanish and Hispanic culture in their lives, since they involve matters universally important, such as self and society, religion and beliefs, government, the aesthetic experience, and culture and values. This course, conducted entirely in Spanish, represents a constant challenge for you to comprehend and communicate with increasing proficiency. Every activity is an opportunity to use and improve your skills.

## **II. Learning Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate the ability

- to use selected, advanced-level aspects of grammar and syntax with a moderate degree of accuracy in speech and writing.
- to negotiate meaning in conversations with native speakers of Spanish.

Students will demonstrate knowledge

- of certain aspects of Hispanic culture, such as the family, social and religious attitudes and values, and contemporary social and political realities of Mexico, Central America, and Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.
- of certain traits and values of their own culture and society
- of some of the social challenges facing Hispanics in the U.S.

### III. Evaluation, Description of Assignments and Activities

quizzes, short writing assignments .....	20%
3 essays (on Latin American culture) .....	30%
2 oral presentations .....	10%
3 interpersonal speaking tests .....	15%
academic service-learning.....	25%

#### **Quizzes, short writing assignments (20%)**

There will be brief quizzes that test your comprehension of assigned readings. There will be short writing assignments that focus on different aspects of the course material, including readings, grammar, and vocabulary, and cultural themes.

#### **Essays (30%)**

You will write three essays with revisions on Latin American culture. The points on the revised version can at most raise the grade of the first version by one half a grade; for example, an initial grade of 'BC' can be raised to a grade of 'B' depending on the quality and effort of the revision. Thus, your first version should be your best effort. A good essay requires time, planning, attention to detail, diligent use of the dictionary, and proof reading.

#### **Oral presentations (10%)**

You will give two oral presentations. The presentations are evaluated on public speaking skills, Spanish usage, and fulfillment of the assigned theme.

#### **Interpersonal speaking (15%)**

To evaluate your ability to engage effectively in situations involving spontaneous, open-ended speech with others you will meet with me one-on-one to engage in an interview-style conversation, the topic of which are your ongoing language exchange experiences at Literacy Green Bay. Your daily participation in class discussions will also affect this grade overall.

#### **Community engagement project (CENG) (25%)**

The grade for the project is based on a) completing 15-20 hours of language exchanges over the course of the semester, b) weekly written reflections (social, cultural, personal analyses) on your language exchanges, c) a language log of vocabulary, expressions, grammar and syntax you hear, d) contributions to class discussions, and e) a final essay that explores a cultural or social theme that emerges from your project experiences and that includes researched information on Spanish America. The project itself is described in detail in the following section (IV). It is important to understand that your grade on the community engagement activities is not for the service itself but rather for the intellectual, analytical work of processing and understanding the experience—as demonstrated by the quality of the academic course assignments described here.

### IV. Language and Cultural Exchanges at Literacy Green Bay:

This course incorporates service-learning into the study of Hispanic culture. As defined by St. Norbert College's Sturzl Center for Community Service and Learning, "service-learning" is "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to

promote student learning and development.” This model of learning serves very well the goals of the modern languages and literatures discipline at SNC, which include first-hand experiences with Spanish-speaking people and their culture and sub-cultures.

The service project takes place at Literacy Green Bay, 424 S. Monroe Ave., Green Bay. This organization provides several services for community residents, among them ESL (English as a second language), and the vast majority of their students are native Spanish speakers. Literacy Green Bay is excited to offer their Spanish-speaking ESL students the opportunity to improve their English speaking skills in a conversational setting. This project does not assume that you have English-language teaching skills, but that you are fluent in English. The goal is to provide a Spanish speaker with the opportunity to practice English in a low-stress setting in which mistakes can be made without negative consequences, such as might be the case in work, medical or legal settings. Such conversations allow for, and even encourage, questions and taking the time to find the right word or learn a better, more effective way to express an idea. At the same time, there is an opportunity for the Spanish speaker to switch roles and be a fluent Spanish-speaking partner for you. So, half the conversation will be in English and the other half in Spanish. Structuring the project in this way enables both partners to experience what the other is experiencing in struggling to improve his or her language skills, on one hand, and to have something valuable to offer the other, on the other hand, and thus to be equals. This also should help to lessen the anxiety of both partners. The length of the conversations will be set by Literacy Green Bay, but 15 minutes for each language for each Literacy Green Bay student will probably be the norm. Depending on how long you can stay for each visit, you could end up having several conversation partners during that one visit. The project, though very simple in concept, represents a significant contribution to people’s ability to become more fully part of their community by speaking better English. At the same time it represents for you a significant opportunity to a) get to know Hispanic/Latino members of our community and learn about their lives and circumstances, b) improve your Spanish-speaking skills through open-ended conversations with native Spanish speakers, c) gain insight into Hispanic culture and, almost certainly, life in a particular part of Latin America. As indicated in section III above, assignments for the academic learning component include written reflections, language log, and a final analytical paper.

We hope to have an end-of-semester and project event with the staff and students of Literacy Green Bay to celebrate the collaboration between the two institutions and our students and to reflect on the experience.

## **V. Grade Distribution**

0-59	=	F
60-69	=	D
70-73	=	CD
74-79	=	C
80-83	=	BC
84-88	=	B
89-92	=	AB
93-100	=	A

## VI. Course Policies

### Receiving help with assignments:

The work you submit for a grade must logically be your own. You may ask anyone for help understanding a specific question of grammar, vocabulary or usage. You may not have someone else write passages of a class assignment for you or correct what you have already written. Also, you may not use Internet translation programs. If I believe you have violated this policy, I will speak with you personally about it and your work may receive a lowered or even failing grade. You should read and understand the information contained in **the St. Norbert College Academic Dishonesty policy**.

### E-mail:

- Check your SNC e-mail account daily for possible course information from me.
- Use e-mail to request a meeting with me to discuss course material or your grade.
- I will not exchange e-mails to explain course material or discuss your grades.
- Do not e-mail me to explain your absence from class.
- Unless instructed to do so, do not submit written assignments via e-mail.

### Cell phones:

- Cell phones must be turned off during class.

### Laptop computers/tablets:

- Use of laptops and tablets during class is prohibited except when authorized by me for specific class activities.
- If not being used for class activities they must be turned off.

### Written assignments:

- Submit reflections on the community project through Snoodle.
- Submit essays and homework assignments on paper, either in class or, if otherwise specified, to my office. Emailed assignments will **not** be accepted unless you have received prior permission from me for a particular assignment. Submitting an assignment via email just to show it has been completed will not keep it from being considered late and receiving a lowered grade when you hand in the paper copy at the next class period. You must also take into account that the College printers and server occasionally break down. To avoid late assignments you must plan to print your paper ahead of the time it is due. **Printer breakdowns are not a valid excuse for late assignments.**

### Academic Honor Code:

You must read carefully and abide by the rules of the SNC Academic Honor Code, and sign every submitted assignment, thereby signifying that you have complied with Code policy.

## VII. Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA)

Every year a Spanish speaker from one of SNC's exchange programs is on campus for the academic year and works with our Spanish classes. You will participate in Tertulias with the

FLTA and have the opportunity to speak in Spanish with him or her informally throughout the semester during weekly office hours. The FLTA can also help explain course material.

### **VIII. Students with Disabilities**

In keeping with the St. Norbert College mission to help students develop their full potential, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the College provides supportive services to students with disabilities. For enquiries and further details, please visit the Academic Support Services Office located in Todd Wehr Hall or contact **Karen Goode-Bartholomew**, Coordinator of Services to Students with Disabilities ( Phone: 403-1326), or visit the website [www.snc.edu/academicsupport/disabilities.html](http://www.snc.edu/academicsupport/disabilities.html).

## CALENDAR

\*Specific assignments will be handed out on a regular basis.

\*\*Some dates and activities may be changed as the semester goes on. You will receive prior notice of such changes.

week	General schedule of in-class activities			Notes and essay due dates
1	M	1-25	course introduction	
	W	1-27	Literacy Green Bay presentation “El mundo de valores latinoamericano”, and study guide	
	F	1-29	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i> : “Naranjas”	
2	M	2-1	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	Literacy Green Bay exchanges begin
	W	2-3	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	2-5	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
3	M	2-8	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
	W	2-10	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	2-12	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
4	M	2-15	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
	W	2-17	interpersonal speaking test 1 (arranged times)	
	F	2-19		essay 1 due
5	M	2-22	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
	W	2-24	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	2-26	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
6	M	2-29	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
	W	3-2	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	3-4	oral presentation 1	
7	M	3-7	oral presentation 1	
	W	3-9	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	3-11	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
8	M	3-14	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
	W	3-16	interpersonal speaking test 2 (arranged times)	
	F	3-18	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	M	3-21	<b>spring break</b>	
	W	3-23	<b>spring break</b>	
	F	3-25	<b>spring break</b>	

9	M	3-28	<b>Easter break</b>	Literacy GB spring break: no exchanges this week
	W	3-30	class meets today	
	F	4-1	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i> : “Lázaro volando”; “México: el reino de la maestra”, Andrés Oppenheimer, p.321-336	
10	M	4-4	“México: el reino de la maestra”, p. 336-358	
	W	4-6	<b>ADVISEMENT: no classes</b>	
	F	4-8	“México: el reino de la maestra”, p. 336-358	
11	M	4-11	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	essay 2 due
	W	4-13	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	4-15	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
12	M	4-18	oral presentation	
	W	4-20	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	4-22	oral presentation	
13	M	4-25	oral presentation	essay 3 due
	W	4-27	interpersonal speaking test 3 (arranged times)	
	F	4-29	oral presentation 2	
14	M	5-2	<i>Cuentos hispanos</i>	
	W	5-4	Literacy Green Bay exchanges: no class	
	F	5-6	work on final essay	
15	M	5-9	Final essay due: 9:15 am	