SPANISH 311: Advanced Spanish Composition

**Prerequisites:** SPAN F202 or equivalent* (see below); or permission of instructor.

**Instructor:** Timothy Wilson  
**Email:** tim.wilson@alaska.edu  
**Office:** 606C Gruening  
**Phone:** 474-5463  
**Office hours:** T/Th 2-3 and by appointment

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Text is available through CDE:  
*Composición: Proceso y Síntesis* (Paperback). By Valdés, Dvorak, Hannum and Angelelli  
Publisher: McGraw-Hill Companies; 5th edition (December 2007)  
**ISBN:** 0073513148

**DESCRIPTION**

This advanced Spanish class builds on the general Spanish communication skills that students gained at the 100 and 200 level. Along with other 300 level classes, such as grammar, conversation and reading, this class targets a specific skill: writing in Spanish in various formal and informal styles. A number of writing assignments of different types and levels will focus on vocabulary and stylistic issues in order to sharpen and improve students’ writing skills. This distance learning web-based course will be conducted in Spanish.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Course goals**
- Become familiar with the format and purpose of various types of writing
- Learn important vocabulary that is often particular to written communication
- Become aware of issues that hinder effective communication
- Review certain grammar points that often cause difficulty in writing

**Expected student learning outcomes**
- Students will be able to effectively express themselves in a number of different genres in Spanish, choosing from among them depending upon their intended purpose
- Students’ increased vocabulary will allow them to write with more sophistication and elegance
- Students will have a new awareness of their target audience and of the register appropriate to each genre
- Students will be able to avoid some linguistic pitfalls of the typical language learner and thus write with more clarity.

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*Prerequisites: Students must have taken SPAN 202 at UAF; or have transfer credit from another university; or have AP credit. If you don’t have any of these, you MUST take the CLEP test and receive a score of 62 or above. You can receive up to 16 UAF credits by taking the Spanish CLEP test.*

To take a CLEP test, visit:  
**Testing Services Office**  
207B Gruening  
474-5277  
www.uaf.edu/testing/  

**hours:**  
Mon/Wed/Thurs 1pm or 3pm  
Tues/Fri 9am or 11am  
or call for appointment.  
**Cost:** $90
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Language learning, like language use, often takes place in a group, and rightly so; a language is not a set of facts you learn, but a skill you practice, and it is normally practiced with others. However, a few aspects of language learning, such as the honing of grammar and writing skills, are more individual pursuits and lend themselves best to individualized study.

For that reason, the subject matter of this course is very well fitted to its medium; students will work independently on individual projects of writing, and interaction with the instructor will be on a one-on-one basis through Blackboard. You will complete assignments and send them to me; I will give you constructive feedback and return it to you for more individual work. You can expect to have some one-on-one conferences with me, either in person, over the phone, or through email. At the same time, the nature of this course (distance learning) also has its challenges: students necessarily must be self-motivated and conscientious about the timely completion of tasks if they are to be successful.

PLEASE NOTE: The most important element of coursework for this composition class is obviously composition writing—and re-writing. Our main goal is to improve writing, so students will use the feedback provided by the instructor to revise their work, so that the final version of the paper is superior to the rough draft. Therefore, please take the revision of the paper seriously. In a very few cases, a paper will need almost no changes, and I will tell you so, but this is rare. Normally I will give you plenty of suggestions, and if changes are suggested, it is because they need to be made; you would be ill-advised to ignore them. Furthermore, such changes will require thought and a bit of work, they will not be minor grammar corrections or a word here and there. It is not acceptable to hand in a final version that ignores revision suggestions and is basically the same as the rough draft with a few changes; such attempts will receive a very, very poor grade.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

There is a language lab located on the 6th floor of the Gruening Building, open M-F from 8:00-5:00. If you are on campus, you can take advantage of our computers, software, study space and tutors.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The course will cover 6 different styles or genres of writing, each covered in a separate unit. Each unit includes the following activities or lessons:

- Readings from the textbook about the genre or style under consideration
- Preliminary exercises targeting salient organizational and grammar points (to be submitted)—these exercises are to prepare you for your paper: they involve a preliminary writings and analysis of texts; they may be longer than the essay itself, in which you will refine and distill these thoughts
- Some chapters (4, 5 and 6) require the submission of a "Tesis" (thesis statement) before writing begins
- "Primera escritura" or first draft (for submission) for each of the six units
- "Versión final" or final draft (for submission) for each of the six units

TIME CONSIDERATIONS

Because this is a distance-delivered course, we will not meet as a class. You can expect to spend your time working on your own, corresponding and conferencing with me. This is a 3-credit course, which means that you should expect to spend at least 126 hours on this course over the semester (the standard equation is that a 3-credit course meets for 42 hours and the student should spend twice that many hours working out of class= 126 hours). Another rule of thumb is that at this level, you can expect to spend about three times as long reading or writing in Spanish as you would on an equivalent assignment in English (or your first language). So if it takes you two hours to write a short paper in English, don’t be surprised if it takes you six or more in Spanish!
COURSE POLICIES

Assignments
- Assignments should be submitted as a MS Word or similar document, and sent as an attachment to the electronic dropbox on Blackboard. If you have any trouble, you could also send it to me in an email.
- The schedule for submission of work must be adhered to—late work will be docked points. If there is a reason why you won't be able to stick to the schedule, please let me know and we'll see if we can work something out. Early submission is okay, late is not. I cannot and will not accept an entire semester's worth of work in the final weeks of the semester.
- Accent marks in Spanish are important: tomó and tomó are different words, so if you get the accent wrong, the word is wrong. See "HOW TO WRITE SPANISH ACCENTS AND SYMBOLS ON THE COMPUTER" below.
- Assignments will be graded according to the guidelines laid out in this syllabus. See “WRITING ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES AND GRADE CRITERIA” below.
- The work you hand in must be yours alone. Please see “Student code of conduct” below.
- I am available for help, tutoring or questions—please contact me!

Student code of conduct. As a UAF student, you are subject to UAF’s Honor Code:

“Students will not collaborate on any quizzes, in-class exams, or take-home exams that will contribute to their grade in a course, unless permission is granted by the instructor of the course. Only those materials permitted by the instructor may be used to assist in quizzes and examinations.

Violations of the Honor Code will result in a failing grade for the assignment and, ordinarily, for the course in which the violation occurred. Moreover, violation of the Honor Code may result in suspension or expulsion.”

In a format such as ours, this means that all work should be yours alone. Though you may receive help or suggestions from a tutor, you must do the writing. Likewise, copying (plagiarizing) something from an online source or elsewhere is also unethical and punishable.

Students with disabilities. UAF makes appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities that have been documented by the Office of Disability Services (208 Whitaker Building, 474-5655). Students with learning or other disabilities who may need special accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to obtain the appropriate documentation if they do not have it. Please meet with me or contact me so that I can collaborate with the Office of Disability Services to provide the appropriate accommodations and supports to assist you in meeting the goals of the course.

Student support services. UAF is committed to equal opportunity for all students. Students who are the first in their families to attempt a four-year college degree, or students whose incomes are low, have opportunities for tutorial and other forms of support from the office of Student Support Services. Please make an appointment with Student Support Services at 474-6844.

EVALUATION
Components of the Final Grade and weight by percentage

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<tr>
<td>Homework (6)</td>
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<td>Thesis statements (3)</td>
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<td>First drafts (6)</td>
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<td>Final drafts (6)</td>
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Departmental grading scale

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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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WRITING ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES AND GRADE CRITERIA
Your written assignments will be graded according to the following criteria. Therefore, it is in your own best interest to go over these 15 questions before you hand in each paper—honestly going through this process can boost your grade by a letter or even two.

1. Is there a single main idea or focus to the paper? For formal academic papers, is there a brief introduction with a clear thesis statement that really summarizes the main idea of the paper?

2. Does the paper’s treatment of the topic indicate that the student has thought about the topic and attempted to develop it in depth, rather than simply putting down a superficial summary or list of ideas?

3. Has the writer checked the basic information of the paper to see that it is correct and true? Does the writer stick to facts and avoid broad sweeping generalizations, or claims and assumptions whose veracity s/he cannot prove?

4. Are all the ideas that are presented explored sufficiently?

5. Does the writer include examples and, when appropriate, quotes to back up his/her argument?

6. Do the sentences lead into each other to form a logical argument or narration?

7. Is there a well thought-out and logical organization to the essay in general? For example, in a formal paper, does each paragraph more or less present one idea or aspect of the argument?

8. Have all “tangents,” superfluous sentences and “filler” sentences been eliminated? Is every single remaining sentence important to the explanation of the idea (or the development of the plot, etc)?

9. In a critical analysis, did the writer avoid retelling the plot of the work, and avoid excessive retelling of literary history? (Your reader is familiar with them too, and doesn’t need a summary).

10. Have sentences been polished to remove clumsy expressions and redundancy, resulting in an economical and elegant expression?

11. Are the sentences linked with connecting phrases to make the essay flow?

12. Has the essay been proofread to eliminate basic grammar and spelling errors as well as typos?

13. Has the writer tried to keep his/her personal opinions from coloring the language (except, perhaps, in a personal commentary as a form of conclusion)? Has the writer maintained a formal tone throughout, as appropriate in an academic essay?

14. Is the vocabulary used more or less authentic Spanish, that doesn’t resort to “Spanglish” and made-up words? Has care been taken when using the dictionary to choose the right translation, avoiding inventions such as “yo voluntad ir” for “I will go”?

15. Is the paper typewritten in a 12 pt font, double-spaced, and the required length? Was the paper handed in by the due date?
HOW TO WRITE SPANISH ACCENTS AND SYMBOLS ON THE COMPUTER

Once you learn how to do it, it is really quick and easy to do these symbols.

Spanish symbols on the PC

á, é, í, ó, ú = Ctrl+’ (apostrophe) then release, and type the vowel.
ñ = Ctrl+Shift++ then release, and type “n”.
¿ = Ctrl+Shift+Alt and type “?”
¡ = Ctrl+Shift+Alt and type “!”

Spanish symbols on the Mac

á, é, í, ó, ú = Option+ “e” then release, and type the vowel.
ñ = Option+ “n” then release, and type “n”.
¿ = Option+Shift and type “?”
¡ = Option and type “!”