SPAN 413: Advanced Communication Skills
Topic: Spanish in the Media

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Hours: MW 2:00-3:00 or by appt.

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Description
SPAN 413 (3 cr) provides contextualized exploration of skills outlined in the National Standards Project’s “Five Cs” and in the additional area of critical consciousness with particular emphasis on language used in journalism and the mass media. This course meets 3 hours per week.

Objectives
By the end of SPAN 413, participants should be able to demonstrate a level of proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and culture equivalent to the upper-end of the Intermediate range on the ACTFL proficiency scales by understanding authentic popular and academic resources and by creating accurate and culturally sensitive materials using a variety of media tools. Class participants should be able to point to ways in which their work demonstrates a commitment to community building and social justice. They should also be able to demonstrate an improvement in study skills and learning strategies, organizational and presentational skills, active engagement with the learning process, productive collaboration with peers, and a strong commitment to lifelong self-improvement through education.

Outcomes
Students enrolled in SPAN 413 who have been successful in meeting the course objectives should:

- identify the origin of informational and entertainment programming in the US mass media
- describe propaganda techniques and logical fallacies used to manipulate public opinion
- recognize and explain psychological factors that curb our willingness to think critically
- recognize and explain common stereotypes projected on the Latino population
- explain the ethical code of the translation profession and produce brief translations
- identify examples of the way sound, costuming, lighting, and other technical skills are used in entertainment media to affect the public's feelings toward ethnically diverse characters
- demonstrate a basic command of digital video production equipment and software
- participate in the execution of a short participatory media project
- reflect on the learning process and provide well-organized documentation of learning and engagement
- Demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of human cultural, historical and social experiences, and reflect on how your individual life experience relates to the complex nature of human conditions in other places and times
- Present and evaluate information, devise and exchange ideas clearly and effectively with diverse audiences in a variety of situations

Additional Graduate Outcomes

- compile an annotated bibliography of fifteen or more academic references in a single area of media studies (e.g. film, journalism, radio)
- create and execute an experiential learning activity around a US film that depicts Latinos
Assessment

Final course grades will be determined based on each student’s ability to complete the tasks listed in the Outcomes section above as well as the quality of the work presented for evaluation. The quality of each assignment should be assessed using the following definitions:

• **6 Exemplary.** Work at this level is both exceptional and memorable. It is often characterized by distinctive and unusually sophisticated problem-solving approaches and solutions. (This would be a high A).

• **5 Strong.** Work at this level exceeds the standard. It is thorough, complex, and consistently portrays exceptional control of content, skills, and learning strategies. (This would be a low A or high B).

• **4 Proficient.** Work at this level meets the standard. It is strong, solid work that has many more strengths than weaknesses. Work at this level demonstrates mastery of content, skills, and strategies and reflects considerable care and commitment. (This would be a B).

• **3 Developing.** Work at this level shows basic but inconsistent mastery and application of content and skills. It shows some strengths, but tends to have more weaknesses overall. (This would be a C grade).

• **2 Beginning.** Work at this level is often superficial, fragmented or incomplete. It may show a partial mastery of content and skills, but it needs considerable development before reflecting the proficient level of performance. (This would be a low C or high D).

• **1 Exploring.** Work at this level is minimal. It typically portrays a lack of understanding and use of appropriate skills and strategies. Work at this level may contain major errors. (This would not be a passing grade).

Formative assessments will take the form of informal and formal feedback from peers and/or the instructor at various times during the course. If at any time you desire feedback on an assignment that has not otherwise been requested for evaluation, you are encouraged to approach the instructor before class or during office hours. You should make revisions and corrections to work in the portfolio as needed until finals week.

The summative assessment—assignment of the final course grade—will take place in a 20 to 30-minute private interview held during finals week. At the interview, each student must present a course portfolio containing evidence of mastery of the course objectives. Before coming to the interview, each student should write a thorough self-evaluation in which he or she addresses each course objective using the scale printed above and proposes an appropriate final grade for the course. You must print one extra copy of this final evaluation document to leave with the instructor. Although the responsibility of proposing a final course grade has been delegated to you, I reserve the authority to revise that grade based on a number of factors (e.g. poor attendance, academic dishonesty, incomplete proof of meeting the course objectives, etc.).

Portfolios are intended to be more than just a random collection of assignments. You are encouraged to include reflections and other interpretive commentary that helps you tell a story to your reader about your learning experience.

Learning Resources

Due to the dynamic nature of the course, it is not possible to list all of the books, articles, and other materials that may be required during the course. Every effort will be made to make materials accessible on Blackboard. Check the course site often!

**Required Materials**
Large three-ring binder for course portfolio
Digital camera media (MiniDV cassettes)

**Recommended Materials**
Reliable and portable computer media storage (USB memory, etc.)
Digital video equipment
Ongoing Assignments

As we begin each unit, you will be provided with a detailed set of objectives and descriptions of the tasks that need to be completed during that unit. Objectives and instructions for individual projects listed on the syllabus will also be provided at the appropriate moment.

There are a couple of required tasks that are listed on the unit plans but that don't appear on any project sheets. First, every unit requires you to compile a list of vocabulary items related to the topics covered. Do this at your own pace as you work through the readings and projects. Words you should have in your list are technical terms in Spanish you may not have encountered in your classes before, words you look up in Spanish after reading English-language assignments in order to prepare for class discussion, and any other terms you encounter that could be useful in exploring the topics we are studying. Make sure to write your definitions in Spanish, include examples of appropriate usage, and, if desired, illustrations or diagrams.

Second, you are to end each unit with a written reflection about your progress during the unit. In this reflection, you should assess not only the quantity and quality of work you completed, but also the learning process you followed. Make note of strategies that worked well for you, identify things that didn't work so well, and propose ways to improve your learning process in future units.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Student Conduct
OSU maintains a web page listing academic regulations related to academic honesty and classroom disruptions at http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm. The fact that this course is largely self-directed and collaborative is no excuse for academic dishonesty. If you don't know what the limits are, ask.

Special Considerations
We will be collaborating to some extent with people who are not students in our class. Special care must be taken when university students interact with members of the public as part of their coursework. Under no circumstances are you to film, photograph, or record anyone who is not a member of the class without their prior written consent. There will be a form available on Blackboard for you to use. (People appearing in the background of a shot taken somewhere where there is no expectation of privacy are an exception). Before photographing, filming, or recording, be sure the people you are working with understand the purpose of the project and are aware of any risks involved. Remember that “risks” don't only refer to physical danger—disclosure of sensitive information such as residency status, sexual orientation, etc. could have profound effects on someone's legal or social standing or finances. If you are compensating people, you must also specify on the permission form the exact benefit the person will gain from participation (money, gift certificates, etc.). If anyone asks to withdraw from participation before your work is published, you should let them.

About Politics
As important scholars like bell hooks and Paulo Freire have noted, teaching is an overtly political activity that should be used to bring about liberation on both personal and collective levels. I don't mean political in a Republican versus Democrat sense, but something deeper. Some students may feel that they are only in the class to learn how to conjugate verbs or to memorize vocabulary lists, but that's not the case. All the conjugating in the world won't help you if you leave the course without a clear understanding of your role in the systems of privilege and oppression that operate in our society as perceived by Latino/Chicano people living in the U.S. That means confronting some difficult issues and engaging each other in respectful discussion that may include ideas from many points on the political spectrum. However,
using social justice as the measuring stick, not all ideas are equally worthy of extended consideration. My classroom is a place where people should feel safe, especially if they are from groups that have traditionally been targets of discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, language, religion, country of origin, age, gender, or sexual orientation/expression.