

MODERN AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
Arts and Humanities

STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN (SOAP)

I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Bachelor's Degree Program in Spanish and the Single Subject preparation program in Spanish is to create, foster and perpetuate an academic environment and community that transcends the lessons learned in the classrooms. The objective of teaching the philosophical vision of a literary text is to foster in students a critical perspective of the world that will bridge cultural differences. For that purpose, the BA in Spanish will prepare students to participate appropriately in oral and written communication in Spanish at the advanced level, gain knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world, analyze literature in Spanish, and understand the structure of the Spanish language.¹

II. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

- A. Students will demonstrate oral and reading proficiency of the Spanish language at the advanced level on the ACTFL scale, including knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

Upon completion of this program students will be able to:

1. Communicate appropriately and express ideas, both academic and everyday, coherently and critically in oral Spanish.
2. Narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.
3. Demonstrate their fluency in Spanish through study of advanced grammar structures and specialized vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.
4. Use several strategies for vocabulary expansion/acquisition in topical/semantic areas.
5. Demonstrate accurate reading comprehension of material of a cultural and/or literary nature.

- B. Students will demonstrate written proficiency of the Spanish language at the advanced level, including good control of Spanish grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and will apply effectively this knowledge in writing activities and literary analysis.

Upon completion of this program students will be able to:

1. Express their ideas coherently and critically in written Spanish.
2. Demonstrate their competency in written Spanish through study of advanced grammar structures and

¹ "Advanced Level" is equivalent to level three on the scale developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The scale consists of five levels: novice, intermediate, advanced, superior and native. For the purposes of the portion of this document concerning undergraduate program assessment, lengthy ACTFL descriptions of advanced level skills have been abbreviated, summarized, or paraphrased. It should be noted that the ACTFL description of the superior standard has in some areas been strengthened to accurately describe the department's objectives in speaking and writing.

specialized vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Also, demonstrate that they can conjugate verbs correctly, and use the accent rules appropriately.

3. Formulate a thesis in an essay and support it with evidence.
4. Employ of the language style appropriate for research papers, formal letter writing, description, narration, exposition, and persuasion.
5. Analyze literary texts within the major literary movements in Spain and Latin America, and formulate a thesis in relation to these texts.

III. Curriculum Map (Matrix of Courses X Learning Outcomes)

Course Learning Outcomes Matrix for the Spanish B.A. Core Courses

I = introduced R = review M = Master

	Outcome A.1.	Outcome A.2.	Outcome A.3.	Outcome A.4.	Outcome A.5.	Outcome B.1.	Outcome B.2.	Outcome B.3.	Outcome B.4.	Outcome B.5.
SPAN 117*	R	R	I	I	R					
SPAN 119			I				R			
SPAN 121A			R	R		R	R			
SPAN 121B			R			R	M	I	I	
SPAN 140	R	R			R	R	M	R	R	I
SPAN 142	R	R			R	R	M	R	R	I
SPAN 143	R	R			R	R	M	R	R	I
SPAN 170	M	M	M		M	M	M	M	M	R

SPAN 117 Advanced Conversation and Reading

SPAN 140 Introduction to Literary Analysis

SPAN 119 Advanced Grammar

SPAN 142 Introduction to Spanish Literature

SPAN 121A Composition A

SPAN 143 Introduction to Spanish-American Literature

SPAN 121B Composition B

SPAN 170 Senior Seminar in Spanish Studies

(*) SPAN 117 is an elective course, but it is included in the SOAP because it introduces and emphasizes Goal A and its learning outcomes.

IV. Assessment Methods

A. Direct Measures

1. In fall 2008 a required course was added to the Spanish major, and the number of upper division units required increased from 36 to 39. SPAN 121 (Advanced Composition) was split into two courses (121A and 121B), as faculty members strongly felt that students were not receiving enough instruction in writing and literary analysis. For this reason, SPAN 121B focuses solely on writing about and analyzing literature, and gives greater refinement of writing skills necessary for SPAN 140 and further upper-division courses in Hispanic literature. Therefore, analyzing a literary text by written means is introduced in SPAN 121B, reviewed in upper-division literary courses, and mastered in SPAN 170, the final course in the program. Students write essays that are scored by the faculty teaching these courses using rubrics prepared for this purpose. In order to assess how well Spanish majors develop writing skills to formulate a thesis and analyze literature (Goals B.3, B.4 and B.5) **a standard rubric for essays** will be used in SPAN 121B and SPAN 170 to assess such progress. Results will be reported to the faculty along with suggestions for improvement in the curriculum.
2. **A diagnostic test** in SPAN 170 will assess accurate reading comprehension (Goal A.5), previously reviewed in SPAN 117, and also will assess competency in written Spanish through advanced grammar structures and specialized vocabulary (Goal B.2), reviewed in SPAN 119 and SPAN 121A. Results will be reported to the faculty along with suggestions for improvement in the curriculum.
3. In order to assess how well Spanish majors develop oral skills to communicate appropriately and express their ideas coherently and critically based on material of a cultural and/or literary nature (Goals A. 1 and A.5) **a standard rubric for presentations** will be used in SPAN 117 and SPAN 170. Results will be reported to the faculty along with suggestions for improvement in the curriculum.
4. At the Fall 2012 Spanish program retreat, Spanish faculty discussed ongoing efforts to improve student writing and analytical skills, research methods, organization, and management of MLA citation style, especially in the final course of the program (SPAN 170), also as a way to prepare students who will start the Spanish MA program. To better practice these skills (Goals B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, and B.5), as well as to practice how to utilize the library databases for literature and how to evaluate the content of articles, students will write **a final research paper** instead of a final exam. The final version of the extended research paper will be preceded by a short draft that will receive feedback from the instructor. Results will be reported to the faculty along with suggestions for improvement in the curriculum.

B. Indirect Measures

1. SPAN 170—the Senior Seminar required for all Spanish majors—is used as an opportunity to assess individual student needs in Spanish, and to provide assignments in those areas where improvement is deemed necessary. For that reason, **a survey** will be conducted among the graduating BA candidates in Spanish concerning the undergraduate program. Their input will be reported to faculty for discussion about improvement in the curriculum.
2. The undergraduate program in Spanish will conduct **a survey** of its alumni concerning the undergraduate curriculum. Their input will be reported to faculty for discussion.

V. Student Learning Outcomes X Assessment Methods Matrix

	Outcome A.1.	Outcome A.2.	Outcome A.3.	Outcome A.4.	Outcome A.5.	Outcome B.1.	Outcome B.2.	Outcome B.3.	Outcome B.4.	Outcome B.5.
Rubric for essays								X	X	X
Diagnostic test					X		X			
Rubric for presentations	X				X					
Final research paper for SPAN 170						X	X	X	X	X
Undergraduate survey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alumni survey	X		X		X	X		X	X	X

“X” indicates the learning outcomes the assessment activity will measure.

VI. Timeline for Implementation of Assessment Methods and Summary Evaluations

Year 2011 to 2012

Method 1. Employ Rubric for Term Papers in SPAN 121B and SPAN 170 (Goals B.3, B.4 and B.5)

Method 2. Survey of Graduating Seniors in SPAN 170

Year 2012 to 2013

Method 1. Employ Rubric for Presentations in SPAN 117 and SPAN 170 (Goals A.1 and A.5)

Method 2. Assess how well students have improved writing and analytical skills, research methods, organization, and management of MLA citation style, through the final research paper for Spanish 170 (Goals B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4 and B.5)

Year 2013 to 2014

Method 1. Diagnostic test in SPAN 170 (Goals A.5 and B.2)

Method 2. Alumni Survey

VII. Closing the Loop - Summary Evaluation, Curriculum Adjustment, and Reporting

A Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP) for the B.A. in Spanish was developed by the former Chair of the MCLL department and was implemented from fall 2005 until fall 2010. The present revised and updated SOAP has been developed in spring 2011 by the B.A. assessment coordinator with the collaboration of the Spanish faculty. The assessment activities included in the schedule for the previous SOAP and the new one consider, among other things, assessing written and spoken language proficiency, literary competency and instructional methods as evidenced by student writing assignments, oral presentations and exams from undergraduate courses. Here is a brief description of the activities carried out from 2005 until 2011:

1) 2005-2006 – Rubric for presentations (Goal A.1)

Spoken language proficiency of students in SPAN 117 (former SPAN 123) was evaluated in oral presentations by current instructor. For assessment and grading purposes a rubric was used which included score ranges for different categories. The total score ranged from 1 to 5 (half-points were added to broaden the score). The rubric for grading oral presentations came from the Instructor's Manual textbook, but some changes were effected in order to expand the criteria of these categories. For example "Content", "Style", "Vocabulary", and "Organization" categories were added to the already existing "Fluency", "Grammar", "Communication", "Pronunciation", "Preparation", and "Presentation".

RESULTS: There were 18 students in this class. Scores ranged from 28 to 34.5 points (35 was the total). Total of points was converted to 100% scale. More than 50% of the students earned an A (10 students) in the oral presentation assignment, even though less than 50% (approximately 44.5%) earned an A as a final grade for this course.

CONCLUSIONS: In this class there were just 3 students who were not native speakers of Spanish. Therefore categories such as "Pronunciation" and "Fluency" worked accurately in these three cases, but not with the rest of the students (native Spanish speakers). Although the rubric for grading oral presentations from the textbook worked well with some categories, it has been necessary to add a new category and modify others. It is very important to adjust some assessment and grading criteria in relation to the great number of native Spanish-speaking students in courses such as SPAN 117 (Advanced Conversation and Reading). Therefore, as creating an effective rubric for grading oral presentations is a work in progress, faculty agreed to develop and employ a specific rubric in the upcoming years (2012-2013).

2) 2007-2008 – Curricular changes: composition courses (Goals B.3, B.4, and B.5)

In spring 2007, sentence structure and composition were evaluated by writing assignments in SPAN 121. In all these cases, instructors reported to the Spanish section faculty and Chair with the results. As a result of the assessment activities, the faculty decided that students needed additional preparation. Thus, Spanish 121 ("Advanced Composition") was divided into two courses, Spanish 121A and Spanish 121B, in order for students to improve their analytical and writing skills before they advance to the literature courses.

3) 2009-2010 – Curricular changes: translation course (Goals A.3, A.4 A.5, and B.2) and grammar lower and upper-division courses (Goal B.2)

Although SPAN 115 (Basic Principles of Translation) was already part of the curriculum, it was revamped emphasizing specific problems of Spanish to English and English to Spanish translations, with special attention to idiomatic expressions and specialized vocabulary. Years later a service-learning required was included (SPAN 115S), as it can be seen on the 2012-2013 catalog.

Based on assessment conducted throughout Fall 2009, Spring 2010 and Fall 2010 in Spanish 119, the Spanish Section agrees that all students taking Spanish 117 and above be strongly advised to take first

Spanish 4A and/or 4B --in order to prepare for upper-division writing, grammar, conversation and literature courses.

4) 2011-2012 - Survey of Graduating Seniors in SPAN 170

As part of the indirect measures contemplated in the new SOAP, a slightly modified survey from a previous one was conducted in Spring 2011, Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 among the graduating B.A. candidates in Spanish concerning the undergraduate program. For that purpose, SPAN 170 (the Senior Seminar required for all Spanish majors) was used as an opportunity to assess individual student needs in Spanish, and to provide assignments in those areas where improvement is deemed necessary.

The survey requests students state what track they are on for their Spanish major (regular track or credential track), their current GPA, and their ultimate career goal. It also includes a rating scale where 1=Excellent; 2=Good; 3=Average; 4=Poor; 5=No opinion. Finally, it asks for written comments regarding the strong and weak points in the undergraduate curriculum in Spanish, as well as any suggestions students might have about it. Here is a brief summary of the written comments and conclusions:

1. Regarding the strong points in the undergraduate curriculum in Spanish, the majority of students liked the program and mentioned how well literature and culture are covered in the program. Some mentioned how students are given sufficient reading and writing assignments which help their development of Spanish skills.
2. Regarding the weak points in the undergraduate curriculum in Spanish, few pointed out that more language classes (grammar/linguistics) are needed.
3. Regarding any suggestions students might have about the undergraduate curriculum in Spanish, some comments suggested more balance between language and literature courses in the program, as well as more practice in research papers.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the students value the strong base the Spanish B.A. Program has in literature, but they request more courses in language (grammar), because they feel it is important for their professional future as Spanish teachers. The Spanish section is already addressing this concern by requesting students to take first Spanish 4A and/or 4B courses, which will better prepare them in grammar and hone their writing skills. Also courses like SPAN 117, SPAN 115S, SPAN 119 and SPAN 121A should emphasize student speaking/writing skills through the study of advanced grammar structures, specialized vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. As regards more practice in research papers, the Spanish section is already addressing this concern by requesting a final research paper instead of a final exam in SPAN 170. Finally, faculty need to point out in their literature classes the importance of reading and analyzing literary texts as a way for students to actively improve their command of the Spanish language while developing their critical thinking in this target language.