

Valencia Semester Program - AIP SPAIN: A CULTURAL STUDY

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

DESCRIPTION: One of the underlying premises of the course is that culture does not deal simply in concrete facts. Rather, it is something to be observed and experienced, and that often one's observations need to be reflected upon before they can be formulated into clear thoughts and opinions. Thus the course attempts to equip the student with an appreciation of some of the historical, political and social factors which have influenced and/or impact on Spanish society, together with an awareness of current and future trends in the country, as well as providing an opportunity for reflective consideration. In short it aims to help the student not only observe but also participate more fully in Spanish daily life.

Since specific topics vary by semester, this course may be repeated for credit.

TOPICS:

- First Impressions: An initial exchange of views about Spain and the Spanish, plus a general overview of the main sociocultural, economic and political aspects of the country including regional disparities and migration.
- A Brief History of Spain: Here we will examine a few of the events which influenced the shaping of modern Spain, concentrating on the time from the Second Republic to the present day.
- Federal Spain: Geography, character, language, food, as well as the political organization of the autonomous communities. Ethnicity, language, and government policies towards the Catalans, Galicians, Andalusians, and the Gypsies.
- Government and Administration: The Constitutional system, the 1978 Constitution, and the electoral system, as well as a profile of the main political parties, the organization of the legislature, and the monarchy.
- Cinema: As cinema reflects culture and values, we'll watch and discuss a few movies in our attempt to understand the Spanish character and way of life.
- Spanish Customs and Holidays: The Spaniards celebrate some weird and wonderful customs. In the spring semester, students have the chance to see "Fallas", which takes place in Valencia and is one of the most spectacular fiestas in all of Spain. A week of festivities culminates with dozens of huge bonfires in the streets of the city.
- The New Spanish Society: population emigration, unemployment, drugs, social life
- The Education System: From pre-school to university. This will include a visit to a High School just outside Valencia.

- The Mass Media: Commentary of newspapers, magazines and television: their role and the information they provide.
- Music: Flamenco, classical music and the new music of the 21st century. We'll hear snippets of everything in this section.
- The Popular Gastronomy in Spain
- Sports and Leisure
- Bullfighting
- Religion in Spain: Religious Demography
- The Police: There are several police forces operating in Spain (Civil Guard, National Police, Local Police, Regional Police) and their history is closely linked to that of the Spanish people. When we visit the Headquarters of the Local Police you'll be able to interrogate the police chief - well, ask him questions anyway.
- Changing values: The situation of women in contemporary Spain and in the past. Religion. Money. Honour. Spanish youth.

EVALUATION

Students are expected to actively participate in class (20%). The exams will be related to the subjects covered in class during the semester. The first test will be worth 25% and the final exam will be worth 25% of the final grade. Students will submit essays related to the subjects covered in class during the semester. The teacher will then go through corrections of each essay and the completion of this work will contribute towards the final grade (30%). Class attendance is regarded as an obligation as well as a privilege, and all students are expected to attend regularly and punctually all classes in which they are enrolled. Three absences will decrease the final grade by 10% and three tardies will be considered as one absence.

TEXT

The New Spaniards. John Hooper, Penguin Publishers.