Spain: Crossroads of Europe, North Africa, and America

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Course description:

Taking advantage of its location in Madrid, this course analyzes the ways in which historical, geopolitical, cultural, artistic, and popular views function to constitute and continuously transform a national culture. Specifically, the course concentrates on epistemological constructions of Spain—the idea of Spain—that emerges from competing external and internal perspectives. Students will examine how this national culture is constructed in three modules. The first analyzes Spain from North African perspectives as, on the one hand, the traditional site and myth of a lost paradise in Sephardic nostalgic poetry as well as Hispano-Arabic literary traditions and, on the other, as the place to which some contemporary, radical movements view as a strategic goal. The second module looks at American perspectives in which the idea of Spain pits notions of Spanish imperial power and grandeur against the Black Legend, a term that protestant circles in Europe and the United States promoted to attack the legitimacy of Spain’s New World empire. The third perspective focuses on European views and analyzes the depiction of Spain as the embodiment of German and French Romantic ideals beginning at the end of the 17th century and the reemergence of the same notion during the Spanish Civil War (1933-36). Throughout the course, students will have the opportunity to examine some of the principal textual and visual images that contribute to the historical and contemporary construction of a national culture that emerged at geographic and cultural crossroads.

Week 1 Introduction
Readings: “The Spanish People” and “The Meaning of Spanish Civilization” by Américo Castro

Module 1: Spain from Perspectives of Sephardim and Al-Andalus
Key Debate: The idea of Spain and the definition of “convivencia”.

Week 2 Medieval Spain: Paradise Lost for the Moors and the Sephardic Jews
Readings: “A Comprehensive View of Medieval Spain” by Julio Rodríguez Puértolas. Medieval Iberia by Olivia Remie Constable (Ch. 6, 9)
Excerpts from Hispano-Arabic Poetry by J.T. Monroe.

Week 3 Medieval Spain: Paradise Lost for the Moors and the Sephardic Jews
Readings: “Adab and Historical Memory: The Andalusian Poet/Politician…” by Ralf Elger
“The Lost Garden of Al-Andalus: Islamic Spain and the Poetic Inversion of Colonialism” by Yaseen Noorani
“Historical and Literary Views of Yusuf: African Conqueror of Spain” by Miriam DeCosta

Week 4 Medieval Spain: Paradise Lost for the Moors and the Sephardic Jews
Readings: *Sephardim: The Jews from Spain* by Paloma Diaz-Mas (Ch. 1, 4, 5, 6)
View documentary: *El último Sefardi*

Week 5 The Spanish Inquisition/The Black Legend
Documentary on the Spanish Inquisition (BBC).

**Module 2: Spain and the Americas**

**Key Debate:** The Black Legend, the treatment of the Indians and the decline of Spain.

Week 6 The Spanish Conquest of Tenochtitlan
Readings: *The Broken Spears* by M. Leon-Portillo (Introduction, Ch. 2, 8 & 14)

Week 7 The Spanish Conquest
Readings: *The Labyrinth of Solitude* by Octavio Paz (“The Sons of the Malinche” & “The Conquest and Colonialism”)
Readings: “A Place of the Translator in the Discourses of Conquest: Hernan Cortes’ Cartas de relacion and Roland Joffe’s The Mission” by David E. Johnson IN *Amerindian Images and the Legacy of Columbus* ed. by Rene Jara (Ch. 13)
Video: The Mission

Week 8 The Identity of the Spanish Monarchy in Spanish America: Transmission, Assimilation and Subversion - Images of Conquest: Charles V, Philip II and Philip IV
Readings: *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* by Mary Louise Pratt (Ch. 3, 4, 8)
Activities: guided visit El Escorial and the Prado Museum

Week 9 The Identity of the Spanish Monarchy in Spanish America: Transmission, Assimilation and Subversion - The Defense of the Eucharist & Guaman Poma de Ayala
Readings: “Colonial Reform of Utopia? Guaman Poma’s Empire of the Four Parts of the World” by Rolena Adorno IN *Amerindian Images and the Legacy of Columbus* by Rene Jara (Ch. 11)
Activities: visit to the Museo de America

**Module 3: Spain From Europe and the United States**

**Key Debate:** The foreign stereotypes about Modern Spain.

Week 10 Romantic Spain

Week 11 Romantic Spain
Reading: *The Mirror of Spain: 1500 – 1700 The Formation of a Myth* by Jocelyn Hillgarth (Part IV The Coalescence of a Myth)
* Carmen by Prosper Merimée
Video: *Don Giovanni* Mozart’s Opera
Film: *Don Juan* starring John Barrymore
   * Carmen by Vicente Aranda (2003)

Week 12 The Spanish Civil War
Readings: *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell (Ch. 1, 5)
   * South of Granada* by Gerald Brenan
   * Excerpts of *The Spanish Labyrinth* by Gerald Brenan
Films: *Land and Freedom* by Ken Loach
   * The Good Fight* by Hemingway
   * Al Sur de Granada* by Fernando Colomo

Week 13 Hemingway’s Spain
Readings: Excerpts from *For Whom the Bell Tolls & The Sun Also Rises* by E. Hemingway
Students chose one of the following films:
   * The Barefoot Contessa* (1954) by Joseph L. Mankiewicz
   * Blood and Sand* (1941) by Rouben Mamoulin
   * For Whom the Bell Tolls* (cinematographic version 1943 by Fred Zinnemann)
   * The Sun Also Rises* (again also has a cinematographic version 1957 by Henry King)
   * Don Quixote* by Orson Welles
   * El Cid* (1961) by Anthony Mann

Week 14 Student Presentations on Current Configurations of Spain

**Course Requirements:**

Attendance and active participation are essential and contribute significantly to the final grade. There will be a midterm, a final exam, and 3 short papers, and a student presentation.

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Course packet: the “reader” will be available for purchase at photocopies Colon and additional reading material for consultation and papers is available in our library.

**Additional Bibliography:**


