**Conversation and Contemporary Life**

**Professor:** Fernando Rivera-Díaz  
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**Office hours:** Tuesdays 11:45-12:45 pm  
Thursdays 11:45-01:45 pm, and by appointment.  
Comenius 406.


**Course description:** An intensive Spanish conversational practice to develop an intermediate level of proficiency. Special attention will be paid to functional communication, and expressing opinions on daily life and current issues. It is expected at the end of the semester that students will be able to:

- Describe and narrate in major time frames (present, past and future)
- Get through simple tasks or social situations
- Participate actively in conversations, in most informal and some formal settings
- Be able to express their own opinions and talk about themselves
- Be able to read and understand news articles and short stories

**Course procedure:** Given that this is a conversation class, it is expected that students speak in Spanish as frequently as possible in class and out of the classroom. *A most effective way to improve your language skills is through intensive practice on speaking and reading.* Therefore, the preparation for the conversations in the classroom will require the careful reading of materials in Spanish on the issues at hand. The assigned materials from the textbook, as well as other sources from the media and the Internet, will enrich the vocabulary and stimulate some ideas for conversation. Lack of preparation will be immediately noticeable. As a rule for this class *no English will be accepted.* If a student cannot express an idea, he/she can paraphrase or try again in Spanish only.
Besides the readings, it is expected that students speak Spanish out of class. It is recommended that students spend at least 2 hours per week out of class in conversation on issues associated with the materials under discussion in class, and with a variety of projects for the class. The best recommendation is to find a Classmate to meet regularly (any fluent Spanish speaker willing to work with you is also acceptable).

**Class attendance:** Faithful attendance is expected, since continuous practice is needed in order to learn a language.

- Every student will be allowed to miss up to **three (3) classes** without losing points off their final grade (however, remember that your class participation grade will suffer beginning with the first absence, regardless of the reason for it).
- Every absence beyond three will result in a **deduction of 1 point off the final grade**. It is the responsibility of the student to reserve his/her 3 absences for those circumstances when missing class is unavoidable (i.e. illnesses, field trips, participation in sporting events, etc.) and to inform the professor as soon as possible about the reason for the absence. In case of extended absences the student should talk to Students Services or the Academic Dean who will contact the professor. **Only if the Dean justifies the absences, they will be excused (and points will not be taken off).**
- **Three (3) late arrivals** to class (10 minutes or more) will be the equivalent of one absence and students will lose 1 point off their final grade.

**EVALUATION:**

1. **Class preparation and participation:** Students are expected to come to class having prepared the readings and exercises assigned by the professor (see “Programa del curso”). In class, students must participate **actively** speaking in group activities and class general discussions. Weekly, the professor will assign points according to the level of preparation and participation of each student (if the student does not participate in class discussion or is missing, he/she will receive a zero for that class period). Students are welcome to inquire about this grade and check their progress throughout the semester.

2. **Oral exams and presentations:**

   There will not be any written exam. The evaluation of this course will be based on oral performance. There will be **one oral exam recorded on tape and one power point**
oral presentation in class. Also, there will be one oral interview at the end of the semester.

- The oral exam recorded on tape will concentrate, but not exclusively, on expressing opinions and developing topics orally. This exam will consist on a recorded presentation on specific topics which the student will develop as a speech. A guide will be provided in advance. On the designated date, students will hand in their cassette which the professor will evaluate according to the rubrics provided for the students in advance.
- Throughout the semester, each student will make one power point oral presentation in class (13-15 minutes long). The selection of each topic should be consulted with and approved by the professor at least one week in advance of the presentation date.
- The final evaluation will be an Oral Proficiency Interview in which the student must demonstrate progress in his/her language skills from the beginning of the semester.

3. Class debates: Students must actively participate in 6 class debates on the short films (cortometrajes) included in each "lección". Questions for the debates are provided in the first "análisis" section in each chapter. In all debates, a brief presentation will be assigned to one or two students by the professor.

4. Film: A Spanish speaking film will be screened on a date announced in the calendar (out of class hour). A discussion will follow the next class, and as a final personal commentary a written review will be handed in (28 to 30 lines, double spaced).

- Nota Final: The final course grade will be calculated as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 taped oral exam</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 power point presentation</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 class debates (5% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 film review</td>
<td>06%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final OPI</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Programa SPAN 150 – Fall 2005

Agosto
Lun. 29 Introducción

Mié. 31 Lección 1: Realidad o fantasía (2-7). Cortometraje 1

Septiembre
Vie. 02 Debate 1 (8-9)

Mié. 07 Estructuras (10-11)

Vie. 09 Ensayo (12-14). Opinión (16-18)

Lun. 12 Cuento (19-23)

Mié. 14 Lección 2: Cuestión de personalidad (28-33). Cortometraje 2

Vie. 16 Debate 2 (34-35)

Lun. 19 Estructuras (36-37)

Mié. 21 Artículo (38-41). Tira cómica (58-59)

Vie. 23 Actividades: el rock en español

Lun. 26 Cuento (43-46)


Vie. 30 Debate 3 (68-69).

Octubre
Lun. 03 Estructuras (70-71). PowerPoint Presentation (demo)

Mié. 05 Entrevista (72-76)

Vie. 07 Opinión (77-81). Taped Oral Exam due
**Fall Recess**

Mié. 12  Cuento  (82-87)

Vie. 14  Tira cómica y tertulia  (88-91)

Lun. 17  **PowerPoint Presentations**

Mié. 19  **PowerPoint Presentations**

Vie. 21  **PowerPoint Presentations**

Lun. 24  **Lección 4: Poder, quiero más poder** (92-97). Cortometraje 4

Mié. 26  Debate 4  (98-99)

Vie. 28  Estructuras  (100-101)

Lun. 31  Experiencias  (106-110)

**Noviembre**

Mié. 02  Cuento  (102-105).  **Película**

Vie. 04  Debate de la película

Lun. 07  **Lección 5: El laboratorio de la literatura** (126-131). Cortometraje 5

Mié. 09  Debate 5  (132-133)

Vie. 11  Estructuras  (134-135).  **Reseña de la película**

Lun. 14  Experiencias  (136-138)

Mié. 16  Cuento  (145-149)

Vie. 18  Actividades:  **diarios y revistas hispanos**

Lun. 21  Tira cómica y tertulia  (150-153)
Thanksgivings Recess

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<tr>
<th>Lunes 28</th>
<th><strong>Lección 6:</strong> Modos de vivir (154-159). Cortometraje 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Miércoles 30</td>
<td>Debate 6 (160-161)</td>
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**Diciembre**

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<tr>
<th>Viernes 02</th>
<th>Estructuras (162-163)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Miércoles 07</td>
<td>Opinión (168-171)</td>
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<td>Lunes 12</td>
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