

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Barcelona

Course Code / Title: BC/SPNS 300 Culture, Language, and Identity in Catalonia

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Spanish Studies / History, Cultural Studies, Global Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

This course provides an in-depth examination of Spanish and Catalan culture and languages, focusing on the historical events that shaped the region and their impact on contemporary dynamics. Through a multidisciplinary approach, social, political and cultural factors will be critically analyzed to understand how languages shape identities. Focusing on key events—such as the Catalan Renaissance, the Spanish Civil War, the transition to democracy, and the independence movement—the course traces the evolution of Spanish and Catalan culture and language from their origins to present-day significance. The complexities of multilingualism and cultural diversity in Spain will be addressed through cultural expressions, such as festival, music, cuisine, and the arts, with the city of Barcelona as privileged setting. Field studies and interactions with local experts will enhance understanding of how identities and communities are shaped in local and global contexts.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students will:

- Analyze the historical evolution of Spanish and Catalan languages, with specific emphasis on the role of political and social contexts.
- Identify the key historical events that shaped contemporary Spanish and Catalan cultures.
- Conceptualize the cultural, social and political roles of languages in national, regional and urban narratives to understand their impact on local and collective identities.
- Examine the intersection of culture and language through artistic expressions, traditions, and symbols, in Barcelona, Catalonia and Spain.
- Compare Catalan and Spanish cultural landscapes with global frameworks to identify the dynamics in place to foster cultural preservation, equity and inclusion in multilingual contexts.

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Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy, participate in class debates and engage in conversations with Guest Speakers. Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the relevant class session (reading assignments are generally 15-25 pages per class session). All assignments must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Graded assignments include:

- **Participation:** students are expected to participate in class discussions and debates, to demonstrate engagement with course content by asking and answering questions, to join group and class activities with respectful behavior, and to demonstrate listening skills by incorporating their peers' contributions into class discussions.
- **Research Project:** an 8-page paper on a topic related to course content and learning objectives. An abstract will be submitted during the second week of the course to be discussed with and approved by the instructor. Specific guidelines will be provided.
- **Fieldwork Reports:** 2 reflective essays, each analyzing a field study students will participate in throughout the course.
- **In-Class Presentation:** 10 minutes. In pairs, students will conduct an interview with a local resident to contrast and compare a specific aspect of Spanish or Catalan culture (to be discussed with the instructor beforehand) and present their findings in class.
- **Midterm Exam:** 20 multiple-choice questions; 10 open-ended questions (250 words per answer); 1 short essay, 500 words in length (students will select and develop one out of three provided topics). All questions will be related to the material covered during the first half of the course.
- **Final Exam:** 20 multiple-choice questions; 10 open-ended questions (250 words per answer); 1 short essay, 500 words in length (students will select and develop one out of three provided topics). All questions will be related to the material covered during the second half of the course.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows.

- Participation (see rubric below) 15%
- Research Project 20%
- Fieldwork Reports (2 at 5%) 10%
- In-Class Presentation 15%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%

Class Participation Grading Rubric

	A – 90-100% Exemplary	B – 80-89% Proficient	C – 70-79% Developing	D – 60-69% Unacceptable	F – 0-59% Missing
Frequency of class participation	Actively contributes 2+ times per meeting	Actively contributes at least 1 time per meeting	Actively contributes at least half of the time during term	Actively contributes less than half of the time during term	Does not contribute
Quality of class participation*	Contribution is always thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, frequently interacting with peers	Contribution is mostly thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, usually interacting with peers	Contribution is somewhat thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, sometimes interacting with peers	Contribution is rarely thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, rarely interacting with peers	Does not contribute or interact with peers
Level of class preparation	Always fully prepared and on task	Mostly prepared and on task	Somewhat prepared and on task	Rarely prepared and on task	Consistently unprepared and not on task

Readings & Resources

Black, Stanley. *Spain since 1939: From Margins to Centre Stage*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009.

Cacho Casal, Rodrigo, and Egan, Caroline. *The Routledge Hispanic Studies Companion to Early Modern Spanish Literature and Culture*. London: Routledge, 2022.

Chislett, William. *Spain. What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Davies, Ann. *Spanish Spaces: Landscape, Space and Place in Contemporary Spanish Culture*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012.

Delgado, María. "Memory, Silence and Democracy in Spain: Federico García Lorca, the Spanish Civil War, and the Law of Historical Memory." *Theatre Journal*, 67(2), 2015: 177-196.

Eaude, Michael. *Catalonia. A Cultural History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Encarnación, Omar Guillermo. *Spanish Politics: Democracy after Dictatorship*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2008.

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- Gibernau, Montserrat. *Catalan Nationalism. Francoism, Transition and Democracy*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Holohan, Kate E. "Una merienda global: The Americas and China at the Early Modern Spanish Table". *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 97 (4), 2020: 485-513.
- Hughes, Robert. *Barcelona*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.
- Kammerer, Nina. "Catalan Festival Culture, Identities, and Independentism". *Quaderns-E De l'Institut Català d'Antropologia*, 19 (2), May 2015: 58-78.
- Keown, Dominic. *A Companion to Catalan Culture*. Rochester: NY: Tamesis, 2011.
- Labanyi, Jo, and Pavlović Tatjana (Ed.). *A Companion to Spanish Cinema*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2015.
- Labanyi, Jo. "Interrogating critical fields in Spanish cultural studies". *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 22 (2), 2021: 147-149.
- Labanyi, Jo. *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Ledesma, Eduardo, and Delgado, Luisa Elena. *The Routledge Hispanic Studies Companion to Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Spain*. London: Routledge, 2025.
- Llano, Samuel, and Whittaker, Tom. "Spanish Sound Studies", *Spanish Sound Studies*, special issue of *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 20 (3), 2019: 199-208.
- Lledó Guillem, Vicente. *The Making of Catalan Linguistic Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Times*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019.
- Long, Duri. "Ritual and Contemporary Catalan Theatre: The Work of La Fura dels Baus". *Journal of Catalan Studies*, 18-19, 2015-2016: 15-51.
- Manuel, Peter. "The Rosalía Polemic: Defining Genre Boundaries and Legitimacy in Flamenco." *Ethnomusicology*; 65 (1), 2021: 32-61.
- McRoberts, Kenneth. *Catalonia: Nation Building without a State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Moreno Luzón, Javier, and Nuñez Seixas, Xosé. *Metaphors of Spain: Representations of Spanish National Identity in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Berghan Books, 2017.
- Rabascall, Joan. *Spain is different. En postales: In postcards*. Madrid: Ediciones Complutense, 2023.

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Resina, Joan Ramón. *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity. Rise and Decline of an Urban Image*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Smith, Paul Julian. *Contemporary Spanish Culture: TV, Fashion, Art and Film*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.

Woolard, Kathryn A. *Singular and Plural: Ideologies of Linguistic Authority in 21st Century Catalonia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Online Resources

Institut Ramon Llull - [Inici EN - Institut Ramon Llull](#)

Instituto Cervantes - [Instituto Cervantes](#)

Real Academia de la Lengua Española - [Inicio | Real Academia Española](#)

Content

Unit 1 – Culture(s) and Language(s)

- The concept of culture, between anthropology and sociology.
- Linguistic landscapes in Barcelona: a framework.
- Spain and Catalonia: topography and cultural geography.

Unit 2 – Languages in Spain across time

- The roots of Catalan and Spanish languages: from Latin to the flourishing in the Middle Ages.
- Spanish language beyond the Iberian Peninsula: intercultural complexities.
- Multilingualism and migration in contemporary Spain.

Unit 3 – Cultural History and Identities

- From the Romans to the Early Modern Era: key events and their legacy in contemporary Spain.
- The Civil War and its presence in collective memory.
- Language policies under Franco and the transition to democracy.

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Unit 4 – Catalonia and Spain in the Global Context

- The Barcelona Brand: from the 1992 Olympics to the 22@ District.
- The Catalan *Reinaxença* and the contemporary debate for independence.
- Bilingual education in Catalonia: embracing diversity.

Unit 5 – Media and Culture

- The role of media in shaping linguistic and cultural identities: the case of Barcelona.
- Catalan and Spanish soundscapes: from Serrat to Rosalía.
- Dance as a form of community expression: sardana and flamenco.

Unit 6 – Festivals and Celebrations

- Cultural values in action: *Sant Jordi*, *La Mercè*, *Semana Santa*, and *Las fallas*.
- *Festes de barri*: multiculturalism and equity in Barcelona.
- The impact of tourism on local traditions: an ongoing debate.

Unit 7 – Symbols and Literature

- Bilingual literature in Catalonia: writers and publishing companies.
- The network of public libraries in Barcelona and the alliance with private bookstores: promoting cultural diversity and accessibility.
- Regional symbols and their role in shaping identities.

Unit 8 – Arts and Architecture

- Catalonia and Spain through the Arts: visual representation and cultural significance, from Velázquez to Picasso and Miró.
- Gaudí and beyond: Gothic and *Modernisme* as marks of Catalan identity.
- Urban arts and graffiti: Barcelona as international artistic stage.

Unit 9 – Cinema and Theatre

- Almodóvar and the *movida*: cinema as a tool for change.
- From Federico García Lorca to *La Fura dels Baus*: challenging the dynamics of power and gender on stage.
- Spain as a cinematic location: reshaping cultural identities from outside.

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Unit 10 – Cuisine and Sports

- The Mediterranean diet: history, symbolic and social significance.
- The city of Michelin stars: cross-cultural cuisine in Barcelona.
- More than soccer: Barça and Madrid at the intersection of Catalan and Spanish language and culture.

Field study and experiential learning components may include:

- Visit the Museum of the History of Catalonia - Inici - Museu d'Història de Catalunya
- Visit a bomb shelter - Refugi 307 MUHBA Refugi 307 | Museu Historia de Barcelona | Ajuntament de Barcelona
- Visit the Royal Shipyards of Barcelona - Royal Shipyards of Barcelona - Museu Marítim Barcelona
- Visit the National Museum of Catalan Art - Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya
- Visit the Barcelona Center for Contemporary Culture (CCCB) - Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona | CCCB
- Conversations with representatives of local organizations, such as Barcelona Turisme, Institut Ramon Llull, Barcelona Cultura.

* Syllabus is subject to minor changes in term-specific syllabus at instructor discretion.