

Millikin University  
Student Learning in the Spanish Major  
By  
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### **Executive Summary**

The Modern Languages Department supports the mission of Millikin University in preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a diverse global community, and a personal life of meaning and value. In the context of the Spanish major, the mission of the Department is to produce graduates who achieve the following four learning outcome goals:

- (1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.
- (3) Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.
- (4) Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

The core curriculum begins with freshman-level courses in Beginning Spanish and Continuing Spanish, as well as a sophomore-level course in Intermediate Spanish, all of which establish a student's competency in Spanish and readiness to continue on with more advanced studies in Spanish. As a student's course of study within the Spanish major continues, he or she engages more specific on focused areas of study in Spanish conversation and composition, and in courses that deal with the culture, art, business, literature, film, theatre and linguistics of the Spanish-speaking world.

Part of the Modern Languages Department's ongoing revitalization is an establishment of thorough and ongoing assessment at the course and program level. It is hoped and anticipated that the listing of artifacts and rubrics here provided will be helpful in continuing to make assessment more systematic throughout the Spanish major and the Modern Languages area.

## Goals

The purpose of the Spanish major is stated in four Modern Languages Department goals:

- (1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.
- (3) Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.
- (4) Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

These Modern Languages Department goals match well with Millikin's University-wide learning goals:

- (1) Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
- (2) Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.
- (3) Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The table on the following page shows how Modern Languages Department goals for the Spanish major relate to University-wide goals:

Learning Goal	Corresponding MU Learning Goal Number(s)
Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.	1
Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.	1, 2
Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze, and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.	1
Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of Hispanic culture, and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.	1, 2, 3

Students majoring in Spanish are required to take 21 credit hours of Spanish at the 300 level or above, including the capstone course SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition. The prerequisite for taking a 300-level course is three semesters of Spanish-language courses.

The mission of the Spanish major is to prepare students for a career in teaching, for graduate studies in literature, or to provide the necessary Spanish-

The Department

Spanish 480, Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition.

A Spanish Major Curriculum Map is offered as an appendix to this document.

A Spanish Club was created, which makes possible for the Spanish major students to participate in cultural activities as well as in round tables to practice their oral communicative skills.

A radio show in Spanish *Español en Acción* was created, making possible for the students to participate as guests. Students may improve their listening and oral skills as well as their knowledge of the cultures of the Spanish speaking world.

The creation of the language communicative lab allows the students with a Spanish major to work as special tutors.

**Double majors and the preparation for professional success:**

One of the characteristics of the major in Spanish is that it supports students in their other field of specialization. All Spanish majors have another major. Most students pursuing another career use Spanish as a way to improve their work and, in this way, to become a successful professional. Spanish majors have the following first or second major:

Art  
Accounting  
Behavioral Sciences  
Biology  
Business Administration Management  
Chemistry  
Communication  
Education  
Marketing  
Music  
Nursing  
Political Science  
Theater

The capstone required course for Spanish majors, *SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition*, provides opportunities for the students to make a direct connection between what they learned in the Spanish courses and the main topics in their second (or first) field of study.

Description of the capstone: *Capstone course required of all Spanish majors. Students will compose and complete an individualized project and participate in an advanced dramatization demonstrating a high level of Spanish conversation and composition abilities.*



Spanish 481 and 482 (Topics in Hispanic Literature)	Research Essays Exams	3	1, 2, 3
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## Spanish Major Curriculum Map

Courses	Goal #1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.	Goal #2: Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.	Goal #3: Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.	Goal #4: Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.
SP 103 – Beginning	X			
SP 114 – Continuing	X			

SP 223 –  
ish



SP 491-494 – Independent Study in Spanish			X	
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### Assessment Methods

For the assessment of the learning goals for the Spanish major the following courses will be used:

Learning Goals	Courses
1	SP 302 Spanish Composition
2	SP 320 Art, Literature, Film of US Latinos
3	SP 321 Survey of Spanish Literature
4	SP 301 Spanish Conversation

### Assessment Data

The grading rubrics used to assess each learning goal have a maximum of 20 possible

**Learning Goal 1:** Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in Spanish.

Table 1:

**Learning Goal 4:** Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

Table 4: SP 301 Spanish Conversation

Rubric Category	Percentage of students in category
Excellent	87.5%
Adequate	12.5%
Nominal	0%
Number of students evaluated	16

Total of *Excellent* and *Adequate* combined: 100%.  
Rating for goal 4: “Green light.”

### **Analysis of Assessment Results**

The analysis of the data shows that the Spanish major is in the right direction.

#### **Learning Goal 1: Assessment for SP302: Spanish Composition**

The assessment of the learning goal for the written component of the Spanish Conversation and Composition course shows that the Department continues doing a very good job during the first semesters of the Spanish Language courses; therefore building a strong foundation for the upper division courses.

This course includes several components in order to achieve the objectives of each ability in second language learning. The oral component includes 2 oral presentations, class discussion of the material presented in class, and the comprehension component of questions and answers for each reading material. Students engage in reading the text and materials in order to improve and demonstrate their reading abilities in class. A grammar component is also added for discussion, writing and practice during classes to improve any issues that may arise with compositions.

The writing component is achieved through note-taking, assigned paragraphs, and compositions. This ability is also evaluated with the preparation of a professional cover letter for a position in the job market. At the end, students have a series of assignments that enable them to perform better in a real life environment using the Spanish language and the culture. Students can perform better when they receive assignments in other advanced courses due to the skills acquired regarding essay writing and academic argument in compositions.

Assessment result: 1 For assessing Learning Goal 1, compositions have been used as artifacts. From the 11 students, 9 got a grade that falls within the category “excellent,” 1 got a grade that falls within the category “adequate”, and 1 within the “nominal”category. **90.89% of the students at the excellent or adequate level.**

**Learning Goal 2:**

**Assessment for SP 320 Art, Literature and Film of U.S. Latinos**

The learning goal 2 for our department entailed students demonstrating an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries. The assessment of this learning goal was achieved in Assessment of SP 320 Art, Literature and Film of U.S. Latinos, which show that the Department continues to do a very good job in its upper division Spanish Language courses.

In this course students engaged in a variety of in-class and extra-class activities such as traveling to the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen, Illinois in the Chicago area and local business within the Decatur area. These cultural experiences and out of class performance learning activities granted students a unique opportunity to be exposed to the Latino culture and practice their Spanish skills. The experience to visit this museum allowed our students to experience tours in Spanish in a museum setting and in a street setting (murals) in the Pilsen neighborhood. During this trip to the National Museum of Mexican Art and the Pilsen neighborhood students practiced Spanish by having direct interaction and contact with the Spanish speaking community. During this class trip,

**88.9% of the students are at the excellent or adequate level.**

**Learning Goal 3:**

**Assessment for SP 321 Survey of Spanish Literature**

The learning goal 3 for our department entailed students demonstrating ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world. The assessment of the learning goal for this engagement was achieved in Assessment of SP 321 Survey of Spanish Literature, which shows that the Department continues doing a very good job in the upper division Spanish Language courses.

In this course, students were exposed to Peninsular literature from the twentieth century

division courses. The Spanish Conversation and Composition I course (together with the Spanish Conversation and Composition II course) is one of the courses recommended to be taken at the beginning of the major. Most of the students take that course right or soon after they take SP 223: Intermediate Spanish.

This is a very important result: **100% of the students at the excellent or adequate level.**

With the strong formation in oral expression in the Spanish conversation course, students are able to succeed in the other upper division courses. They will be able to communicate effectively in class, to participate in discussions, and contribute with their insights.

The oral component of the course has also benefited from a stronger foundation in the first semesters of Spanish language courses. On the year 2005 the Department created a *Communicative Lab*, in which students taking the first two semesters of Spanish can practice the target language with the assistance of a *facilitator* (an advanced Spanish major student).

In this class students watched short films from the Hispanic world (Latin America and Spain), learned about those cultures and, at the same time, practiced their listening comprehension skills. Students also read different kind of readings (essays, short stories, dramas), discussed about them in an organized way, improving their communication skills.

For assessment Learning Goals 1, dialogues have been used as artifacts.









## Appendix 2: Rubrics

### Literature Essays

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Concepts and Thesis	[5 points] Student shows a strong knowledge of literature concepts, and essay has a clear thesis.	[3 points] Student shows a reasonable but less than complete knowledge of literature concepts, and essay has a thesis.	[1 point] Student shows a marginal awareness of literature concepts, and thesis is not clear.
Organization of Ideas	[5 points] Student defends his or her main idea very clearly, with strong organizational links between and among his or her ideas.	[3 points] Student defends his or her main idea somewhat clearly, with reasonably effective organizational links between and among his or her ideas.	[1 point]