

Millikin University  
Student Learning in the Spanish Major  
By

## 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.

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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

In addition, the Department has implemented a new *communicative language lab* for students who are taking Spanish 103 and, more recently, also for students taking Spanish 114, which consists of group work with the coordination of a *facilitator*. Its main goal is that the students can achieve an advanced level of oral proficiency.

This year a mural reflecting the Latin American, French and Italian cultures was painted in the communicative language lab. The goal is to contribute to the process of learning within a more cultural-embedded ambience.

The curriculum consists of traditional courses in language, literature and culture, as well as practical courses like SP 330 (Spanish for Business), SP 340 (Theatre Performance in Spanish), and SP 350 (Study Abroad in Spanish) and SP 310 (Spanish for Health Professions). Those 4 new courses have been added to reflect 1) the tendency among Spanish programs across the country toward the inclusion of “practical” offerings, and 2) education within a global environment.

The number of students enrolled in the Spanish major has grown to more than 30 students in the academic year 2006-2007, and continue to grow.

### **Learning Story**

The first-year curriculum in Spanish establishes the student’s proficiency in basic spoken and written Spanish, through Spanish 103 (Beginning Spanish) and Spanish 114 (Continuing Spanish). The second-year curriculum, with Spanish 223 (Intermediate Spanish) confirms the student’s readiness to proceed into more advanced junior- and senior-level courses that engage Spanish conversation and composition; culture, art, business, literature, film and theatre of the Spanish-speaking world, including Latin America, Spain, and U.S. Latino/Latina culture; and Spanish linguistics.

To complete the Spanish major, a student must take a minimum of 21 credits above Spanish 223, including the capstone SP 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition, from the following courses:

- Spanish 301, Spanish Conversation and Composition I;
- Spanish 302, Spanish Conversation and Composition II;
- Spanish 303, Culture of Spain;
- Spanish 304, Culture of Latin America;
- Spanish 310, Spanish for Health Professions;
- Spanish 320 (Art, Literature, and Film of U.S. Latinos);
- Spanish 321 (Survey of Spanish Literature);

A chapter of the national Spanish Honor Society *Sigma Delta Pi* 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.*

## **Assessment Methods**



## **Assessment Methods**

For the assessment of the four learning goals the following courses will be used:



## **Learning Goal 1**



The program in Chile started in January 2005, and has been very successful in terms of recruiting a good number of students and in achieving the corresponding learning goal. The newest program is the one in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which started in May 2006. In all those three countries Millikin' students have had plenty of opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from different social status. From the academic refined language to the street language, the students demonstrated their communications skills by interacting with professors, waiters, bus drivers, etc. It is also evident the confidence the students get by being able to communicate with native speakers in another country.

#### Assessment of the Study Abroad in Argentina:

This year students studied the life and contributions of Eva Perón, the life of the gaucho, the elements of tango (including taking tango dance lessons in Buenos Aires), community theater, and immigration.

For the purpose of assessing the Learning Goal 2, the final report/reflection essay written by students who participated in the Study Abroad program in Argentina was chosen as the artifact. From the nine students who wrote the final report/reflection essay, 5 fall within the category "excellent" (55%), and 4 within the category "adequate" (45%).

#### Learning Goal 3:

The assessment of the learning goal for the Survey of Latin American Literature I course shows that the students are able to (1) use the skills they learned in the composition course, and (2) apply the concepts of literature and analytical skills acquired in this and previous courses.

Two research papers were chosen as the artifact for the purpose of assessing the Learning Goal 3.

From the 8 students who wrote two essays, 2 fall within the category "excellent" (25%), and 6 within the category "adequate" (75%).

#### Learning Goal 4:

The Spanish for Business course is centered on the notion that in order to do business in another country, it is necessary to learn about its culture. Students learn important aspect of the culture of Latin American countries, relevant to the world of business, as well as its specific vocabulary,.

For assessing the Learning Goal 4, a comprehensive exam is used as the main artifact.

From 13 students who took the final exam, 4 fall within the category "excellent" (30%), and 9 within the category "adequate" (70%).

## **Improvement Plans**

The Department of Modern Languages will continue to implement a communicative approach to teaching, as well as continue monitoring the needs of the students who major in Spanish. In Spring 2008 the capstone course SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition was offered for the first time, and will be offered every Spring semester. That course will allow for more integration of theory and practice, since students will be working in a special project relevant to their major. Those students who are double major will continue to be able to work in a project that put together the acquired knowledge in both fields. In the Spring 2008 semester, students from the capstone course participated in the *Celebrations of Scholarship* event, showing their achievements in their research. The Department is planning to continue with that tradition.

Starting in the Fall 2008 semester, the Department of Modern Language will have a new Assistant Professor of Spanish specialized in Central American Literature. This new position will allow the Department to better serve the growing number of Spanish majors.



## 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] Student's defense of his or her main idea is unclear; organizational links between and among his or her ideas are weak or nonexistent.

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