20.04 The Global Spanish-Speaking Community: From Imperial Conquests to Latino Diasporas
3 hours; 3 credits

Examination of the history and present-day realities of the diverse cultures comprising the global Spanish-speaking community: Spain, Latin America and the Caribbean, Spanish-speaking Africa, and the US Latino populations. Topics include language and empire, colonialism, economic and social structures of power, religion, the role of women, racial and ethnic identity, migration and immigration, and the role of the artist in society. (Not open to students who have complete Core Curriculum-Upper Tier 20.3)

Prerequisite: Junior standing or completion of all lower-tier requirements in Philosophical and Social Inquiry.

Common Goals Addressed by Core course:

1. To understand the ancient cultures of Spain, Africa and Latin America and their relationship to those of the present. (3, 4).
2. To develop the ability to think critically and creatively, to reason logically, and to express one’s thoughts orally and in writing with clarity and precision (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21).
3. To develop the ability to make sound moral judgments (1, 20, 26).
4. To appreciate and understand diverse cultures, value one’s own identity and consider critically one’s beliefs, and integrate knowledge from a variety of sources (19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28)

Objectives of Core Course:

1. Students will become acquainted with the ancient cultures of Spain, Africa and Latin America and appreciate their relationship to those of the present. (3)
2. Students will develop an understanding of the literary and artistic achievement of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking global community and develop a critical appreciation of the contribution of literature and the arts to the life of the individual and society (4)
3. Students will develop skills of conceptual analysis and argumentation. (9)
4. Students will be able to express ideas clearly in writing. (10)
5. Students will be able to communicate thought orally. (12)
6. Students will be able to develop a basis for evaluating texts. (13)
7. Students will become acquainted with ethical and moral arguments related to the evolution and development of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. (1)
8. Students will acquire an understanding of their own cultural identity and will be able to demonstrate a conceptual knowledge of forces that contribute to the formation of one’s cultural identity: genetic, social, economic, psychological, class, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, etc. (20)
9. Students will be able to recognize the diverse cultures at Brooklyn College. (19)
10. Students will be able to demonstrate conceptual knowledge of the diversity of U.S. society. (24)
11. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding and appreciation of other cultures and of globalization, including the world history that encompasses the experiences of the diverse peoples comprising the Spanish-speaking global community in Europe, Africa and the Americas. (25)

12. Students will be able to demonstrate that issues may be regarded from multiple viewpoints and the value of acknowledging those viewpoints in an argument. (28)

Outcomes for Core Course:
1. Students can identify and discuss the material and cultural foundations of ancient civilizations in Spain, Africa and the Americas and their relationship to the shaping of the modern Spanish-speaking world. (3)
2. Students can reflect upon and critically examine fundamental themes and issues of important literary and artistic works in Spain and Latin America, and can assess their contribution to the life of the individual and to society in the global Spanish-speaking community. (4)
3. Students can produce arguments to support a position relating to culture and society in the global Spanish-speaking community. (9)
4. Students can use writing to reflect on, to explain, and to critically examine concepts and issues relating to culture and society in the global Spanish-speaking community. (10)
5. Students can orally explain and critically examine concepts and theories relating to culture and society in the global Spanish-speaking community. (12)
6. Students can recognize the use of rhetorical and cultural conventions related to the evolution and development of culture and society in the global Spanish-speaking community and understand their persuasive effect. (13)
7. Students can explain and critically examine moral issues related to the evolution and development of culture and society in the global Spanish-speaking community. (1)
8. Students can reflect upon the evolution and development of their own cultural identity. (20)
9. Students can reflect upon the evolution and development of the diverse cultures at Brooklyn College. (19)
10. Students can reflect upon the evolution and development of the diverse Latino cultures in the United States. (24)
11. Students can demonstrate how world events (e.g., conquest, colonization, wars, economic or political events, immigration) impacted upon women of different ethnic, class and racial groups in the Spanish-speaking world community. (25)
12. Students will articulate and examine various points of view on issue related to the evolution and development of culture and society in the global Spanish-speaking community. (28)
Course Outline:


Week 1- The Reconquest of Muslim Spain in 1492 and the Foundations of the Castilian Language.

Week 2- New World Spanish Conquests: Language, Culture and Empire.

Week 3- Colonial Institutions of Power in the Americas.

Week 4- Indo-America: the Indigenous Peoples from Pre-Columbian Civilizations to Present Day Urban Populations.

Week 5- Afro-America: the African Presence and Issues of Race, Color and Identity.

Week 6- Spanish Colonial Africa.

Week 7- Religion and Changing Spirituality: from Roman Catholicism to Syncretic Creole Religions and the Pentecostal Movements.

Week 8-Women, Culture, and Issues of Gender, Race and Class.

Week 9-Postcolonialism: from Independence to Neo-Colonialism.

Week 10- Revolution and Change: the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions and their Impact in the Region.

Week 11- The Artist as Social Conscience.

Week 12- The Latino Diaspora in the United States: Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Cuban-Americans.

Week 13-The Complexities of Contemporary Immigration: from the Americas to the United States and to/from Europe.

Week 14-Globalization and the New World Order: International Trade Agreements, Tourism and Soap Operas.

Methods of Evaluation: Midterm (20%), Final (45%), Research Paper (20%), Writing Assignments (10%), Class Participation (5%).

Methods of Assessment:
1. Students are asked to summarize an important literary work from the colonial period in Latin America and to explain some significant issues presented in these works. (3)
2. Students are asked to research a theme or issue of an influential literary work from Spain, Africa, Latin America or US Latino literature and to assess its significance to past and to contemporary human life. (4)
3. Students are asked to debate orally alternative viewpoints regarding such issues as colonialism, economic and social structures of power, religion, the role of women, racial and ethnic identity, migration and immigration, and the role of the artist in society. (9)
4. Students are asked to discuss and critically examine in writing concepts and issues related to the evolution and development of the cultures and societies of the global Spanish-speaking community. (10)
5. Students are asked to present an in-class oral presentation of a critical examination on such issues related to colonialism, economic and social structures of power, religion, the role of women, racial and ethnic identity, migration and immigration, and the role of the artist in society found in the literature of the Spanish-speaking world. (13)
6. Students are asked to identify and discuss in writing such themes as language and empire, colonialism, economic and social structures of power, religion, the role of women, racial and ethnic identity, migration and immigration, and the role of the artist in society found in literature. (12)
7. Students are asked to explain and critically examine some moral issues that arise in discussions related to the evolution and development of the cultures and societies of the global Spanish-speaking community. (1)
8. Students are asked to do an oral presentation comparing the views of cultural identity found in literature to their view of their own identity and values. (20)
9. Students are asked to relate views of cultural identity found in literature regarding the identity of an ethnic group different from their own found representing the students of Brooklyn College. (19)
10. Students are asked to write on the portrayal in literature of US Latino cultural identity. (24)
11. Students are asked to debate in class how world events (e.g., conquest, colonization, wars, economic or political events, immigration) impacted upon women of different ethnic, class and racial groups in the Spanish-speaking world community. (25)
12. Students are asked to articulate and examine in writing competing and diverse points of view on issues related to such topics as language and empire, colonialism, economic and social structures of power, religion, the role of women, racial and ethnic identity, migration and immigration, and the role of the artist in society in order to demonstrate the complexity and significance of this global cultural community. (28)

Assessment tools: Diagnostic and end-of-term writing assignments, Class participation and presentation. Homework and in class essay questions interpreting texts and analyzing issues.
Selected Bibliography


Dorfman, Ariel. The Empire's Old Clothes: What the Lone Ranger, Babar, and Other Innocent Heroes Do to Our Minds. (Pantheon, 1983)


Galeano, Eduardo. Memory of Fire. (Pantheon, 1985)


León-Portillo, Miguel, ed. Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico. (Beacon, 1962)


Sale, Kirkpatrick. Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the  Columbian Legacy. (Knopf, 1990)


