

ICADS SPANISH DEPARTMENT

Syllabus for Basic Spanish

SPA 101/102

Course Description

ICADS is an institute whose mission is to educate students about diverse topics related to Latin America, through Spanish language instruction and academic program offerings that use a critical theoretical perspective. Additionally, students' own experiences help them to deepen their understandings of social, political, and economic realities and the effect that these have on the environment and society as a whole, especially the poor and the marginalized.

As another component, ICADS supports organizations and communities in the countries where we work, especially groups that have demonstrated a commitment to social justice and to subjects like education, healthcare, immigration, human rights, and the environment.

ICADS Basic Spanish course is for students that have are beginners in terms of the oral communication skills. It is an intensive course of 80 contact hours which are complemented with homestays with Costa Rican families and with cultural activities, guest speakers, educational trips, and community service.

The course is focused on the development of oral communication, and specifically works on developing listening, reading, and conversational skills.

General Course Objective

The principal objective of this course is to offer to students of Spanish the knowledge and skills needed to develop initial communicative skills in Spanish and to achieve a level of Beginner to Low-Intermediate on the ACTFL scale.

Specific Course Objectives

At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Greet and say goodbye politely
- Give and ask for personal information
- Ask and answer basic and concrete questions
- Talk about daily activities and their favorite pastimes
- Express likes and dislikes
- Participate in short conversations about basic topics
- Describe people and places

Methodology

This course has a communicative focus that aims to deepen intercultural communications. ICADS does not follow a monolithic methodology, but rather a holistic one which the professor develops according to the profile of the students in the class.

ICADS works with small groups (usually a maximum of 5 students), which allows the professor to observe the strengths, weaknesses of the students. Based on these criteria, the professor selects varied techniques and activities that aim to achieve the principle course objectives.

The professor has a facilitating role and guides the learning process, as well as evaluates the needs and progress of the students. Additionally, the professor has the task of helping the students deepen their understanding of the cultural aspects that are presented, and mediating between the diverse cultures that are presented in class. The objective is to open spaces that help create greater intercultural understanding.

In general, the class methodology is participatory, interactive, and mainly conversational. Some written materials and an ICADS workbook are also used.

Given that the class is focused on them, the students have a fundamental role within the ICADS methodology. As such, it is necessary that students participate in diverse communicative situations and all class activities with trust and interest, and that they strengthen their own confidence and communicative efficacy.

It is expected that students take responsibility for their own learning through studying and homework outside of class to improve their linguistic capabilities and their cultural knowledge.

Student Placement and Classes

Groups are formed according to the linguistic skills of students which are determined through an oral interview based on guidelines proposed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). This interview evaluates what students are

capable of with their current knowledge of Spanish, the types of tasks that they can complete, and the social contexts that they are capable of handling. Additionally, students are measured based on the level of discourse they are capable of using, grammatical precision, vocabulary, and the comprehension of direct questions.

On the first day of class students will have a diagnostic class to confirm their level. Any changes that are necessary will be confirmed by an additional interview and a written exam.

Activities

The activities proposed for Spanish classes are designed to develop diverse communication skills, meaning that students will be required to speak, listen, read, and write in Spanish.

At the same time, activities are selected according to the level of the students, and will increase in complexity as students continue to develop their language skills.

Examples of activities recently used in Spanish class are:

- Describing people, places, and pictures
- Using vocabulary words and verbs to describe and ask questions
- Speaking about family and friends
- Talking about personal schedule and day-to-day tasks
- Using both didactic and traditional Costa Rican games
- Creating posters and collages
- Creating and responding to questions
- Conversing about different topics

The majority of the activities used in class are related to linguistic and cultural aspects, given that ICADS is committed to the development of both skills. As such, it is necessary that during the activities students make their own observations and investigate about the life and culture in Costa Rica, as well as making their own comparisons and reflections.

As an example, a 4-week program is structured according to the following schedule:

Week	Social Topic	General Activity
1	Costa Rican Families: Gender Roles, Values, and Customs	Family Tree of Host Family
2	Cultural Influences in Costa Rica: Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean Cultures	Speech about a Costa Rican cultural group
3	Health and Education in Costa Rica	Create and explain a collage that represents health or education in Costa Rica
4	Natural Resources and Ecotourism	Make a tourism campaign to promote Costa Rica

Materials

The majority of course materials are created by native speakers and serve to develop the communicative skills of students both in and out of class. Additionally, professors have access to a large number of materials created especially for the teaching of Spanish as a second language.

Course Content

Grammatical Content:

- The alphabet
- Gender and number
- Definite and Indefinite Articles
- *Ser* and *Estar*
- Personal Pronouns
- Interrogative Pronouns
- Descriptive Adjectives
- Demonstrative Adjectives
- Possessive Adjectives
- Adverbs of place
- Adverbs of frequency
- Adverbs of quantity
- *Tener, haber, hacer, gustar*
- Regular Present
- Verbs *preferir, necesitar*
- Modal verbs
- Basic prepositions: *a, de, en*
- *Encantar, molestar, caer bien*
- Reflexive verbs of routine
- Reflexive verbs of emotion
- Verbs about weather
- Irregular Present
- Immediate Future
- Time expressions in the future

Cultural Content*:

- The importance of greetings
- The expression *Pura vida*
- “Tico time”
- Family Traditions and Values
- Celebrations and Holidays
- “Cafecito” and “Gallo Pinto”
- “El barrio y la pulpería”
- Safety
- Cultural Aspects by Province

*This content can be extended according to the work of each group, and will deal with ideas, beliefs, values, daily routines, traditions, customs, and other themes, with the goal of making intercultural connections, encouraging empathy and respectful coexistence between Costa Ricans and the students.

Lexical Content:

- The classroom
- Family and friends
- The household
- Pets
- The neighborhood and the city
- Food
- Restaurants
- The supermarket
- The bank and money
- Colors
- Numbers
- Clothing
- The climate and the seasons
- Sports
- Pastimes

Evaluation

The Spanish course will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Participation	40%	(work in class each day)
Homework	20%	(work outside of class)
Oral Presentation	20%	(during the last week of class)
2 Short Exams	20%	(Weeks 2 and 4)
TOTAL:	100%	

The participation grade will be determined based on punctuality, participation in class conversations and activities, over all interest, and asking questions. Additionally, the professor will evaluate the student based on their respectfulness, politeness, tolerance, and integration into the class.

Homework will be evaluated based on punctuality, completeness, and coherence.

The oral presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria, each worth 20 points, for a total of 100 points that make up 20% of the overall grade.

- Presentation (not read and with a clear and relevant visual aid)
- Knowledge of the theme (relevant research and preparation)
- Grammatical and lexical precision (proper use of grammatical structures and vocabulary)
- Organization of ideas and the overall clarity of the presentation
- Interest

If the student does not submit a homework assignment or is absent for an exam or oral presentation, they should let their instructor know and justify their absence. It will then be necessary to speak with the Spanish Coordinator to reschedule the date and time of the exam or presentation.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to the professor or the Spanish Coordinator.