COURSE TITLE: Contemporary Spanish Society: From Dictatorship to Democracy

DESCRIPTION: Why are Spaniards currently exhuming mass graves of the Civil War? How can the country tolerate an unemployment rate of 20 percent? Why has Catalan and Basque nationalism dominated politics for decades? Why does a country with a historic reputation for machismo boast such progressive laws on gender and gay marriages? How come political corruption remains so prevalent? This course examines political and social issues relevant to Spaniards today. It begins by discussing recent history in order to contextualize the major themes of the past few decades. It then moves to those subjects that emerged out of the transition to democracy – regionalism, terrorism, and linguistic pluralism – and still account for many of the peculiarities of Spanish politics. The second half of the course analyzes “Spain’s Second Transition” under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero by focusing on immigration, Islamic fundamentalism, foreign policy, gender and family relations, historical memory, political corruption, and the economic crisis. The course is multi-disciplinary, consisting of a mixture of readings from political science, history, and cultural studies. Each session will consist of a lecture and a class discussion.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT*: Class participation (15%); oral presentation (5%); essay (20%); mid-term exam (30%); final exam (30%)

Students are expected to attend all class sessions prepared to discuss the reading. Students are also required to write an essay (7 pages long; Time New Roman 12; 1.5 lines) that cover the major subjects discussed in the class. Students will be required to give a short presentation on their essays during the final class sessions. The essay will be submitted in hard copy and also sent by email to the professor.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students are allowed THREE absences throughout the semester without penalty. Starting with the fourth absence, the student’s FINAL GRADE will be lowered by a fraction of a letter (1/3 of a letter grade). For example, if a student has 4 absences and a final grade of B+, the grade will be lowered to a B, if 5 absences the grade is lowered to B-.

There are NO excused absences. If a student misses class because s/he is sick, that counts as one of the allowed absences. No excused absences and no excuses.

Essay Topics: Students may choose to write on any of the following essay topics. All other essay topics must be cleared in advance with the professor.

1. To what extent has Spanish society come to terms with the legacy of the Civil War, Francoism and the repression?
2. Why has terrorism persisted in the Basque Country despite the advent of democracy?
3. Discuss and evaluate the merits and drawbacks of linguistic normalization in Catalonia.
4. How have gender and family relations changed since the transition to democracy?
5. Discuss and evaluate the challenges that immigration presents in Spain today.
6. Discuss and evaluate the most salient characteristics of Zapatero’s “Second Spanish Transition”?
7. To what extent has Spanish foreign policy (and policy toward the European Union) shifted since the transition to democracy?

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of the course students will be able to:

• engage directly in debates concerning events in Spain currently covered in the news.
• articulate the historical context of regional tensions in Spain today.
• analyze the tremendous changes that have taken place within Spanish society and culture over the past three decades.
• demonstrate knowledge of the major issues relevant to Spaniards and Europeans today, including immigration, unemployment, the economic crisis, gender relations, and the European Union.

CONTENT:
Session 1. Introduction to the course.

Session 2. The Construction of the Spanish State

Session 3. The Legacy of the Past: Francoism and Repression

Session 4. The Legacy of the Past: Francoism and Development

Session 5. The Transition to Democracy

Session 6. Political Parties and Governments since the Transition (1)

Session 7. Political Parties and Governments since the Transition (2)

Session 8. The Legacy of the Transition: The Pact of Memory and Forgetting

Session 9. The Legacy of the Transition: Regions and Regionalization

Session 10. Catalan, Basque, and Galician Nationalisms

Session 11. Controversy in Catalonia: Linguistic Normalization

Session 12. Controversy in the Basque Country: The Persistence of Terrorism

Session 13: Review Session

Session 14: Midterm Exam

Session 15: Spanish Foreign Policy and the Terrorist Attacks of 11 March 2003
Session 16: Spain’s Second Transition? The Socialist Government of José Luis Zapatero

Session 17: Spain and the European Union

Session 18: Gender, Family, and Marriage

Session 19: The Exhumation of Mass Graves and the Historic Memory Law

Session 20: Immigration

Session 21: The Persistence of Political Corruption

Session 22: The Economic Crisis


*Required Readings:* Selection of articles from The Guardian and The Economist

Session 24: **Student Presentation of Paper Topics**

Session 25: **Student Presentation of Paper Topics**

Session 26: **Final exam**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


