

Spanish 4433.280
Senior Capstone
Monday/Wednesday: 12:30-1:50 p.m., PY 203
spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Oxford

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teléfono – 940-397-4144

Oficina: Bea Wood 114

Horas de oficina: MW 8-9; MW 10-12:30; T 8:30-9 and 10-12:00

(but I am in my office much more than that, so feel free to come by at your convenience)

Textos:

1. *Spanish Grammar in Context*, by Kattán-Ibarra and Howkins. ISBN: 978-0-415-72347-3
2. La novela que se va a leer para el ensayo de investigación

Materiales adicionales recomendados:

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, by Gibaldi (7th edition or later)

Please note:

1. This course uses supplemental D2L. Please make sure you access the D2L site **every day** for homework assignments, class updates, additional grammar explanation, practice materials, etc.
2. **As per *The Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR Title 34, Part 600.2)**, “a credit hour is an amount of work [...that] reasonably approximates not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and **a minimum of two hours of out of class student work** each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester.” That is, as per U.S. government guidelines, your spending a minimum of 6 hours per week on homework during this session would be totally reasonable.
3. **If you carry a cell phone or pager, please silence it during class. Text messaging or the use of non-authorized electronic devices is prohibited.** Please speak with me if you have questions.

Prerequisitos:

15 advanced hours in Spanish

Objetivos:

This course is designed for advanced students of Spanish who have completed at least 15 advanced hours of Spanish and/or are completing their coursework requirements within two semesters. Students will review/acquire the tools and knowledge necessary to conduct research and write a term paper in Spanish over a Spanish or Spanish-American novel and a related cultural aspect. Students are expected to read assignments from the text and discuss material in class. Some class sessions will be conducted in a workshop format. Other sessions will be handled in a discussion format.

Additionally, this is the class in which the Department carries out many of its assessment-of-the-program measures. Thus, you will be requested to participate in assessments of your linguistic abilities in Spanish and/or self-assess your abilities at various points throughout the semester. Failure to do so will result in a non-passing grade for the course.

POLICIES

1. **Attendance.** Please note that attendance contributes 10% toward the final grade in this course. Attendance in class is fundamental to the acquisition of language knowledge and ability. It should be understood that enrollment in the class represents a commitment to be in class, every day of class, for the entire class period. If you cannot attend class for some reason, such does not mean that you have the right to simply skip that information but, rather, that you must make a double effort on your part to find out what you missed and what you need to do for the next class period. In fact, the attendance grade is based on your being in class for the entire 80-minute period. Arriving more than 10 minutes after the class start-time (or leaving within 10 minutes of class being officially dismissed) will result in a deduction of 1 point from your overall attendance grade (each occurrence); arriving after 30 minutes (or leaving 30 minutes before class being officially dismissed) will result in a deduction of 2 points (each occurrence). Each absence lowers your attendance grade by 5 points.
2. **Absences.** No absence will be “excused” without written document (telling me orally is not sufficient; I sometimes forget those), and only then will it be excused if it involves an official religious holiday, university activity, illness, death, or other catastrophic event. Any unexcused absence will result of “0” for that day’s activities as well as a loss of attendance points for the day; grades for excused absences will be treated as per #7, below.
Note: Absence on the days of term paper presentations (April 29, May 4, and May 6) and the Final Exam (May 13) will constitute an automatic grade of zero (0) for the entire category of “Attendance” (i.e., your **entire** Attendance grade **for the entire semester** will be a “0”).
3. **Homework and Quizzes.** Regular assignments will be made from the text and from other sources (these will be detailed on the D2L class site that you should check every week). Students are expected to prepare homework (*tarea*) as assigned. Independent study of grammar and vocabulary is also expected. Quizzes, based on homework and class work, will be given. Graded homework and quizzes will be 15% of your final grade. Unless otherwise indicated by the professor at the end of class, only homework placed on the instructor’s desk prior to the beginning of class will be accepted, and you must be in class the entire period (i.e., don’t send it with a friend and don’t come just to turn in the homework; no class attendance means no homework credit).
4. **Semester project/Term paper:**

Written research paper

The written research paper will consist of an original research essay (following the MLA style, 7th, 8th, or 9th edition ONLY) on a topic pre-approved by the professor with **a minimum of 8 pages, excluding the bibliography**. Please be aware—if writing a literary-based paper—that author biography and plot summary are not appropriate content for a research paper and will result in a deduction of the grade assigned to the paper. In order to demonstrate that you have thoroughly researched your topic, a substantial literary review (i.e., brief summaries of what other critics say about your author/topic) is required as a part of the your essay introduction. You should also overtly state what your paper’s thesis is. As well, the instructor is VERY demanding in terms of your following the MLA style manual; if you have any questions

concerning such, be sure to ask! The bibliography must consist of at least 12 secondary sources, of which a **maximum of one (1) may be a non-scholarly** source (use [this guide](#) to help determine if a source is scholarly or non-scholarly). Students should individually consult, in-person or electronically, with the instructor and must obtain permission of the book/cultural topic to study.

Following are deadlines related to your research essay:

- a. Your choice of book to read is due January 21.
 - i. The specific novels/works are first-come, first-serve with no repetition among students.
- b. Your 1000-word book summary is due February 25.
- c. Your thesis statement and initial bibliography is due March 2 and March 4, respectively.
- d. Your 250-word book summary is due March 16.
- e. Your introductory paragraph and bullet-point outline for the entire research essay is due March 25.
- f. An initial draft of the *entire* research essay is due April 20 (bring hard copy to class).
- g. Your *polished*, entirely finished term paper is due April 27.

The term paper will be graded according to the following schemata:

- a) Grammar – 33% - each type of major error (e.g., verbal tenses, repetitive typographical errors, noun-adjective agreement, etc.) will result in a deduction of 10 points; minor errors (e.g., an occasional preposition, less than 3 typographical errors [including accent marks], etc.) will result in a deduction of 5 points.
- b) Format – 33% - each type of major error (e.g., margins, spacing errors [between lines and/or words], works cited formatting, etc.) will result in a deduction of 10 points; minor errors (e.g., an occasional punctuation mark, less than 3 typographical errors, widow/orphan, etc.) will result in a deduction of 5 points.
- c) Content – 33% - each type of major error (e.g., no thesis stated toward/at the beginning of the paper, new ideas introduced in the conclusion, confusing/illogical sentences or sentence fragments, no lit. review, etc.) will result in a deduction of 10 points; minor errors (e.g., less than three indefinite antecedents or non-refuted arguments, etc.) will result in a deduction of 5 points. Not following page-length requirements will result in a deduction of 10 pts per page, or portion thereof, less than the minimum requirement.

No term paper, or portions named above, will be accepted late without penalty (see section #7, below). For that reason it is highly advised—i.e., you **should**—submit these items BEFORE the due date as computer crashes, flash-drive malfunctions, D2L issues, etc. do occur, but **no** excuse/reason will result in a “forgiveness” of the grade penalty.

Thesis statement

One of the most important parts of your term paper is your thesis statement; you will see a possible draft version of your thesis statement in the document containing the novel choices. However, **you should revise that statement to more closely fit with the objectives of your own research essay**. The thesis statement should be **specific**, tell the reader **precisely** what s/he is going to learn upon reading your paper, and answer the question “**So what?**” (i.e., explain why it is important that the reader should take time out of her/his schedule to read your paper). Because the thesis statement is of such extreme importance, it is highly

recommended that you closely read the following website concerning how to create a thesis statement, and what such should contain: [Thesis Statements](#).

Semester project presentation:

- a. **Part I:** April 29 – in front of class; this could be considered a “practice-run”
- b. **Part II:** May 13 – in front of all Spanish faculty members (required by program assessment policies)

The oral presentation of the term paper should be between 7-10 minutes and consist of what you consider the most important points of your written research (prior section, above); i.e., what you think others should glean from your essay (note: you should prepare a two-slide (maximum!) PowerPoint, Prezi or other visual presentation to go along with your oral presentation). The oral presentation may be composed of a 2 minute (maximum!) presentation of plot summary (fyi: plot summary should NEVER be a part of the written presentation), with the remainder of the time being an explanation of your findings/research. Please note: an oral presentation **should not be simply a reading of your notes**—you will be deducted points for such—and you should always keep in mind *throughout the entire* oral and written presentation the main idea that you want your audience to learn (i.e., “What, and why, is what I’m saying important?”). The presentation must be presented “live” and be entirely in Spanish. As well, while preparing your presentation, you should keep in mind that you need to include background information (e.g., history, cultural precedent, [who/what/when/where/why/how?], etc.), present-day events, and implications of your decision (i.e., no decision is entirely good or bad). The audience should also be kept in mind since they will not have read your novel. This is a semester long project; the final project—both the written and oral version—MUST reflect such!

For the grading rubric for the presentation, see D2L → Contents → Ensayo de Investigacion.

5. **Job application:** Part of the capstone experience of this class is searching, and “applying,” for a job of interest to you. This will include taking a simulated “Briggs Myers Personality Types” online exam, finding three jobs of interest currently available and “applying” for one of them, and having your resume and application letter for the aforementioned job critiqued by the MSU Career Management Center. See the calendar of classes for deadlines regarding each item. Note: the job ads **must specifically state** a need or preference for Spanish speakers, degree in Spanish, or make another reference to using your Spanish-language skills.
6. **Late work and “make up.”** Late work is “docked” 10% for each 24-hour period (or portion thereof) past the deadline, up to 48 hours. Any work submitted after 48 hours will receive no credit. There are no “make ups” of any type in this class; in the best of scenarios (i.e., you present written documentation to justify an “excused” absence, you will be assigned a grade of “missing” and the other grades in that section will count more).
7. **Student Honor Creed.**
“As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so.”
“As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, we, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic

honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas that are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.”

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate

8. **Students with Disabilities.** The Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA), is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in the Student Wellness Center, 397-4140.
9. **Safe Zones Statement.** The professor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.
10. **Concealed Handguns on Campus.** Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage regarding [campus-carry](#). If you have questions or concerns, please contact MSU Chief of Police Patrick Coggins.

Research and Creative Activity Opportunities at MSU

Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities (EURECA) is a program that provides opportunities for undergraduate to engage in high-quality research and creative activities with faculty. EURECA provides incentives and funding through a system that supports faculty and students in a cooperative research process. For more information, contact the Office of Undergraduate Research, (940) 397-6275 or eureca@mwsu.edu. Information and resources are available at [EURECA](#).

GRADING COMPONENTS

Final grade category	Location	Overall percentage of grade
Attendance	In-class	10
Homework/Quizzes	D2L	15
Personality Quiz (due January 26)	D2L	5
3 job announcements/job application (critiqued job app due April 6)	D2L	5
Resumes (critiqued version due February 16)	D2L & Career Mgt	5
Term paper – thesis and bibliography	D2L	5
Term paper - intro and outline	D2L	5
Term paper – April 20 draft of all	D2L	10
Term paper – polished version (April 27)	D2L	20
Term paper – oral presentation	In-class	10
Term paper – presentation to faculty	In-class	10

General Class calendar

- See the D2L class site