



## Boston University Study Abroad Madrid

### CAS PO 249: Contemporary Spain: Political and Social Movements in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Instructor:** Lucas Pascual Bordón, PhD, [lucaspb@bu.edu](mailto:lucaspb@bu.edu)

**Office Hours:** Any time by appointment

**Class:** Mondays, 4:45–7:45 pm, plus mandatory field trips (42 total contact hours)

**Room:** TBA

**Online:** Blackboard - [learn.bu.edu](https://learn.bu.edu)

**Credits:** This class is worth 4 credits and is taught entirely in Spanish.

**First-Year Writing Seminar (e.g., WR 100 or 120)**

#### **Course Description:**

Spain has evolved a great deal in recent decades. In the middle of the 20th century, Spain was quite homogenous and may have been considered “behind the times” to an outsider. However, Spain today is a modern and multicultural country. This course aims to highlight this transformation, present a general scope of the country, and compare its sociopolitical situation with that of its European neighbors. Students will also have the opportunity to compare it with their home country—whether that be the United States or other countries. All of these topics will be distributed among five units:

- 1. European democracies: The Spanish Political System**
- 2. European and Spanish challenges and policies of the 21st century**
- 3. Women: fighting for equality**
- 4. Regionalism and nationalist demands**
- 5. Multicultural Spain: coexisting with diversity**

## **General Course Objectives:**

### **By the end of this course, students will:**

1. Acquire knowledge of the political situation in Spain: the government and its institutions.
2. Understand the function of the European Union and analyze its influence on Spanish politics.
3. Use their background knowledge to compare aspects of the sociopolitical realities of Spain and the United States: government systems (parliamentary monarchy vs. constitutional republic), economic situations, and principal governmental policies (immigration, healthcare, the environment).
4. Understand the various social movements in Spain and, using their own experiences, compare this to those in the United States.
5. Understand the process of achieving regional, cultural, and linguistic diversity in Spain: nationalist demands.
6. Analyze Spain's international relations with members of the European Union and the United States.

## **Boston University HUB Learning Outcomes**

### **1. Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy**

- Using their own background knowledge and experiences along with the material that will be studied in class, students will analyze and compare two different sociopolitical realities: that of Spain and that of the United States. They will be able to compare the electoral system and respective government institutions of each. By examining Spanish policies on issues such as immigration, the environment, and the healthcare crisis, students will be able to identify parallelisms and differences among these social movements, paying particular attention to concepts such as feminism and immigration in both cultures.
- The very nature of this course is essential for the students' development as global citizens. This class is taught entirely in Spanish and they will learn about Spain's sociopolitical situation while immersed in the very culture in which they are studying. The city of Madrid serves as the setting to experience firsthand what they learn in the classroom. Additionally, this course offers various field trips to give students an authentic, inside look at the topics covered in class (details below).

### **2. Writing-Intensive**

- Students will complete their written work, in Spanish, maintaining a coherent structure and including well-supported arguments:
  1. At the conclusion of each unit, students will be required to submit a four-to-five-page essay approximately every 2-3 weeks, totaling four essays over the duration of the course. These essays serve the crucial purpose of enhancing and expanding upon the topics previously covered in class, readings, and on field trips. All readings, films, and class activities are geared toward fostering essay preparation. Detailed instructions for essay writing are

outlined in the 'Assessments' section below.

2. Students will have ample opportunity to receive feedback in order to refine their essays. As outlined in further detail in the 'Assessments' section below, students will receive feedback from the instructor throughout each phase of researching and writing their essays, including peer-to-peer reviews from their classmates as well.
- Students will interpret and make effective use of four different types of sources:
    1. Scientific literature: chapters from manuals and scientific articles. Students will extract the main ideas from each reading and will then use their own words to express their ideas. The debates/ discussions in the classroom, prior to submitting these essays, will also serve as a basis for their writing. At the end of every essay, all works and readings should be cited. In addition, the authors that support their conclusions should also be cited.
    2. News articles: Spanish media is not always objective. The content is often influenced by the political ideology of the editor. For this reason, students will read journalistic texts from various sources and, whenever possible, will read opposing viewpoints on the same subject. Students will complete a critical analysis of these sources. Students should make a point to comment on any controversial topics that are debated during class in their essays.
    3. Films: Students will watch Spanish films that deal with current social or political topics throughout the six units of the course, and will discuss them both in class as well as in their essays. Students must analyze the context and message that the filmmaker is trying to convey, taking into consideration any emotional or political bias.
    4. Online resources: students will comment on graphs, statistics, and surveys during class. They should then cite these documents in their written work. These resources allow students to support their arguments with real-life, present-day statistics and figures and they will learn to effectively incorporate these resources into their work to enhance and support their arguments.

### **3. Critical Thinking**

- Students will independently formulate conclusions following a comprehensive analysis of the sociopolitical landscape in Spain, drawing insights from in-class discussions, texts, graphs, surveys, statistics, and films. It's important to recognize that certain sources, including news media and films, often exhibit biases stemming from the author's political stance. Therefore, students will analyze the key issues affecting Spanish politics from various perspectives in order to distinguish different political trends in Spain and their representation in the media. In this regard, special emphasis will be placed on the analysis of Spain's major media outlets and their editorial stance. We will also place a particular focus on exploring the phenomenon of "fake news" and how to discern it from factual information. Acquiring insight into the Spanish landscape, its diverse political and social inclinations, and their portrayal in the Spanish media will empower students to approach

global issues (climate change, unemployment, feminism) with a broader international perspective, thus fostering a more discerning viewpoint.

- Students will apply what they've learned, gather what they've observed, and create their own coherent, well-founded arguments which will be later expressed through their written work and group presentations. They will also have to participate in debates and discussions in class with their classmates. During these activities, they will be invited to share their thoughts and opinions and in turn, critically (yet respectfully) analyze the arguments of their peers.

### **Course format and attendance:**

This course is worth 4 credits and has a total of 42 contact hours. These hours are distributed over twelve class meetings, several individual tutoring sessions, and three mandatory field trips. Attendance is mandatory. Any unexcused absences will negatively affect the final grade. Students are expected to have prepared before each class session by reading over the previously-assigned materials (readings, films, online resources, etc.). Students will be asked questions on these materials during each class session and their answers will be noted.

### **Assessments:**

At the conclusion of each unit, students will be tasked with composing an essay. In the final unit, students will prepare for a class debate.

**Essays:** The essays involve research articles covering a broad topic related to the principal themes of each unit, enabling students to later concentrate on specific areas they wish to expand upon further. The designated topics for each unit are as follows:

Essay 1: "The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Contemporary Spanish Political Dynamics"

Essay 2: "The 15M Movement: From the Streets to the Institutions"

Essay 3: "The 'Yes Means Yes' Law: Exploring Feminist Mobilization and Legal Reform"

Essay 4: "Solidarity and Activism: The Role of Social Movements in the Reception of Migrants in Spain"

**Writing instruction:** The essay writing process will begin in the classroom through an initial research and group debate approach to identify potential areas to explore further. During this phase, students will participate in discussions and present their ideas to their peers, fostering an environment where they can openly receive recommendations and suggestions regarding the bibliography, and contribute insight of their own. This collaborative effort will expose students to topics beyond their own and they can then conduct further research to delve deeper into their chosen topic.

Once students have selected the specific area they'd like to research, they will draft an abstract to share with one of their classmates for a peer-to-peer review. The draft (1 page, Times New Roman

12, double-spaced) should include a brief summary of the main theme or themes of the essay, along with a list of consulted bibliography. For the peer-to-peer review, students will fill out a document provided by the instructor in which they must provide feedback, pose questions, and make a bibliographic recommendation. This process encourages students to explore deeper into the issues related to the unit's topic, enriching their own essays.

Following the review of the abstract, students will proceed to draft an initial version of the essay, which will be reviewed and discussed with the instructor during tutoring sessions. Taking the instructor's feedback into consideration, students will compose the final version.

**Debate:** The final unit will feature a debate on the Catalan independence movement and its implications for contemporary Spanish politics. To organize this, the class will be split into two groups: one in support of independence and the other against it.

Each group will be responsible for drafting a script that outlines their respective arguments and perspectives, drawing upon the ideas of political parties and media outlets aligned with their position in the debate. Moreover, to promote critical analysis, both groups will review and counter each other's scripts, facilitating a comprehensive comparison of ideas and arguments.

The instructor will guide the debate using the provided script as a framework. Each student will be expected to participate at least twice: once by presenting an argument and again by responding to a point made by the opposing group.

**Attendance and participation:** attendance is mandatory and participation will be factored into the final grade.

### **Grading:**

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|--|-----|
| • 4 written papers (one for each unit) | 60% |
| • 1 Debate on class                    | 20% |
| • Attendance / participation           | 20% |

### **Academic Conduct Code**

Academic integrity is expected of all students. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the university's Academic Conduct Code:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

### **Course Materials**

- All mandatory readings are available on Blackboard ([learn.bu.edu](http://learn.bu.edu))
- All mandatory films will also be made available to students.

### **Online Resources**

- *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS)*. Institución adscrita al Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Memoria Democrática del Gobierno de España. Periodic surveys on the opinions of the Spanish population on various subjects: voting

intention, religious practices, etc. [www.cis.es](http://www.cis.es)

- *Delegación del Gobierno Contra la Violencia de Género*: institución adscrita al Ministerio de Igualdad del Gobierno de España. Current figures and statistics on gender-based violence: <https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/home.htm>
- *Dirección General de Diversidad Sexual y Derechos LGTBI*: recent creation of the Ministry of Equality of the Spanish government, focused on the protection of sexual diversity and the rights of historically marginalized groups of the LGBTQ+ community <https://www.igualdad.gob.es/ministerio/dgltbi/Paginas/index.aspx>
- *Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)*: institución adscrita al Ministerio de Asuntos Económicos y Transformación Digital del Gobierno de España. Facts and figures about various topics (such as immigration and unemployment) broken down by age, sex, etc. [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)
- *European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)*: Information on gender-based violence in the 27 countries of the EU. <https://eige.europa.eu>

*Web oficial de la Unión Europea*: Information on the EU, member countries, politics, and policies on environmental issues, immigration, and foreign policy. [https://europa.eu/european-union/index\\_es](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_es)

### **Field trips:**

**Museo Reina Sofía**: Visit to the galleries dedicated to Picasso's Guernica and the Spanish Civil War, as well as the galleries dedicated to social movements in Spain. Duration: 2 hours.

**Madrid city of (counter)power**: Field trip around Madrid exploring the main buildings associated with political, economic, or cultural power in the city. Duration: 2 hours

**Valle de los Caídos** (San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid): Monument representative of the Francoist dictatorship. The remains of General Franco were buried here for 44 years (1975-2019). Presently, there is an intense debate about the future of his remains that affects both Spanish politics and society. Duration: 6 hours.

## Course Calendar:

### 1. European democracies: The Spanish Political System

#### **Session 1 - From dictatorship to democracy and Spain's joining of the European Union**

**Readings:** C. J. Ross, "The Spanish State" in *Contemporary Spain*, London: Arnold, 2002, pp. 20-53; J. L. Cebrián, "¿Que hace el Rey?" en *El País* (10 / 06 / 1979).

**Films (choose one):** *Ay, Carmela* (Drama, 1990); *Tierra y libertad* (Drama bélico, 1995); *Pájaros de papel* (Drama, 2010). These films will provide historical context for this unit.

#### **Session 2 - Fieldtrip: Valle de los Caídos: Monument representative of the Francoist dictatorship.**

The remains of General Franco were buried here for 44 years (1975-2019). Presently, there is an intense debate about the future of his remains that affects both Spanish politics and society.

Duration: 6 hours

**Essay 1:** Abstract

#### **Session 3 - How the Spanish political system works, the role of the European Union and comparison with the political systems in North America.**

**Readings:** L. Palacios Bañuelos, "Cuarenta años de democracia. Reflexiones", en *La Albolafia: Revista de Humanidades y Cultura*, Nº 14, 2018, pp. 193-212; "¿Dónde están y cómo funcionan las principales monarquías del mundo?" en *El Confidencial* (09 / 06 / 2014); I. de Reyes, "Por qué el rey Felipe VI de España no será coronado" en *BBC* (18 / 06 / 2014).

**Essay 1:** Draft

**Session 4 - Field trip: Museo Reina Sofía:** Visit to the galleries dedicated to Picasso's Guernica and the Spanish Civil War, as well as the galleries dedicated to social movements in Spain. Duration: 2 hours.

**Essay 1:** Final version

## 2. European and Spanish politics facing 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges:

### Session 5 - Spain and the European Union in a global context:

*Readings:* Elina Viilup, “La UE, ni enano político ni gusano militar”, en *Por la Paz*, Nº 23: La UE, ¿un actor de paz real?, 2015, ICIP; “Futuro de Europa: el cambio climático es el mayor reto para la UE”, en *Noticias del Parlamento Europeo* (26/01(2022)).

### Session 6 - The end of bipartisanship and the polarization of Spanish politics (2015-2023):

*Readings:* ROA, S. De, “Movimiento 15 M. Cuidado que viene el ciudadano”, en *Mas poder local*, Nº 6, 2011, pp. 6-19. O. Sánchez Muñoz, “El fin (momentáneo) del bipartidismo en España: Análisis de los resultados electorales de 2015 y 2016” en *Revista Española de Derecho Constitucional*, 109, pp. 237-260); B. Amigot, “El escenario político tras la crisis: fin del bipartidismo y auge de Podemos” en *Expansión. Com* (06 / 11 / 2014);).

*Film:* *Perdiendo el norte* (Comedy, 2015). This film deals with current topics related to this session.

**Essay 2:** Abstract

### Session 7 - Populism and disinformation in Spanish and European politics.

*Readings:* G., Tortella, “Del Fascismo al Populismo” en *El Mundo* (09 / 05 / 2016); Mazower, “La bestia del fascismo” en *El País* (09 / 11 / 2016).

**Essay 2:** Draft

**Session 8 - Madrid city of (counter)power:** Field trip around Madrid exploring the main buildings associated with political, economic, or cultural power in the city. Duration: 2 hours

**Essay 2:** Final version

## 3. Women: fighting for equality

**Session 9 - Characteristics of Spanish feminism and legislative advances in the fight for equality and comparing these movements in Spain vs. North America.**

*Readings:* J. J. Albert Márquez, y A. Soto Arteaga, “Las leyes de igualdad de género en España”, en *Ciencia, Técnica y Maestreaming Social*, Nº 2, 2018, pp. 83-98; A. Requena Aguilar, “De las huelgas del 8M a *El violador eres tú*: el feminismo resurge como movimiento de masas” en *El Diario.es* (26 / 12 / 2019).

**Essay 3:** Abstract

**Session 10 - Gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ rights in Spain and Europe.**



**Readings:** M. E. Maeso Fernández, “Reflexiones sobre la violencia de género de una historiadora” en *NURE INV* (14) 91, 2017- 2018; L. Albor, “La lucha contra la violencia de género, una asignatura pendiente en Europa” en *ABC* (16 / 08 / 2018); A. Alfageme, “Un país que cambia” en *El País* (30 / 06 / 2015); P. Álvarez e I. Valdés, “Diez países de la UE no tienen datos fiables de violencia machista” en *El País* (30 / 06 / 2019). **Essay 3:** Draft

#### **4. Multicultural Spain: coexisting with diversity**

**Session 11 - From a Catholic, homogenous Spain to a secular, multicultural Spain. Synthesis of the great socioeconomic transformation of the last four decades.**

**Readings:** A. Pérez Agote Poveda, “Sociología histórica del Nacional Catolicismo español”, en *Historia Contemporánea*, 26, 2003, pp. 207-237; H. Fouce, “De la agitación a la Movida: Políticas culturales y música popular en la Transición Española” en *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, Nº 1, 2009, pp. 143-153;

**Film:** *Un franco, catorce pesetas* (Comedy, 2006). This film provides historical context for this session.

**Essay 3:** Final version

**Essay 4:** Abstract

**Session 12 - A diverse and multicultural Spain. Analysis of immigration in Spain: migratory flows, irregular immigration, and European control policies.**

**Readings:** R. Briones Gómez, “La integración del otro en la emergente España multicultural” en *Gazeta de Antropología*, 2007, 23; A. Lozano, “Por qué gana Vox en El Ejido: Franco en los bares y la calle Manolo Escobar copado por magrebíes” en *El Español* (04 / 12 / 2018).

**Essay 4:** Draft

#### **5. Regionalism and nationalist demands: autonomous regions in Spain**

**Session 13 - Regional and linguistic diversity in Spain**

**Readings:** Chapter 1. “Spain: Geography, Population, History and Culture”, in *Spain Today*. Madrid: Ministerio de la Presidencia, 2014, pp. 7-59. **Readings:** C. J. Ross, “Regionalization and Regionalism”, in *Contemporary Spain*, London: Arnold, 2002, pp. 89-124

**Online resources:** Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)

**Film:** *Ocho apellidos vascos* (Comedy, 2014). This is a satire film about regionalism in Spain.

**Essay 4:** Final version

**Session 14 - The crisis of Catalonia (2014-2023): Spain's position and that of the European Union.**

**Readings:** *El conflicto catalán*. Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano, 2017.

**Film:** *Ocho apellidos catalanes* (Comedy, 2015). This is a satire film about regionalism in Spain.

**Debate on class**

### **"Additional Notes"**

Changes have been made to the WIN section. The writing instructions, feedback, and peer-to-peer review guidelines have been further detailed in the 'Assessments' section