

SPAN 4500/6500: “Intercultural Seminar” Capstone Course Spring 2026

Professor: Dr. Paul Alonso

Format: Online Class (Tuesdays 12:30-1:45 PM, synchronous online, + 1.5 credits asynchronous online)

Office hours: Tuesdays, 11:30-12:30 pm (y cita previa por correo electrónico)

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Course Description:

SPAN 4500/6500, “*Intercultural Seminar in Spanish*,” provides an experience of intercultural reflection for students who have already completed a program of study or work abroad in a Spanish-speaking country. This course has three interrelated focuses:

- To explore the concept of culture.
- To explore different dimensions of cultural interpretation.
- To prepare students for a professional future in which the use of Spanish and knowledge of Hispanic cultures are necessary.

SPAN 4500 is designed to function as the Spanish “Capstone Course,” that is, a culminating class for students in Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies (ALIS), International Affairs and Modern Languages (IAML), Global Economics and Modern Languages (GEML), or students who have completed the “International Plan” (IP) in Spanish-speaking countries.

SPAN 4500 and its graduate counterpart SPAN 6500 are required for undergraduate and graduate majors respectively of the ALIS program. Designed to function as the culminating “Capstone” intercultural seminar for undergraduate language majors, this course will be taken as 6500 by those ALIS majors pursuing the BS-MS degree.

The main objective of the intercultural seminar is to foster awareness of the problems and pitfalls of using one’s own culture to analyze other cultures—since doing so leads to invalid or incomplete judgments and generalizations. We will learn to analyze a culture within the context of that culture itself, as well as through an intercultural analysis.

COURSE DYNAMICS AND COMMUNICATION

This is an online course: on Tuesdays we will meet via Zoom from 12:30–1:45 pm (the link is on Canvas). In addition, you will have an exclusively online and asynchronous activity, such as participating in a weekly Canvas discussion forum or completing a special assignment. Forum participation must be completed before the deadlines indicated on Canvas. The weekly course materials will be available on Canvas. Each week will include a set of readings, videos, discussion forums, and/or weekly assignments. Students must complete the readings, watch the videos, and participate in the weekly forums.

Assignment due dates (writing assignments, oral presentations, and final projects) are listed on Canvas and in the course calendar. Students must meet these deadlines. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Each week, the new weekly module will be activated. The instructor will stay in contact with students through synchronous classes or email and will be available for any questions. If students have a question, they may post it in the Questions Forum (so classmates can also see it) or contact the instructor by email or by sending a message through Canvas. Messages will be answered within 24–36 hours.

Course Goals

The primary goals of this course are as follows:

- To understand the concept of culture and intercultural communication
- To understand the different dimensions of cultural analysis
- To recognize stereotype and hyper-generalization in (one's own and others') cross-cultural comparison
- To construct supported and particularistic cultural descriptions
- To demonstrate critical thinking in the analysis of cultural case studies
- To develop the use of the target language and cultural knowledge necessary for a professional future

Core IMPACTS course

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Arts, Humanities & Ethics area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence

GLOBAL SEAL OF BILITERACY

The [Global Seal of Biliteracy](#) is an internationally recognized credential that certifies your language skills in both English and at least one other language. It offers a valuable way to demonstrate your fluency to employers, graduate schools, and scholarship programs. The School

of Modern Languages covers the cost for this for B.S. ALIS, IAML, and GEML majors and M.S. ALIS and M.S. GMC students.

Global Seal of Biliteracy for Modern Languages Majors and Graduate Students

During their senior year, typically in their capstone seminar (FREN 4500, GRMN 4500, SPAN 4500 etc.), majors in ALIS, IAML, or GEML will complete the Oral Proficiency Interview – Computer ([OPI-C](#)) and the Writing Proficiency Test ([WPT](#)) in the target language. Exams are proctored remotely by ACTFL (which administers the tests), so students have flexibility in when they take them. Your Instructor will make exam familiarization materials available to you ahead of time. If you require exam accommodations, please alert your instructor as soon as possible. Because this is part of the Capstone class, we won't have classes during the period(s) you take the exam.

Please consult with your [program director](#) if you plan to take the capstone at another time. The same opportunity is available to graduate students in M.S. ALIS and M.S. GMC.

The School of Modern Languages covers the cost for this for B.S. ALIS, IAML, and GEML majors and M.S. ALIS and M.S. GMC students

Exam scores are submitted by the School to the Global Seal of Biliteracy organization.

You'll graduate with two nationally recognized certifications:

1. ACTFL proficiency scores for professional and academic use.
2. The Global Seal, an employer-friendly credential that highlights your fluency.

For more information, please follow this [link](#)

Global Seal of Biliteracy for non-Modern Languages Majors

Students outside the School of Modern Languages can still earn the Global Seal through Georgia Tech. To apply:

1. Register for the [OPI-C](#) and [WPT](#) exams through [ACTFL](#).
2. Send your results to [Tia Williams](#) in the School of Modern Languages.
3. Include the email address where you'd like your certificate sent.
4. Complete testing at least six weeks before graduation to ensure timely processing.

Note: Non-Modern Languages majors are responsible for covering the exam costs on their own.

For more information, please follow this [link](#)

- **As part of the Capstone class, we won't have classes the week of February 17th, so you can take these exams then.**

Suggested Reading for the class:

- Neuliep, James. "Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach." Sage.

Distribución de la nota:

- Correcciones del Ensayo 1 (50%) y el Ensayo 2 (50%) 20%
- Presentación en clase sobre lectura de dimensión cultural 10%
- Proyecto de análisis de un método de comparación cultural 15%
- Análisis de película 10%
- Entrevista Personal/Profesional 10%
- Participación activa en los foros y discusiones de clase 15%
- Video con PPT y narración explicando las siete dimensiones culturales estudiadas y una dimensión adicional 20%

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- Revisions of Essay 1 (50%) and Essay 2 (50%) –20%
- In-class presentation on a cultural dimension reading — 10%
- Analysis project of a cultural comparison method — 15%
- Film analysis — 10%
- Personal/Professional Interview – 10%
- Active participation in forums and class discussions — 15%
- Video with PowerPoint and narration explaining the seven cultural dimensions studied and one additional dimension — 20%

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Attendance:

Attendance to class is mandatory and essential. Two absences without a formal excuse will result in a 5-point deduction of the final grade. Any additional absence will result in an additional 3-point deduction of the final grade. Students should arrive on time; two tardy arrivals will be counted as an absence from the course. If a student misses class, it is his/her responsibility to stay updated on the contents and homework of the course. Official absences are allowed following the Institute guidelines: “Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.”

OJO: Si un estudiante falta a clase, es responsable por la materia que se presentó ese día – primero consulten a sus compañeros y luego, si tienen dudas, hagan una cita con el profesor.

Academic Honesty:

As a student at Georgia Tech, you are expected to fully understand and to carefully follow the policies and standards of academic honesty set forth in *The Student Handbook*, which is available from the office of the Dean of Students and online. Lack of familiarity with the university’s policy on academic honesty will not be accepted as an excuse or justification for violations. The policy set forth in the Handbook offers examples of plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaborations. If you have any questions, or concerns about this policy, you should

consult with your academic advisor, instructor, or department chair. Confirmed violations will result in appropriate disciplinary actions.

While several forms of academic dishonesty are possible, the most common form is plagiarism, the essence of which is representing the work of others as your own by not attributing sources of ideas and facts, failing to indicate and cite direct quotations, or falsifying citations. Any widely used style guide, such as the APA, will offer guidelines regarding attribution, quotation, and citation, and these rules should be followed completely and consistently. These rules apply equally to books, journals, newspapers, other hard copy publications, and materials obtained over the Internet.

