



# SPAN 4020 - Advanced Conversation

Valdosta State University  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Modern and Classical Languages

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## course info

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| Course Number | SPAN 4020                                                                                     |
| Course Name   | Advanced Conversation                                                                         |
| Credits       | 3.0                                                                                           |
| Prerequisites | SPAN 3010, at least one 3000-level or 4000-level course (at VSU), or permission of instructor |

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## description

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| <b>Course Description</b> | An intensive approach to spoken Spanish at the <b>advanced level</b> with emphasis on increasing the speaking performance of students through focused 'units' with an eye to preparing them to take the exit assessment interview (the Oral Proficiency Interview) at the end of their program of study.. The design of the course is to expose students to many areas of vocabulary and grammar not presented in traditional university courses, but that one generally learns through life in a foreign country. SPAN 4020 may be repeated for a maximum of <b>6 credit hours</b> .                                                                                    |
| <b>Goal</b>               | The main goal of this class is to teach you how to SPEAK and understand SPOKEN Spanish well. Your progress in class will be evaluated based on two things, best described as Communication and Details. Communication is about making yourself understood regardless of whether you make errors involving grammar or syntax. Proper pronunciation is often a part of this. And Details is all about learning correct spelling, grammar, or syntax (word order) as well as idiomatic expressions. In other words, 'details' are the elements of Spanish that make it different from English (and from other languages) and that you will need to demonstrate in speaking. |

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## textbook

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| <b>textbook</b> | <i>There is no text that must be purchased. Various materials will be posted in BlazeView and it will be the student's responsibility to download and use these items. Students will also have to find some written materials (i.e. articles, stories, etc.) in various forms to use as the basis of certain homework and in-class assignments.</i> |
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## course rules

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| <b>Student Responsibility Statement</b> | It is the student's responsibility to know the administrative procedures established by the University that will be observed in this class. This is especially important regarding dropping or withdrawing from courses of instruction. Students must adhere to deadlines for drops and withdrawals in order to avoid academic and financial penalties.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Attendance + Lateness</b>            | Upon reaching your <b>fifth unexcused absence</b> , you will automatically receive a grade of <b>F</b> in this course. No exceptions will be made. Chronic lateness will have an adverse effect on the student's final grade.<br><br>The following are examples of absences <b>NOT</b> considered excused: not feeling well / feeling sick, even with a doctor's note; having a previously scheduled doctor's appointment; car trouble; problems with a roommate or boyfriend / girlfriend; being in jail, among others. The following may be considered as excused absences but the student <b>MUST</b> provide documentation: participation in a VSU team's scheduled sporting event; emergency room visit or hospital stay; car accident on the day of the absence; family emergency involving immediate family member; child's documented illness, (6) military duty. |

If you are absent on the day of a scheduled exam, you will receive a zero and will not be able to make up the exam without a documented excuse. If you miss a quiz, you may come to my regular office hours *prior to your next class* to make up the missed quiz (no excuse required).

**Cell Phones,  
Food, Drinks**

All mobile telephones must be turned off and put away during class hours. If I see your mobile phone out (even if it is not in use) or if I see you texting secretly, you will lose **10 points** off your Class Participation Grade **for each incident**. All food is prohibited however drinks are allowed.

**Academic Integrity**

Cheating, copying and plagiarism are forms of academic dishonesty and constitute a very serious offence. Participation in such violations may result in failure or even dismissal from VSU. No credit will be given for the work done. Even if you study or practice with a classmate, be sure to prepare your own individual work unless it is a group assignment. "Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and the faculty members' syllabi. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics. The full code is available at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

## compliance

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**title ix statement**

Valdosta State University (VSU) is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. VSU is dedicated to creating an environment where all campus community members feel valued, respected, and included. Valdosta State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including pregnancy status, sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, in the University's programs and activities as required by applicable laws and regulations such as Title IX. The individual designated with responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies is the University's Title IX Coordinator: Director of the Office of Social Equity, [titleix@valdosta.edu](mailto:titleix@valdosta.edu), 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia 31608, 229-333-5463.

**americans with  
disabilities act**

Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you believe that you are covered under this act, Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall South. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farbar Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit VSU's Access Office or email: [access@valdosta.edu](mailto:access@valdosta.edu).

## standards, goals, outcomes

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**statements**

Learning Goals for the VSU General Education Core may be accessed at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/VSUCore.shtml>

The Area C Learning Goal applicable to this course is: students will analyze, evaluate, and interpret diverse forms of human communication. In this document ACTFL refers to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines, which can be found at: <http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/languagelearning/OtherResources/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines/contents.htm>  
And at: (Speaking, revised 1999; Writing, revised 2001) <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4236>

**guidelines**

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (**Intermediate High** or **Advanced Low**)  
Upon completion of the course the student will demonstrate proficiency in three language skills (listening, reading, and speaking) at the **Intermediate High** or **Advanced Low** level of proficiency as defined by the ACTFL and an awareness of various sociocultural aspects and the distinctiveness of certain cultural traditions.

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Valdosta State General Education Core Goals can be found at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/VSUCore.shtml>

The Program outcomes for the Spanish program can be found at the following site: <http://www.valdosta.edu/mcl/assessments.shtml>

Future and prospective teachers (Foreign Language Education majors) may consult the Conceptual Framework of the College of Education at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/ecre/documents/COEConceptualFrameworkELEMENTSANDINDICATORS2.doc>

## Comprehensive Assessment Rubric (To be completed for every student)

|                                                                                                                                                                    | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task completion<br>Self-directedness and thoroughness in fulfilling the requirements of the situation<br>Score =                                                   | Completes all required tasks without prompting or questioning by the instructor. Provides most details/data essential to the transaction.                                                                                                  | Completes most required tasks without prompting. Needs to be questioned to provide some details/data essential to the transaction.                                                                                                           | Completes some required tasks without prompting. Needs to be questioned to provide many details/data essential to the transaction.                                                                                                                     | Completes very few required tasks without excessive prompting. Needs to be questioned to provide most details/data essential to the transaction.                                                                             |
| Comprehension and Interpersonal Communicative Strategies<br>Active participation and responsiveness in conversation; Ability to clarify misunderstanding<br>Score= | Consistently participates actively and responds in conversation; usually clarifies by asking questions. Responds appropriately to unexpected complications.                                                                                | Almost always participates actively and responds in conversation; often clarifies by asking questions. Hesitates a bit in comprehending unexpected complications, but then responds appropriately.                                           | Often participates actively and responds in conversation. May avoid attempts at clarification. Hesitates a great deal in comprehending unexpected complications and/or does not respond appropriately.                                                 | Rarely participates actively or responds in conversation. Avoids any attempt at clarification. Shows evidence of not comprehending unexpected complications and/or cannot respond to them at all.                            |
| Vocabulary<br>Appropriate, varied, and rich use of words in context<br>Score =                                                                                     | Consistently uses appropriate and logical vocabulary for the context. Uses a broad range and variety of vocabulary.                                                                                                                        | Almost always uses appropriate and logical vocabulary for the context. Uses a somewhat limited range and variety of vocabulary.                                                                                                              | Often uses appropriate and logical vocabulary for the context. Uses a more limited range and variety of vocabulary.                                                                                                                                    | Rarely uses appropriate or logical vocabulary for the context. Uses a clearly limited range and variety of vocabulary.                                                                                                       |
| Grammar<br>Accurate word order, verb endings, noun/adjective agreement<br>Score=                                                                                   | Consistently uses well-constructed sentences. Controls almost all verb conjugations and consistently observes agreement. Almost perfect; some minor, very few major errors.                                                                | Almost always uses well-constructed sentences. Controls most verb conjugations and almost always observes agreement. Majority of structures are accurate.                                                                                    | Often uses well-constructed sentences. Controls some verb conjugations and frequently observes agreement. Approximately half of structures are accurate.                                                                                               | Rarely uses well-constructed sentences. Controls very few verb conjugations and rarely observes agreement. Less than half of structures are accurate.                                                                        |
| Comprehensibility<br>Degree to which the language produced is understandable to a native speaker<br>Score =                                                        | Pronunciation is consistently correct, especially in terms of vowel sounds. Very few words are mispronounced, and there is very little English interference. Very few brief pauses to reorganize thoughts. Message totally comprehensible. | Pronunciation is almost always correct. Some words are mispronounced, there is some English interference, but utterances are still understandable. One or two pauses of somewhat considerable length. Majority of message is comprehensible. | Pronunciation is often correct. Many words are mispronounced, there is a lot of English interference which often makes utterances difficult to understand. Several pauses of more considerable length. Approximately 1/2 of message is comprehensible. | Pronunciation is rarely correct. Most words are mispronounced, English is used, and most utterances are not understandable. Number and length of pauses distracts significantly. Less than 1/2 of message is comprehensible. |
| Total raw score                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

\*This rubric was adapted with slight modifications with the permission of Dr. Eileen Glisan of the Spanish and Teacher Education Program at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania

**Course Outcomes**At the end of instruction in SPAN 4020 the learner is able to:

1. Hold a conversation on, as well as present and defend an opinion on, a wide range of topics that one might find in a daily newspaper, or magazine, or other periodical, including tabloids.
2. Speak on a wealth of topics in all verb tenses in Spanish with few errors.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with and general use of authentic idiomatic expressions in Spanish, in addition to the ability to assimilate new expressions.
4. Narrate events with a long and/or complex story structure, employing all necessary verb tenses with few errors.

ACTFL Target Level: **Intermediate High / Advanced Low**

| Course Outcomes | * Grade Components used to Measure Outcomes | Types of Assessments                                                                                  | ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards | VSU General Education Outcomes | Projected Major Outcomes |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1               |                                             | Formative written and oral assessments                                                                | 1.a, 1.b                      | 2,3,4,7                        | 1,2,3,4,6,9              |
| 2               |                                             | Formative written and oral assessments                                                                | 1,b, 1,c                      | 2,3,4,7                        | 1,2,3,4,6,9              |
| 3               |                                             | Formative written and oral assessments                                                                | 1.a,1.b, 2.a                  | 3,4,6,7                        | 1,2,3,4,6, 9             |
| 4               |                                             | Formative written and oral assessments<br>Summative written examination<br>Summative oral examination | 1.a, 1.b, 1.c                 | 3,4,6,7                        | 1,2,3,4,6, 9             |

\*This column refers to the evaluation activities listed under **Mark Breakdown** of this syllabus.

# course particulars

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## Mark Breakdown (i.e. Grade)

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the following percentages:

1. In-Class Work (assignments, daily practices, participation)..... 30%
3. Semester Exams (20% each)..... 40%
4. Final Oral Interview..... 30%

In-Class Work: I will assign homework on a regular basis, and you will receive a grade based on the quality of your work. Be advised that your grades in this area will be based on three things: the mechanics of your speech (i.e. pronunciation, grammar and syntax, vocabulary, and use of idiomatic expressions), the general flow (i.e. how fluid or choppy your speech is), and the content of your ideas (i.e. this is about how interesting or cogent or insightful your ideas are; I do not make judgment about whether those ideas are 'wrong' or 'right'). I will also give occasional oral quizzes about which you will receive prior warning. Additionally, you will receive a daily grade based on your level of participation regardless of the quality of work you perform. If you come to class unprepared, or if you do not engage actively in class discussions, this grade will be very low.

If you never speak in class, your oral proficiency grade will be low. If you are too shy to speak aloud in class or if you would simply rather not do it, you should take some other professor's class. The overall grade in this area will be established through the following distribution of elements:

(1) Mechanics: This involves averaging grades together based on *pronunciation, grammar and syntax, use of verbs, vocabulary, and flow* (i.e. fluidity of speech).

Pronunciation + Clarity: Does the student make an effort to pronounce authentically and clearly, or do elements of the native language (sound, cadence, rhythm) dominate speech? At this level, the student should display some hallmarks of good advanced-level proficiency.

Grammar + Syntax: Does the student show good use of all pronouns and proper word order, or does English grammar and syntax dominate? Is it apparent that the student is translating from English word for word into Spanish, or does s/he employ authentic idiomatic structures?

Verbs: The student should have perfect command of subject-verb agreement with no mistakes present in any verb tense. Additionally, the student should have effortless, near-native command of the **present indicative, present progressive, preterite, imperfect, and present perfect** verb tenses. Competent use of the **present subjunctive** is encouraged, and use of the **past subjunctive** is explored.

Flow: This refers to the fluidity of the student's speech. Often students get stuck in the habit of translating word for word from English into Spanish as they speak, and this leads to a very halting, disjointed manner of speech. Students should show good progress in eliminating that trend and showing smooth sentence transition.

(2) Vocabulary: The student should show an intermediate-level vocabulary and be able to discuss any topic at least to a small degree. As the semester progresses, the student should show steady progress in learning new vocabulary (as generated via in-class discussions) and enhancing vocabulary through learning synonyms to make speech richer and more sophisticated.

(3) Ideas: The student will be evaluated based on his/her contributions to in-class discussions on a daily basis. At no time is a student judged as being "right" or "wrong" in regards to a topic, rather a student's contributions to the daily discussions are evaluated on how cogent, insightful, and well-presented they are. It bears noting that even a native speaker or a heritage speaker could receive low marks in this area if s/he has nothing intelligent or interesting to contribute.

Semester Exams: Students will **take two (2) oral exams** during the semester that will be administered in my office at a day and time to which the student agrees.

Final Oral Interview: The interview given at the end of term will **not** be an official OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview), but it will be administered in keeping with the guidelines of a formal OPI. Anything covered (vocabulary, grammar, discussion topics) presented in class are fair game for this exam.