

Prof. Dr. Pablo Fraile Jurado ([pfraile@us.es](mailto:pfraile@us.es))Prof. Dr. Víctor Rodríguez Galiano ([vrodriguez8@us.es](mailto:vrodriguez8@us.es))**Brief Course Presentation**

Spain is comprised of an absolutely fascinating set of diverse places, inhabited by intriguingly diverse peoples, traditions and landscapes consequence of its rich history, cultural heritage and complex geography. The focus of this course is on learning about the country, regions and the people. In a context marked by economic crisis, the pressures from sectors such as construction, tourism, transport, energy and agriculture, high densities and pressures in coastal areas and islands determines that Spain faces important challenges in economic, social and environmental issues. The teachers will try to provide an open, critical and diverse overview of contemporary Spain using press releases, videos, reports and presentations.

**Objectives**

The course aims to provide:

- ✓ A coherent content focused upon the ways in which relationships between people and the natural environment and patterns of spatial relationships vary across Spain.
- ✓ An understanding of how these relationships produce the distinctiveness of particular places, landscapes, and patterns of environmental and human attributes, society and identities.
- ✓ An appreciation of the characteristics of the urban, regional and rural environments of selected areas in Spain and the geographical processes which underlie their development.

**Skills Outcomes:**

Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- ✓ Relationships between human and physical systems in Spain.
- ✓ Main demographic, economic and environmental characteristics, threats and challenges in Spain.

Students have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:

- ✓ To contribute to students' understanding of important issues and problems in Spain's contemporary society
- ✓ To discuss the nature of the main social, economic and environmental problems.
- ✓ To understand some of the processes and trends shaping Spain today.
- ✓ To analyze of broader environmental, social and economic threads and challenges.
- ✓ To encourage in students a sensitive awareness of peoples, places and landscapes, both in their own country and elsewhere.

**Syllabus**

The syllabuses are presented within 9 topics, each based on a broad theme:

**TOPIC 1:** SPAIN'S CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY. An exceptionally diverse country: main geographical features. Spain's strategic location. The romantic and mythologized Spain. Spanish lifestyle. Diversity of Gastronomy: From tradition to the international projection of the Spanish Cuisine. Main Popular Festivals and Religious Events around Spain.

**TOPIC 2:** SPAIN TODAY: POLITICAL CONTEXT. The Kingdom of Spain and Democracy: Parliamentary government under a constitutional monarchy. The country territorial divisions and political structures.

Devolution processes and the Autonomous Communities' role.

**TOPIC 3: THE SPANISH NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AS ECONOMIC RESOURCE.** The growth of leisure facilities and tourism in relation to the main attractions of the physical and human landscape. Environmental threats: the difficult balance between economic growth and sustainable development.

**TOPIC 4: ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: A COUNTRY WITH NO PETROL.**The need for energy supplies. Spain leadership in the technological and industrial development of renewable energies: "Renewables Made in Spain".

**TOPIC 5: POPULATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM IN SPAIN.** Changes and trends. Migration: Push-Pull factors. Population Distribution and Demographic Dynamics. Health Care System and Public Education. The crisis and budget cuts. Privatization of public services.

**TOPIC 6: SPAIN IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT.** The Spanish EU Integration. Spain within the Global Context.

**TOPIC 7: AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES.** The economic and social challenges facing rural environments. Changes in traditional agriculture: organic farming *versus* the expansion of greenhouses. The role of agribusiness. Irrigated agriculture and environmental and social conflicts.

**TOPIC 8: THE SPANISH FINANCIAL CRISIS.** The booming housing market and construction industry severe recession. Spanish Economy Strengths and Weaknesses. Spanish unemployment. The Government measures to reduce public debt. The sparking wave of social protests.

**TOPIC 9: SEVILLE:** brief History of the city and its geographical context. Recent urban, metropolitan and regional controversies. *Field trip.*

### **Assignments: Individual/Group Project**

Based on the course syllabus, the students will undertake a personal or group project focus on current issues in Spain. Topics will be presented and decided during the first lectures.

Presentations will take place on the agreed dates. Students should also hand in the presentation file for assessment.

### **Assessment and Grading**

<b>Assessment type</b>	<b>% of formal assessment</b>
Class attendance. Reading and participation	10%
Midterm exam and presentations	30%
End of term exam and presentations	30%
Group project presentation*	30%

\* Students will prepare a group project on an Autonomous Community of their choice. The results will be presented using a PowerPoint presentation which will be presented during 45 minutes each group.

### **Bibliography and Learning Resources**

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## WEBSITES

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- European Union website:  
[http://europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm)
- European Environmental Agency  
<http://www.eea.europa.eu/>

- Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía:  
<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/institutodeestadisticaycartografia/index.html>
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- Mapa interactivo de España:  
<http://w3.cnice.mec.es/eos/MaterialesEducativos/mem2002/mapa/>
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[http://age.ieg.csic.es/recur\\_didacticos/index.htm](http://age.ieg.csic.es/recur_didacticos/index.htm)
- GAPMINDER, world statistics:  
<http://www.gapminder.org/>
- Blog of prof. Vinçen Navarro (Professor of Political and Social Sciences at the Pompeu Fabra University and Professor of Health and Social Policy at the Johns Hopkins University).  
<http://www.vnavarro.org/>
- Online map quizzes: <http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/euroquiz.html>;  
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