

Spanish 414: Spanish phonology (Fall 2009)

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PREREQUISITE: SPANISH 215 OR LINGUISTICS 100.

This prerequisite is absolutely essential. If you have not already taken one of these courses, or an equivalent introduction to linguistics course at another university, you will need to drop this class, since basic knowledge of linguistics and linguistic terminology, including phonetic transcription and phonetic terminology, is presupposed.

TEXTBOOK:

Guitart, *Sonido y sentido* (SS)

OBJECTIVES:

This course serves as an overview of the Spanish sound system, its variation both regionally and socially within the Spanish-speaking world, and its relationship to the sound system of English. The objectives of this course include strengthening your Spanish pronunciation in the direction of a more native-like, normative pronunciation, and enhancing your awareness of the pronunciation of Spanish world-wide.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

You are required to come to class prepared, having read the required material and having completed the assignments for the day. Participation on an individual level as well as at a group level is normal for this class. Two unexcused absences will be permitted for this class; 1% will be taken off the final grade for each subsequent unexcused absence.

WEEKLY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES:

For each class, students will be asked to give a brief oral summary of selected readings. This task will be assigned in a prior class, and will rotate among the students.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will document their pronunciation of Spanish and—for non-native speakers—their improvement during the semester, by means of a portfolio of webcam recordings (audio and video), posted on Facebook, You-Tube, or equivalent sites. If you are not already familiar with

the techniques for making and uploading such recordings, please check with the information technology assistance available across campus. WHY VIDEO AS WELL AS AUDIO? Because phonetic differences between Spanish and English can be seen as well as heard, and in order to fully grasp these differences, and to improve your own pronunciation, it is helpful to use visual cues as a supplement to auditory input.

(1) At the beginning of the semester, each student will make and upload a preliminary diagnostic webcam recording (audio and video) of his/her pronunciation in Spanish. The recording should contain approximately **3-5 minutes** of spontaneous speech, on any subject. Do NOT read from a text or recite previously memorized statements. The instructor will listen to each recording, and provide a classification of each student as a non-native speaker of Spanish or a native speaker of Spanish (based only on pronunciation traits). Those students classified as non-native speakers will be given a list of traits that need to be improved. These traits will be discussed and exemplified throughout the course, and will form the basis for the final oral exam. The final oral exam for students classified as non-native speakers of Spanish will consist of free conversation in which attention will be paid to improving the traits noted at the beginning of the semester. Students classified as native speakers of Spanish based on their pronunciation will come to the oral final exam prepared to discuss their own pronunciation of Spanish according to the phonetic terminology developed during the course. The initial diagnostic recording is due by **Monday August 31**. Be sure to send me (via e-mail to jlipski@psu.edu) the link to your recordings.

(2) During the course of the semester, each student will make and upload **four more** webcam recordings (audio and video) of Spanish pronunciation, by the dates listed on the syllabus. Each recording is to be **3-5 minutes** in length. Students classified as non-native speakers of Spanish should discuss how they have applied what they have learned so far to their own pronunciation. Students classified as native speakers of Spanish should discuss how their own pronunciation of Spanish and how it corresponds to the material learned so far in the course. These videos will be graded for phonetic accuracy and improvement (for non-native speakers of Spanish), and for descriptive accuracy (for native speakers of Spanish).

(3) There are **three written partial exams** during the semester. They are comprehensive in that they include all material covered in the course up until the date of the exam. See schedule for dates. **There will be no written final exam.** The partial exams will be given in a computer lab (location to be announced prior to each exam) and submitted electronically.

(4) A **final oral exam** will evaluate how well you have assimilated and applied concepts of Spanish pronunciation throughout the semester. For non-native speakers, any difficulties identified at the beginning of the semester should be overcome (you can come see me at any point to check on your improvements, and you will get feedback on your periodic webcam recordings). The format will be free conversation; there is no need to prepare any materials. Students classified as native Spanish speakers will have to give a detailed description of their own pronunciation during the oral final exam, using the terminology developed in the course. The final oral exam will take place on a one-to-one basis with the instructor during the last week of class. There will be no regular class on these days; you will come for your exam time only.

(4) There will be a **final project**, consisting of the analysis of a recorded (audio) interview carried out by the student. Students classified as non-native speakers of Spanish will interview a native Spanish speaker and provide a written report on the speaker's pronunciation, according to guidelines that will be supplied prior to the end of the semester. Students classified as native speakers of Spanish will interview a native English speaker who has learned Spanish as a second language, and comment on the pronunciation and any interference from English. Students may bring recordings to the instructor at any point for help in transcribing or interpreting, or for general advice. A written summary of the principal phonetic characteristics will be turned in, together with the recording. The recording should be **digital**, and turned in on a CD. The written summary should be turned in electronically, or included as a document file on the CD. Do NOT submit any paper assignments. The analyses are to be written in proper Spanish. More details and specific information are contained in the on-line course supplement (on ANGEL), and will also be discussed in class at the appropriate time.

☞ **This is a paper-free course.** All assignments are to be turned in **electronically** in documents prepared using Microsoft Word®. When sending documents, be sure to save in **Word 97 format only** (.doc extension, **not** .docx). Send assignments and all other communication ONLY to jlipski@psu.edu International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) phonetic symbols should be in the **DoulosSIL** font, available from www.sil.org If you use phonetic symbols, be sure to check the “embed truetype fonts” box on the Tools-Options menu in Word® before saving the file, to ensure that the fonts will be preserved when I open your file.

☞ All electronic communication should be through e-mail: jlipski@psu.edu. Do NOT send messages to me via ANGEL; I will use ANGEL only for posting readings, assignments, and other files.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

- 5% Attendance and Participation
- 20% Webcam recordings (4)
- 20% Final project
- 45% Written exams (3)
- 10% Final oral exam

Grading scale:

95.0-100%	A
90.0-94.9%	A-
87.7 – 89.9%	B+
83.4 – 87.6%	B
80.0 – 83.3%	B-
75.0 – 79.9%	C+
70.0 – 74.9%	C
60.0 – 69.9%	D
59.9% and below	F

LANGUAGE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE:

This is an advanced level language skills and language content course. It will be conducted entirely in Spanish and students will be expected to perform (written and oral tasks) in grammatically correct and appropriate Spanish. The proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), derived from the U. S. Foreign Service Institute language proficiency ratings and the “industry standard” for foreign language teaching, acknowledge four levels: novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior, with subdivisions in each category (<http://www.actfl.org>). Successful completion of a 400-level language course requires ACTFL Advanced level proficiency, and this will be expected of all students. The ACTFL guidelines for basic Advanced (not Advanced plus) are as follows:

Reading: Able to read somewhat longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly if presented with a clear underlying structure. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Reader gets the main ideas and facts and misses some details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language. Texts at this level include descriptions and narrations such as simple short stories, news items, bibliographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader.

Writing: Able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution. May still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Good control of the morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures, e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination, but makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization (rhetorical structure) is emerging. Writing is understandable to natives not used to the writing of non-natives.

Speaking: Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

Understanding: Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation. Comprehension may be uneven due to a variety of linguistic and extralinguistic factors, among which topic familiarity is very prominent. These texts frequently involve description and narration in different time frames or aspects, such as present, nonpast, habitual, or imperfective. Texts may include interviews, short lectures on familiar topics, and news items and reports primarily dealing with factual information. Listener is aware of cohesive devices but may not be able to use them to follow the sequence of thought in an oral text.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Pennsylvania State University defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of

academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of their students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction. See <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>

☞ To make matters simpler, for the purposes of this course, I define academic integrity as follows:

For any graded assignment prepared outside of class, you may use any written, published, or virtual source, provided that you give a complete citation. You may NOT consult with any other person about a graded assignment (by any means, including e-mail, telephone, etc.) EXCEPT for the instructor (John Lipski). All your work must be done by you alone. Conversely, you may not assist any other student in this class with any graded assignment. During in-class tests, you may not give or receive aid of any kind.

DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENT

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF ASSIGNMENTS

Week #1 (beginning August 24): INTRODUCTION; PHONEMES AND GRAPHEMES; SYLLABIFICATION.
Read: SS, chaps. 1-2.

Week #2 (Beginning August 31): SYLLABIFICATION, CONT. POINT AND MANNER OF ARTICULATION.
Read: SS, chaps. 3-4; chap. 8; chap. 18. **Diagnostic webcam recording due Monday, August 31, by 2:30 p.m.**

Week #3 (September 9, 11): TRANSCRIPTION PRACTICE; DISTINCTIVE FEATURES. *Read:* SS, chap. 6.

Week #4 (beginning September 14): PHONEMES /p/, /t/, /k/. *Read:* SS, chap. 9

Week #5 (beginning September 21): PHONEMES /b/, /d/, /g/. *Read:* SS, chap. 10. **Webcam recording #1 due Wednesday September 23.**

Week #6 (beginning September 28): PHONEMES /f/, /x/, /s/. *Read:* SS, chap. 11. **EXAM #1 Friday October 2.**

Week #7 (beginning October 5): NASAL CONSONANTS. *Read:* SS, chap. 12.

Week #8 (beginning October 12): PHONEMES /l/, /k/, /r/, /r/. *Read:* SS, chaps. 13-14. **Webcam recording #2 due Wednesday October 14.**

Week #9 (beginning October 19): VOWELS. *Read:* SS, chap. 15.

Week #10 (beginning October 26): SEMIVOWELS AND SEQUENCES OF VOWELS. *Read:* SS, chap. 17. **EXAM #2 Friday October 30.**

Week #11 (beginning November 2): RHYTHM AND ACCENTS. INTRO. TO INTONATION. *Read:* SS, chaps, 16, 19. **Webcam recording #3 due Wednesday November 4.**

Week #12 (beginning November 9): PRINCIPAL DIALECTS OF SPAIN. *Read* (on ANGEL).

Week #13 (beginning November 16): PRINCIPAL DIALECTS OF LATIN AMERICA. *Read* (ANGEL).

Week #14 (beginning November 30): LATIN AMERICA, cont. **Webcam recording #4 due Monday November 30. EXAM #3 Friday December 4.**

Week #15 (beginning December 7): **ORAL FINAL EXAMS (NO REGULAR CLASS)**

FINAL PROJECT DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 14