

My Class Policies:

Learning a foreign language is fun. I enjoy teaching Spanish because it is a blast to see students learning to express themselves in another language while at the same time expanding their world vision, realizing there is more to the world than what they are used to and then seeing them take flight – literally – and discover the Spanish speaking world for themselves.

However, learning a foreign language at the college level is also demanding and requires two (2) hours of outside preparation for every hour spent in the classroom. Students with learning disabilities often must devote more time to master the material.

I am aware that not all students have an aptitude for language and that it is more difficult for some students depending on factors such as experience with other languages, experience abroad, early exposure to a foreign language, musical talent, family factors, etc. Nevertheless, I expect all students to put forth a sincere effort – working harder than you have in the past.

Getting a college education requires sacrifice. Many times you have to make a choice between spending time with friends or studying in the library. While you may be working while you are at the University, your education takes priority. Do not allow your friends or employer to take advantage of your schedule while you are in classes. Speak to them well in advance of perceived conflicts and let them know your schedule. I know from first hand experience that juggling family, friends, sports, church and community service, fraternities/ sororities, jobs and other obligations and emergencies is daunting. If you come and talk to me, I will only tell you that it is going to get even more difficult after you graduate and this is the best time to learn how to achieve balance in your life. If you have other questions, I am more than happy to see how I can help you out.

Attendance

It is imperative that students attend class every day. If a student is sick or otherwise incapacitated, they must inform me before class either by email or by phone. If they do not contact me before class the absence will be counted as unexcused. Don't ask me if we are doing anything important in class on the day you will be gone. Students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences during the semester. After the fourth – the final grade will be affected. (This policy is based upon the official MSUM absence policy that can be found at:

<http://www.mnstate.edu/acadaff/Departments/policies/studentabsence.htm>)

Homework

Homework is on the course syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to do the homework assigned for the day *before* coming to class. Generally we will go over the homework in class, although there may be times when I collect the homework to be

graded and returned on the next day of class. Homework is intended to stretch you. Questions for quizzes and exams are often taken from what you learn by doing the homework, therefore, the student that does their homework has a definite advantage over the student who neglects it.

Time spent doing homework includes: reading Spanish out loud, reviewing verb conjugations, memorizing vocabulary, listening to Spanish either through course materials or some other media source, and given the opportunity, through conversations with other Spanish speakers.

If a student is absent, they are responsible for getting the material covered in class as well as any particulars regarding the homework for the next class period from another student in the class. I cannot accept late assignments, please don't put you or me in an uncomfortable situation by asking me to do so.

For those classes that have online workbooks to accompany the text, the work done online workbook will be reviewed daily. There is no Language Lab due to the availability and accessibility of so many technologies online, so this will be the kind of activity you would have had to go to a lab to do years ago.

-- **Plazas** (only applicable to Spanish 101 & 102):

The homework in the syllabus only refers to the pages covered in the book, however as you study those pages you will notice there are exercises to be done alone (*¡A ver!*) and exercises to be done in groups (*En voz alta*). For this class you should write out all the answers to the (*¡A ver!*) exercises and be ready to talk about them in class. You should also read the *Encuentro Cultural* and answer the accompanying questions as well as listen to the *En Contexto* sections online. This may seem like a lot of work (it is) but it will become routine as we move along during the semester.

-- **Transcriptions** (only applicable to Spanish 351):

Students doing transcriptions are required to listen to a recorded speech sample and render it in phonetic or phonological symbols. You will learn how to do this through multiple opportunities in class. Speech samples are found on the SPAN 351 website. The dates they are due is on the syllabus.

-- **Study Guides** (only applicable to Spanish 321):

Students are required to view cultural videos of Spain from the Languages and Cultures Department which have been placed on reserve in the Livingston Lord Library. You will check out the video and turn in a one-page summary of what you learned from the video in Spanish on Monday of every week. See Composition Helps for more details.

Decide which video you would like to see (with alternate choices if the one you want is checked out) before you request the video from the Reserve desk. Some videos are ½ hour, some are 1 hour and others are 2 or more hours. You will receive credit for each 1 hour viewed. Therefore, for a two hour video, you would receive credit for two assignments. On the other hand, you need to see two ½ hour videos to be worth one assignment. You are expected to view 10 hours of material for the semester. You can do one hour/ week or do more and finish early. For a complete listing of the videos see the web page for the class.

Quizzes

I like “pop” quizzes (*pruebas*). “Pop” quizzes are brief tests, which are given unannounced and deal with the homework assignment for that day. Yes, they are to test whether or not you have done your homework. Experience has shown that students are more likely to study if they know they may be quizzed on the material. I may announce some quizzes and others may come when least expected. The best way to ensure yourself of a good quiz grade is to always come to class prepared. They are not intended to trick you. Studies have shown that it is a far more effective pedagogical technique to grade students at small intervals on small amounts of material through different types of assignments as they go rather than testing them on large amounts of material once or twice with only one assessment format. Quizzes will almost always come right at the beginning of class. If you miss a quiz due to absence or tardiness, you may not make up the quiz. You may however perform a service such as reading in Spanish to elementary schools students and submit a one-page description of that activity as “extra credit.”

Exams

Exams (*exámenes*) are lengthy assessments that give students the opportunity to show me what you have learned. They are to be written without the aid of texts or dictionaries. Exams can be written on a laptop and submitted electronically with prior approval from me – Profe Smith. The types of questions I use on exams are: complete-sentence response, multiple choice, identification/definition, fill-in-the-blank, translation, short essay and long essay. Part of the grading of each exam is based on use of grammar and spelling. Material for the exams will be drawn from the text as well as class discussion, again stressing the importance of attendance in class.

If, for some reason, a student has a legitimate excuse for missing class the day of an exam, that exam can be made up by *prior* arrangement with me. If a student misses an exam without notifying me, it cannot be made up.

Presentations

From time to time I assign in-class presentations. There are different kinds of presentations: “Diálogos,” for example, involve two or more students in a memorized dialogue on a given topic. They can take different forms, informational, instructive, critical or dramatic. Ideally, your partner is a student from your Spanish class but it can also be a Spanish speaking friend willing to visit your class.

Another kind of presentation is discourse style. In this presentation you can use 3X5 note cards, but the presentation should not be read. Students who read their presentations will be docked points for preparation. Of course, all preparations are made better by visual and audio aids. The key is balancing such aids with meaningful content. An example of poor use of an audio aid would be a student doing a presentation on a certain style of music and playing the music for the majority of their presentation. A better example would be to explain the style of music and well-known artists of that genre, playing several short samples from different sources commenting

on each one individually and then concluding by summarizing the main points covered and reactions to the music to which the audience was exposed.

Spanish 102 students are required to do an end of the semester dialogue in front of the class for 5-10 minutes.

Spanish 321 students are required to do two presentations: Students will present a cultural topic of their choice for the class at MSUM and then they will take that presentation to Ellen Hopkins Elementary School where they will present the material to 2-5 grade students during the second half of the semester. These presentations will be focused, prepared and organized talks in front of the class accompanied by a written script. Part of the assignment will be journaling your experience at the elementary school.

Presentations are graded on Content (20); Pronunciation (20 pts); Grammar (20 pts); Vocabulary (20 pts); and Preparation (20 pts).

Writing Assignments

All writing assignments are expected to be the original work of the student whose name is found on the title page of the paper. Copying another person's words without quoting them or giving them credit is considered plagiarism. If plagiarism is suspected, the student will be notified and the grade for the assignment will be an "F." If plagiarism is found a second time in the same semester for the same student, the student will receive an "F" for the course and the Vice President of Academic Affairs will be notified.

http://www.mnstate.edu/sthandbook/academic_info/academicpolicies.htm#academic_honesty

My policy on correcting papers is not to catch every possible error you make. The idea is to catch the main tendencies and point you in the right direction. Writing assignments are all works in progress and therefore should help you learn to write better globally and not just to focus on discrete point errors. It is imperative that the student familiarize themselves with the description of the assignment, the grading rubric and the pitfalls which are explained on the Composition Helps page found at the following link: <http://www.mnstate.edu/smithbe/compositionhints.htm>

Extra credit

I do allow extra credit to make up for time missed in class. Extra credit can sway your grade if it teeters between an A and a B, or a C and a D, for example, however, extra credit is not intended to be a type of death-bed repentance. If you have been performing poorly in class and then try to do a rash of extra credit type of activities in the last two weeks of class, don't expect to receive a high grade. To receive extra credit, a student must submit a one-page report *en español* on some cultural activity in which you have participated. The report must be turned in before the last day of class and must detail what you have done and what you have learned. Ideas of extra credit activities are:

- Visit Ellen Hopkins Elementary School (20th Ave S & 14th St – Moorhead) and help a teacher in the Spanish Immersion Program.
- Read and summarize an article from a magazine or newspaper in Spanish
- Attend a Hispanic community cultural activity
- Service in the Fargo-Moorhead Hispanic community (i.e. Migrant Health Clinic, Centro Cultural)
- Evidence of established correspondence with someone in Latin America or Spain
- Any other projects apart from those listed must be approved previously by me.

Grades

I make a point of updating students on their grades throughout the semester. Students can expect to receive a report of their standing in the class at the end of each full month of classes (i.e. September, October, November, February, March and April). This is an opportunity for me to check for errors in reporting and allow students to get their act in gear. If students have concerns about their grade they are invited to speak with me individually and clear up the matter.

My grading scale for all classes is as follows:

A = 92-100%	B+ = 87-90%	C = 72-77%	D = 60-70%
A- = 90-92%	B = 82-87%	C- = 70-77%	F = 0-60%
	B- = 80-82%	C+ = 77-80%	