

Which Spanish class should I take?

Consider the recommendations below. Read the course descriptions. Complete the online placement tool. Still have questions? Contact the advisor, Dr. Laura Edwards (lcedwar@ilstu.edu). Heritage speakers, contact the instructor of SPA 119-120, Marinelly Castillo (mcastil@ilstu.edu).

*Please note the **recommendations** below are a **guide not a rule**. Regardless of years of study or credit earned through AP / Seal, students should take the course most appropriate for their abilities.*

After completion with a C or better of a course, CAP (Credit for Acquired Proficiency) will be awarded (upon request in online form) for up to 8 credits of prior courses in the sequence.

Placement Guide

Preparation	Recommended class
0 years of study; 0 exposure to the language	SPA 111
1-2 years of study in high school	SPA 112
3-4 years of study in high school	SPA 115 (or higher)
AP Spanish Language and Culture score of 3	SPA 115 (or higher)
AP Spanish Language and Culture score of 4	SPA 116
AP Spanish Language and Culture score of 5	SPA 213 and/or 214
Speaking Spanish at home (no formal instruction in school)	SPA 119
Speaking Spanish at home + formal instruction in school (some grammar and writing instruction)	SPA 120
Seal of Biliteracy	SPA 115/116 or 120 or higher; see course descriptions below and/or contact the Department.
Native Speaker with no need for SPA 120	SPA 213
AP Spanish Literature score of 3, 4, or 5	This score earns credit for SPA 233. Placement is likely SPA 213/214, but review the rest of this document and reach out if you have questions.

On the following pages, you'll find details about our courses by level. Take a look at the skills that are covered to get a sense of what course is right for you.

Take the [online placement](#) test (really a tool, not an exam) for the level that seems like a good starting point; your results will give you additional advice on what course to take. Heritage speakers, there is currently no placement test for 119/120; if you have questions about which class to take, please contact Marinelly Castillo (mcastil@ilstu.edu).

Please know that if you register for a class and need to make a level change the first two weeks of class, we can accommodate that.

Basic/Introductory/"First Year" Spanish (111-112)

These courses cover the fundamentals of basic language skills and introduce students to the diverse cultures of the broad Spanish-speaking world. At the novice and intermediate low levels, students can speak about themselves and their routines and activities, their families and communities, with simple sentences about the present, past, and future.

SPA 112 satisfies the language requirement for the B.S. in College of Arts and Sciences

By the end of **Spanish 111**, students are able to:

- introduce self and greet others
- talk about your studies, life at the university, daily routines
- ask and answer simple personal questions
- briefly describe people, places, things and daily activities
- express dates and times
- state obligations and plans for daily activities
- talk about family members and their personal characteristics

Overall, you will be able to convey some basic personal meaning and engage in very simple Spanish conversations about personal topics and/or daily occurrences.

Textbook: [Contraseña Unidades 1-6](#)

Culture: social media, siestas, university life, famous/admired people, marriage equality in Hispanic world.

Grammar tools: gender agreement for nouns and adjectives; question formation; present tense statements with common regular and irregular verbs; possessive adjectives and how to indicate what belongs to you/others; when to use *ser* or *estar*; idiomatic expressions and structures to talk about the weather, likes and dislikes (*gustar*), and other commonly used language.

Vocabulary: family, routines, descriptions of people (physical and personality traits, mood and state of being), daily routines and activities, classes and college life, vacations and leisure, plans and obligations, dates and times.

By the end of **Spanish 112**, students are able to:

- talk about professions, fashion, travel, sports, food, basic health issues
- speak briefly about past personal events
- make simple recommendations about topics and issues of personal/everyday life
- make simple comparisons and express personal preferences
- develop reading and listening skills by making predictions and identifying general meaning in written and oral texts in Spanish

SPA 112 includes a review of SPA 111 skills.

Textbook: [Contraseña Unidades 7-12](#)

Culture: Sports, food, meals, health and wellbeing in Hispanic countries; professions and gender roles, the body-positive movement in Hispanic countries; environmental challenges in the Hispanic world.

Grammar: irregular verbs to talk about activities in the present, informal and formal commands, verbs like *gustar*, reflexive verbs, the present progressive tense, regular and irregular verbs in preterit to talk about the past, direct and indirect object nouns/pronouns, the imperfect tense to talk about other aspects of the past, comparisons of equality/inequality (more than/less than).

Vocabulary: Sports, food, meals, body parts, health/wellness, professions, fashion/clothes, travel, weather and the environment.

Spanish 115-116 Intermediate Spanish Parts I and II

In SPA 115 and 116 students build on their basic language skills to be able to talk and write about the world *beyond* themselves and their routines. Students learn the grammatical structures they will need to tell slightly more complicated stories, express opinions, and make arguments. Their vocabulary will grow to cover a variety of somewhat more complex cultural topics. These classes prepare students for the upper intermediate – advanced skills and topics courses in the minor and major in Spanish.

SPA 115 satisfies the language requirement for the BA (substitutes for a QR course required for the BS)

SPA 116 satisfies the Language in the Humanities requirement for General Education

By the end of **Spanish 115**, students are able to:

- narrate stories in the present and past about immigration, culture, identity
- understand and use texting abbreviations in Spanish
- write a dialogue
- read basic news articles and compare immigration trends in the Spanish-speaking world.
- create and present a timeline to explain context for a work of art
- prepare and deliver an oral presentation on basic historical facts
- make comparisons of how technology is changing patterns of social interaction in the Spanish-speaking world
- analyze stereotypes and cultural perceptions in the Spanish-speaking world and in the United States
- interpret a spoken word poem about cultural identity
- edit written work in Spanish

Textbook: [Contraseña](#) Unidades 13-18

Culture: immigration in the Hispanic world; Hispanic artists and writers; technology and personal relationships; stereotypes of the Hispanic world; Hispanic identities in the U.S.

Grammar: past tense verbs (preterit vs. imperfect) to tell stories about the past, demonstrative adjectives/pronouns (this/that etc.), future and conditional tenses, impersonal/passive (se) constructions, introduction to the subjunctive to express opinions and make arguments, impersonal expressions with *ser*, expressions of doubt and denial, desire and emotion.

Vocabulary: immigration trends and experiences; art and society, point of view, personal relationships, social media and technology, stereotypes, identity

By the end of **Spanish 116**, students are able to:

- narrate an anecdote about a life-changing experience
- write a summary
- describe an influencer and write a report on the role of influencers in your culture
- consider how and why customs and traditions are introduced, maintained, and changed; describe an event and write a story about a custom or a tradition
- analyze the impact of telecommuting on the economy, the environment, and lifestyle; express opinions and write an about telecommuting
- discuss the role of art in social change; critique a work of art and write a review
- analyze patterns of food consumption in the age of food insecurity, sustainability, environmentalism and consider the impact of choices; make a persuasive presentation and write a persuasive essay

Textbook: [Contraseña](#) Unidades 19-24

Culture: the meanings of *hispano, latino, latinoamericano, americano, and estadounidense*; spatial and physical boundaries in social interaction; typical celebrations; telework in the Spanish-speaking world; art and social change; food, society and the environment

Grammar: continuation/expansion of preterit and imperfect for more nuanced narration in the past, double object pronouns, present indicative and subjunctive, *gustar* and similar verbs, past subjunctive, comparative, superlative, relative pronouns, reflexive, uses of **se** (incl. personal/passive voice).

Spanish for Heritage Speakers

These courses are designed to support heritage speakers of Spanish seeking to build their bilingual abilities by developing formal reading, writing, and speaking skills, learning the distinctions between US Spanish and Spanish spoken elsewhere. These courses prepare students to take more advanced coursework in Spanish for a minor or major and for using Spanish in professional settings.

SPA 119 satisfies the language requirement for the BA (substitutes for a QR course required for the BS)

SPA 120 satisfies the Language in the Humanities requirement for General Education

By the end of **Spanish 119**, students are able to:

- identify when and where to use formal and informal you forms (tú/vos; usted/ustedes)
- make comparisons regarding greetings, politeness, foods, holiday, and family relationships throughout the Hispanic world, including Latino cultures in the US
- accurately use accent marks (tildes) in writing
- recognize cognates and “false cognates” common to US Spanish and considered “errors” in other Spanish-speaking communities
- read and interpret simple stories, news articles, essays and other readings in Spanish
- express needs, wants, preferences, and obligations
- identify basic grammatical structures in Spanish as a tool for understanding the language and developing writing skills

Culture: Hispanic/Latino cultures and communities in the US, including holidays and traditions; comparisons with other cultures and communities in the Spanish-speaking world

Grammar: identify when to use ser or estar; gender and number of nouns and the words that grammatically agree (articles and adjectives); gustar and verbs like gustar; expressions with tener; direct and indirect object pronouns; reflexive pronouns

Vocabulary relating to greetings, meals, activities, classroom and household objects, family relationships, daily activities, the home, colors, descriptive words, states of mind, holidays, traditions, and other aspects of community life

By the end of **Spanish 120**, students are able to:

- speak, read, and write with confidence and in ways that capitalizes on their prior contact with and knowledge of the language
- build their vocabulary and their mastery of language for a variety of new contexts
- recognize cognates and words considered “false cognates” by native speakers outside of the US
- compare and contrast geographies and cultures of Spanish-speaking countries
- identify when and where to place accent
- develop strategies for correcting spelling, punctuation, and editing writing in Spanish

Textbook: MyLab Spanish with Pearson eText for *Manual de gramática y ortografía para hispanos* (chapters 7-12)

Culture: Geography and cultural heritage of Spanish-speaking countries; short stories, podcasts, films on a variety of cultural topics

Grammar: Verbs in the past, present, future tenses;); verb forms and structures for making complex statements, expressing opinions and emotions, and constructing argument; verb forms and structures for expressing hypothetical situations (subjunctive and conditional; commands; gender and number of nouns; agreement (adjectives and articles); prepositions; use of the *tilde* (accent marks)

Vocabulary: Development of specific vocabulary to discuss geography, economy, political and social issues, traditions and customs, cultural identity in the US and throughout the Spanish-speaking world

200-level courses – Complete the minor, bridge to the major

Some incoming students are prepared to jump right into 200-level courses, which develop students' abilities to speak, listen, read, and write at increasingly higher levels, working toward the goal of advanced-level proficiency and expanding cultural knowledge of the Spanish-speaking world.

<p>By the end of SPA 213 Written Communication in Spanish, students develop their writing skills. Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore a variety of cultural topics through readings, films, and other media • write a series of essays to practice developing thesis statements, convincing arguments, documenting evidence and sources • identify and utilize strategies for revising and refining written work, including organization and content, grammar and vocabulary, spelling and punctuation 	<p>Pre-req: SPA 116 or 120 or permission of the instructor.</p> <p>Specific topics will depend on the instructor.</p> <p>This course is required for the minor and the major and is the pre-requisite for further coursework; may be taken concurrently with: SPA 214 Oral Communication in Spanish</p>
<p>By the end of SPA 214 Oral Communication in Spanish, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore a variety of cultural topics through readings, films, and other media • develop oral fluency to narrate, explain, interpret, analyze, and discuss increasingly complex topics in Spanish • develop vocabulary related to a variety of cultural topics • converse in informal settings • make formal oral presentations <p>Students at this level are working toward advanced-level proficiency, though usually not achieving this high-level goal until they have taken more classes and gained more experience speaking the language.</p>	<p>Pre-req: SPA 116 or 120 or permission of the instructor.</p> <p>Specific topics will depend on the instructor.</p> <p>The course is required for the major and is one of three options for the minor (SPA 214, 235, 240; see below).</p> <p><u>OPE (Oral Proficiency Exam) to earn credit for SPA 214: Heritage speakers of Spanish and others with strong oral proficiency ("intermediate high") may register to take the OPE.</u></p>
<p>In SPA 235 Spanish for the Health Professions, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop vocabulary and intermediate speaking skills in preparation for work in a variety of health careers 	<p>Pre-req: SPA 213 or permission of the instructor.</p> <p>(Counts toward the minor, not the major.)</p>
<p>In SPA 240 Spanish for Business, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop vocabulary and intermediate speaking skills in preparation for work in a variety of business careers 	<p>Pre-req: SPA 213 or permission of the instructor.</p> <p>(Counts toward the minor, not the major.)</p>
<p>Spanish 215 Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics: overview of ways to study the language in greater depth</p> <p>Spanish 233 Introduction to Hispanic Literature: read and analyze stories, poems, plays, and essays from the Spanish-speaking world</p>	<p>Pre-req: SPA 213</p> <p>Minor: SPA 215 or 233 Major: SPA 215 and 233</p>

What's next?

The Spanish program offers additional 200- and 300-level courses for the minor and major that will allow you to explore the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world (Latin America and Spain) in greater depth (through the study of stories, novels, poems, plays, newspapers, films, podcasts, TV series, and more) and study the language itself more thoroughly (syntax and grammar, phonetics and pronunciation, pragmatics and language in context, and language acquisition and pedagogy. **See the catalog and/or LAN's website for specific requirements and current offerings.**

SPA 243 – Cultura española

SPA 244 – Cultura hispanoamericana

Literary and Cultural Studies:

SPA 305 – Topics* in Hispanic Cultures

SPA 323 – Literature of Spain (Medieval through the 19th Century collapse of the Spanish Empire)

SPA 324 – Literature of Spain (Twentieth and Twenty-first Century)

SPA 326 – Literature of Latin America (Pre-Hispanic and Colonial through the 19th Century Independent Nations)

SPA 327 – Literature of Latin America (Twentieth and Twenty-first Century)

SPA 336 – Topics* in Latin American Literature

SPA 337 – Topics* in Peninsular Spanish Literature

SPA 385 – Topics* in Hispanic Literature (Spain and Latin America)

Theoretical and Applied Linguistics:

SPA 310 – Spanish Syntax

SPA 311 – Spanish Phonetics and Phonology

SPA 360 – Topics* in Spanish Linguistics

SPA 370 – Topics* in Spanish Pedagogy

*Topics change each semester. Literary and cultural topics include: Latin American Cinema; explorations of big questions regarding pain, life, death, and the human imagination; literature of the fantastic; Latin American cultural icons; the art of social change in Mexico; rethinking colonial history. Linguistics and pedagogy topics include: Spanish in the US, teaching pronunciation, Spanish pragmatics, and many others.

Interested in being a Spanish Teacher? The Spanish Teacher Education subplan includes courses from the General Spanish major and additional Teacher Ed requirements.

For more on the major and minor, see our website: <https://lan.illinoisstate.edu/academics/#tabs-accord3>

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