

Spanish Language Teaching Methods

SPRING 2026 | SPAN 4321

Professor: Elena Foulis

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Office:

Class:

Office Hours: 5-6:30pm (Wednesdays), and by appointment via zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the United States, Spanish is the most studied language at all levels of education ([MLA](#)) and the number of students studying it as a heritage language has grown rapidly ([Heritage Briefs-Center for Applied Linguistics](#)). Indeed, Spanish has always been a part of U.S. history, and in our context of South Texas, Spanish is a very present local language. In fact, Texas is the state where most [Spanish is spoken in the US](#), followed by California and New Mexico. The primary goal of the course is to foster students' ability to apply different pedagogies and techniques that seek to develop learners' critical language awareness (CLA) and sociolinguistic agency both inside and outside the classroom.

Language Teaching Methods (SPAN 4321) is designed for novice and experienced language teachers as well as those generally interested in language education. Students will build a solid foundational knowledge of the connections between theory, research, and practice in teaching language and culture in classroom settings, with a focus on teaching Spanish as a second and as a heritage (L2/HL) language in the U.S. Students will be introduced to key concepts defining the field of language learning and teaching more generally and will develop a contextualized understanding of the continually evolving field of language pedagogy. Students will have hands-on opportunities to apply and evaluate different methods of instruction and curriculum development for L2 and HL Spanish learners, as well as to critically reflect on the complex interplay of cognitive, sociohistorical, sociocultural, and sociopolitical factors in language education that impact learning outcomes for individual learners and societies.

Students are expected to:

- carefully read all assigned readings
- demonstrate consistent preparation, participation, and engagement in weekly homework, discussions, and interactive tasks via Blackboard
- actively participate in written discussions on assigned topics (Discussion Board)
- complete guided reading critiques (Journal)
- apply principles and methods of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) through designing, implementing, and evaluating a task.

The course culminates in a final holistic assessment in which students create a digital language teaching portfolio (using WordPress, Weebly, Wix, or other online tool) that showcases their development and work and includes a [language teaching philosophy](#).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) UNDERSTAND the relationship between theory, research, and practice in teaching language and culture in instructed settings;

- 2) APPLY** key concepts and **EVALUATE** different methods of language instruction;
- 3) ANALYZE** internal and external factors that impact teaching and learning Spanish and other languages;
- 4) CRITICALLY REFLECT** on the impact of the sociohistorical, sociocultural, and sociopolitical dimensions of language teaching;
- 5) DESIGN & IMPLEMENT** a task for communicative purposes and **EVALUATE** its outcomes;

COURSE READINGS & RESOURCES

This course will draw on several chapters from the following ebook as well as selected articles and chapters listed under **Lecturas in Bb Content**. Students are responsible for accessing all required and recommended readings in Bb.

Sanz, Cristina, Ellen J. Serafini, and Inma Taboada, editors. *Manual para la formación de profesores de español*. John Wiley, 2025.

ONLINE LEARNING TOOLS

In addition to Blackboard, our learning management system, we will be creating an online repository of lesson plans and class activities that everyone can access, use and adapt.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Description and assessment of all course components are briefly detailed here. More detailed descriptions and evaluation rubrics can be found on Blackboard. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to email me (efoulis@tamusa.edu), visit me during office hours or schedule a virtual visit.

- 1. Participation, Engagement, & Community Building (20%).** Successfully meeting the learning objectives of this course requires students to be consistently prepared and to actively engage in learning and community building activities intended to not only facilitate learning course content but also build a supportive learning community. Students will collaborate with a [google sheets](#) working document by adding [two new words/concepts and definitions](#). This involves carefully reading assigned materials; completing any interactive assignments; and checking email, and announcements on Blackboard *on a daily basis* to stay on top of due dates and workload.
- 2. Written Discussions (Discussion Board) (15%).** The Discussion Board provides students with a space to reflect, connect, express opinions, and make sense of topics under study while also considering other points of view and experiences. It also allows students to build confidence in written communication in an informal environment. Throughout the semester, students will participate in the discussion board **7 times of about 200-300 words each**. For each topic, students will follow the prompt, provide thoughtful commentary, and respond to **at least one classmate's** post.

3. Applying Task-Based Principles (40%). There will be 2 teaching demonstrations.

Students will put their knowledge into practice by applying task-based principles and methods in the following ways:

- a. **Task design & evaluation.** To design a communicative task, students will choose a language teaching context, learner population, and focus (literary, cultural, (socio)linguistic, pragmatics, critical language awareness, etc.). Following the provided [template](#), students will (i) determine 1-2 learning objectives; (ii) fully describe necessary materials and technology and (iii) instructional steps in pre-task, during task, and post-task phases; and (iv) create a method of evaluation (e.g., holistic or analytical rubric) to assess task-based outcomes. *Students should also provide one example of task differentiation.*
- b. **Task implementation/teaching demonstration.** Students will implement the tasks they designed in class. Peers are expected to be active learners and to share constructive feedback with each other.

4. Individual Oral Presentation (10%). Students can choose among the [recommended](#)

readings for the week on a topic of interest that connects research and practice in some way (e.g., *the role of grammar in a communicative, task-based classroom; teaching language for social justice in K-12 Spanish classrooms*, etc.). Students should send their selected article for presentation to the professor *at least two weeks in advance*. Once they obtain approval, the student will carefully read, summarize, critique, and identify pedagogical implications for the classroom, and then organize and present this information in an oral presentation to the class (10-15 minutes). It is important to use visuals.

5. Digital Teaching Portfolio (15%). As a final summative, holistic course assessment,

students will create a digital language teaching portfolio using WordPress, Adobe Spark, Weebly, Wix, or another online platform. Among other elements described in detail on Blackboard, the main component of the portfolio is a [Language Teaching Philosophy](#) that represents students' developing voice, views, and approach as a language teacher, educator, and advocate. The philosophy should contain a statement of the core principles guiding your approach to teaching with specific examples of how you put them into practice. This statement should primarily focus on what you have learned through course readings, discussion, and activities, but can also draw on personal and professional experiences as a language learner and teacher. Guiding resources are provided on Blackboard, and all students will produce a first draft for peer revision (due **April 30**). The final teaching portfolio should be submitted by **May 10th**. You would choose two of your task-based teaching demonstrations, [revised](#) based on class and instructor comments and include them in your portfolio.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Your progress made in this class will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Components	%	Grade scale
1. Participation, Engagement, & Community Building	20	90-100 A

2. Discussion Board (7)	15	80-89	B
3. Applying Task-Based Principles (4) i. Task Design & Evaluation ii. Implementation	40	70-79	C
4. Individual Presentation (from readings) (1)	10	60-69	D
1. Digital Language Teaching Portfolio i. Teaching philosophy ii. 2 lesson plans (revised)	15	0-59	F

Notes:

1. All graded work is due by 11:59pm of the day indicated in the course calendar. No late work. Any missed assignment or exam will receive a grade of zero unless student has an officially approved excuse. *If you are experiencing unexpected difficulties due to the effects of COVID 19, it is your responsibility to let me know right away so we can work out flexible accommodations and accountability.*
2. All graded writing assignments must be your own work. You should familiarize yourself with the sections on cheating and plagiarism Texas A&M-San Antonio Students' manual. If you have any questions about the concept of academic integrity, please talk to your professor.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course uses Blackboard, the learning management system at Texas A&M-San Antonio. You should possess basic familiarity with how to use several Blackboard tools including Discussion Board, Journals, Kaltura, and others.

Basic technology requirements for this course include access to a Windows or Macintosh computer and a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). For optimum visibility of course material, the recommended computer monitor and laptop screen size is 13 inches or larger. You will need computer speakers or headphones to listen to audio content.

Your computer should also have a word processor, such as Microsoft Word.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

For this course, **use of Internet-based dictionaries are permitted within reason but use of translation resources (e.g., Google Translate, ChaptGPT, or other AI tools) is NOT allowed for any written assignments** and constitutes a violation of the academic honor code. If you have any doubts about the types of assistance that you are permitted to receive from others or from Internet-based translation resources, send me an email.

PRIVACY & COURSE MATERIALS

Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. Students must use their Jaguar email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class.

Videorecordings of class meetings that are shared *only* with the instructors and students officially enrolled in a class do not violate FERPA or any other privacy expectation. However, all course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site *are private*; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone *not enrolled in this class*.

- Videorecordings of class meetings that include audio or visual information from other students are private and must not be shared
- Live Video Conference Meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household

IMPORTANT DATES	
January 20	First day of classes
January 27	Last day to register for Spring 16-week Session
March 9-14	Spring Break - no classes
April 17	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
May 4	Last day of scheduled classes
May 6-12	Final examinations
May 10	Submit Final Teaching Portfolios on Blackboard (11:59pm)

*See the official academic calendar for Spring 2026 [here](#).