

SPANISH AMERICAN FOLKLORE AND THE ARTS

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Introduction

Knowledge of a second culture and its elements is a fundamental extension of the study of a foreign language. Instruction and transmission of the characteristics of a foreign culture, aside from those purely linguistic, is often necessarily omitted in the first-year course due to a concentration on elementary grammar and syntax, basic vocabulary, and an attempt to inculcate in the student a facility in their use. Second-year courses traditionally continue the language trend of their first-year counterparts, adding reading to the listening and speaking skills. Since 1972 at Purdue however, the second-year humanities student has been offered an alternative to reading in the language. Several courses, focused around cultural themes and taught in English, are given as options from which the student may select two to fulfill the language requirement for graduation. A recent addition to courses reflecting a literary or cultural orientation is Spanish 210F, "Spanish American Folklore and the Arts," created for the Spring semester of 1975. Its purpose is to bring to the student an understanding of culture as manifested in various Latin American countries. Primary objectives thus aim to acquaint the learner with the concept and development of folklore and the arts in their different forms in the major geographic region of Latin America, and to compare and contrast the characteristics peculiar to each area. Secondary objectives entail making the students more aware of Latin American culture in general and, as a result, more receptive to their Latin American neighbors. Finally, it has been postulated that some positive shift in attitude would accrue over the semester, and that this shift would occur as the students gained a greater appreciation of Latin American folklore and the arts.

Definitions

The term culture has several meanings. Brooks (1964) distinguishes between two types. The traditional understanding of the term, which he designates Culture with a large "C," encompasses the masterpieces and artistic endeavors of writers, artists, and architects. Conversely, culture with a small "c" has thus come to mean the total

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belief and behavior patterns of a language community. Folklore and the arts find representation in both of the above definitions. As used in this paper, folklore is meant to describe the science of traditions, customs, and lore of a country. Thus, folklore includes reference to both spoken and written literature, songs and legends, poems and theater, crafts and dwellings. Correspondingly, the term *arts* is meant to encompass those aesthetic characteristics of the major schools of art, sculpture, and architecture; the arts, thus are illustrated through paintings, monuments, music, and other lasting masterpieces of civilization.

Subjects

One section of Spanish 210F was designated for the Spring of 1975. Some 29 students enrolled in the course. Their experiential background is given in Table I. Women outnumbered men two-to-one. The majority of the students were sophomores or juniors and eight

Table I
Student Characteristics

Sex	Semester		Prev. Span.*		Most Recent Span.		Grade	
F 20	1-2	2	High School	19	High School	2	A	5
M 9	3-4	14	Purdue		Purdue		B	12
			101-102-23		101-102	10		
	5-6	4	203	2	203	2	C	10
	7-8	8			Another 210	15	D-F	2

*Non-additive due to multiple responses across categories

were graduating seniors; their various "majors" included Anthropology, Education, Communication, Creative Arts, History, Political Sciences, Speech and Hearing, Recreation, and Industrial or Social Psychology. In spite of this diversity, the class manifested various common characteristics: all were enrolled in the School of Humanities, Social Science and Education; all had previously studied at least the equivalent of two college semesters of basic Spanish language; all had elected the cultural rather than language option to fulfill their language requirement; all were somewhat negative towards having to study foreign language at all. Half of the students had previously enrolled in another cultural option; all but two had received "C" or above grades in their most recent Spanish course. None professed previous extension knowledge of Latin American culture beyond that routinely learned by all students in social studies in elementary, junior high, and high school. Only one in ten had travelled outside of the United States.

Procedures

The curriculum of 210F was organized around materials designed to prepare the student to understand and accept Latin Americans as a unique people with a multifaceted culture whose various manifestations provide the observer with particularized evidence of Folklore and the Arts.¹

Students met with the primary investigator for three fifty-minute periods each week throughout the fifteen-week semester. Classes entailed lecture and discussion, audiovisual illustrations, quizzes, examinations, and presentations of oral reports or student projects. Two reference texts were selected, *An Anthology of Latin American Folklore* by Harriet de Onis², and *A History of Latin American Art and Architecture* by Leopoldo Castedo.³ Both allowed the student to view a progressive revelation of folklore and the arts in Latin America over the last two millenia. The assigned readings reflected specifically the Pre-Columbian era, the Colonial Emerging Nationalist, and Nationalist periods, and current times. Lectures by the teacher or invited guests and presentations by the students themselves supplemented day-to-day discussion based upon the readings. Unit-by-unit study guides were prepared for each of the major subdivisions and formed the basis by which the student carried out his week-by-week assignments.

Initially the class was given over to the discussion of culture and folklore as world phenomena; the students traded anecdotes of their travels to help establish the concept of universality in the behavior of man, thereby allowing the teacher as observer to become aware of possible stereotypical and ethnocentric views which they held.

The first portion of the courses was dedicated to the historical and geographical characteristics of the Iberoamerican world, and the concepts of folklore and folkloric methodology were revealed. Additional discussion included the various categories of folklore that are found in oral and written literature, drama, and music. Emphasis was given to the identification of those features which distinguish folklore from the fine arts in the strictest sense so as to clarify these two major themes for the learner. Additional topics explored folklore in the sociological context (the family, work, games), in the popular arts (ceramics, weaving, oral literature), and in mythology and magic. Also discussed and illustrated were the architecture, painting and sculpture of the 19th and 20th centuries with emphasis on Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela.

The remaining portion of the course was divided equally among units pertaining to Pre-Columbian and Colonial Folklore, to the plastic arts and music, and to folklore once again as seen through the Spanish

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American writers movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. Under the Pre-Columbian heading, the folklore and arts of the Aztecs, Mayan and Inca cultures were examined; Spanish American plateresque, renaissance, and Baroque architecture, sculpture, and painting were explored for the Colonial period. Finally, the music of Spanish America was exemplified along with musical folklore and instruments of European, Indian, and African origin. In addition, the characteristics of representative national music were presented *vis-a-vis* contributions from the various ethnic groups which together form Latin America.

Theory was kept to a minimum in favor of principles so that the student could internalize basic concepts; readings in the text were assigned to reflect contemporary and recent times first, working backwards chronologically from the known to the unknown. The popular arts, mythological, literary and musical lore in each epoch were illustrated audiovisually via slides and tapes and discs.

Audio-Visual Materials

Several slide/tape programs and records were purchased utilizing monies allocated under Course Development Grants by the Dean for Instructional Development in the School of Humanities at Purdue University. Described under the title of *Latin American Audiovisual* (see Appendix B) the various pictorial representations with commentary in English and Spanish about major cities, industries, and people, formed an important basis with which to situate the student geographically, sociologically, and psychologically within Latin America, and to introduce him to the plastic arts in their fundamental and regional forms. The slides, tapes, and discs further served as stimuli for discussion to compare and contrast the student's native culture with that of Latin America.

Original plans also included the rental of films to supplement the slide presentations and the purchase of records of folk and "musica culta" from the Latin American countries. Several titles were acquired from the Purdue and Department of Foreign Languages audiovisual libraries, and requests for catalogues and similar literature were forwarded to agencies in New York, Chicago, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. The audiovisual materials which were purchased thus came to form an integral part of the total curriculum and, in the main, seemed well accepted by the students.

Evaluation

Evaluation of students was carried out on two levels, in the cognitive and the affective domains. In the former, three summative evaluations were taken at approximate equal intervals over the semester. Exam I covered units 1-2, Exam II, units 3-4, and Exam III, units

5-6. Each examination contained items of an objective and a subjective format. Grades obtained therefrom, taken together, made up three-quarters of the student's term grade. The remaining one-quarter was judged upon a term project which the student prepared, individually or with a partner, and presented to the class. Occasional oral quizzes of a formative nature, based upon the audiovisual materials, rounded out the evaluation of cognitive skills. Table II lists the breakdown of grades, by exam, and project over the semester.

Table II Evaluation					
	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3	Project	Final Grade
A	10	18	10	9	11
B	14	10	15	18	16
C	4	1	4	2	2
D,F	1	0	0	0	0
Total	29	29	29	29	29

An attitude-interest inventory, following an objective, forced choice format was administered twice during the semester, at the end of the first week and again during the next-to-last week of classes (Appendix C). Its purpose, initially, was to establish a class profile from which to gauge the students, interest toward language learning, their degree of ethnocentrism, and their attitude toward foreign culture. The 50 items were a compilation of inquiries from similar questionnaires used by Savignon (1972), Jakobovits (1974), and Gardner and Lambert (1972). Six subtests of items were thus defined: Ethnocentrism, Linguistic Orientation, Attitude toward Foreign Culture, Attitude toward Foreign Language, Spanophilia, and Desire to Learn. "Ethnocentrism" is that sum of characteristics which make an individual open to or suspicious of foreign peoples and ideas (Adorno et. al., 1950). The remaining concepts are derived from Gardner and Lambert (1972) who have described "linguistic orientation" in terms of whether the emphasis in learning a second language is on knowing more about or meeting members of the other language group, or on the utilitarian values which might accrue devoid of any interest in people. "Attitude toward Foreign Culture" and "toward Foreign Languages" are affective predispositions which reveal the value that the learner places on knowing a second language. The concept defined by "Spanophilia" is represented by the activities related to learning Spanish in which the learner currently and willingly engages. Finally, "Desire to Learn" here focuses on the student's attitude toward learning Spanish rather than on the amount of preparation, participation, and overall effort spent in learning the language.

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Results from both the pre- and post-administration of the instrument (respectively, $n=27$; $n=24$) were submitted to factor analysis⁴ in order to validate those items which best exemplified interest, ethnocentrism, and attitude-toward-culture. The principal components solution of the original factor matrix revealed a well defined general factor with loadings greater than .50 ($p=.01$, $n=27$) on almost half of the items. Loadings for secondary factors were similarly well delineated; thus, it was decided to accept the entire interest-attitude instrument in its original form. Scores were computed for each student across the respective subtests for both administrations of the instrument. The means and the differences between the pre- and post-ratings item-by-item are listed in Appendix C along with the subtest titles (in parentheses) to indicate the construct that the respective items were designed to measure.

Results

The data from the interest-attitude inventory were analyzed from a parametric standpoint. The differences between the means of the first and second administrations were evaluated for significance by t-test for independent samples. The results are listed by subtest and for the total instrument in Table III.

Differences between pre- and post-administrations of the interest-attitude inventory proved insignificant across all subtests; however, the direction of the differences consistently favored the end-of-term evaluation. Similarly, zero differences were observed between total scores summed across all subtests, although the direction of the differences also favored the posttest.

Table III
Affective Orientation

Subtest	Posttest -($n=27$)		Pretest -($n=24$)		t	p
	X2	s2	X1	s1		
I. Ethnocentrism	30.92	4.20	29.85	4.29	.89	.38
II. Motivation	18.75	4.15	18.67	3.88	.07	.94
III. Attitude Toward Culture	19.71	2.53	19.59	2.45	.17	.87
IV. Attitude Toward Language	29.29	5.9	28.37	4.00	.66	.51

V. Spanophilia	31.48	4.17	30.96	4.34	.44	.66
VI. Desire to Learn	18.58	5.0	19.00	3.57	.35	.73
Total (I-VI)	148.21	17.66	146.96	13.81	.28	.77

Discussion

Ethnocentrism, or pride in one's national origin, is a relatively stable culture-bound attitude, at least for the beginning language student (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), and a function of how open the individual is to ideas and customs which may conflict with his own philosophy or life-style. Nevertheless, it was postulated that a systematic presentation of Hispanic folklore and the arts might make the learner more receptive to other ethnic groups. In this regard, the course was only partly successful, if at all, for differences between pre- and post-rating in Subtest I "Ethnocentrism and Subtest III Attitude Toward Culture" while marginally positive, were non-significant.

Some change in the students' affective orientation was postulated at the outset of the study. Rivers (1964) has noted that over a period of time there often is a leveling or reduction of declared interest in second language learning. Thus it was expected that students' end-of-term interest would be less than that expressed at the beginning of the course. Student interest was maintained, however, as indicated by Subtest II (Linguistic Orientation) and Subtest V (Spanophilia). Apparently the materials and their presentation were instrumental to some degree in maintaining the learners' initial interest and curiosity about Latin America. While the curriculum and audiovisuals did not alter or increase their interest appreciably, the overall structure of the course prevented a negative turn.

Attitude toward an educational endeavor is, in part, a function of how successful the learner feels are his efforts toward achievement (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). With respect to second-language learning, attitude may also be considered a reflection of the degree to which the student accepts or rejects a language requirement (Jakobovits, 1970). The items from Subtest IV (Attitude Toward Language) and Subtest VI (Desire to Learn) exemplify attitude toward foreign language. Differences between pre- and post-administrations were slightly in favor of the posttest, but not significantly so. Thus, as demonstrated by the responses to the interest subtests, the students also maintained a relatively positive attitude orientation throughout the course. While the curriculum may have had some effect in this regard, in all likeli-

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hood attitude was influenced more by the successful grades obtained exam-by-exam than by the scope and content of the materials *per se*.

Finally, the differences between the pre- and post-means for each subtest were inspected, item-by-item, in an attempt to gain an understanding about where primary shifts in the students' attitude-orientation might have occurred over the semester. The average response on several items demonstrated a shift of .4 or better and seemed to reveal the following: the students' concept of the individual worth of the family increased (item 20) as did their perception of the worth of studying a second language in order to better understand foreign people and their way of life (item 15). Similarly, the students' judgement of the contribution of the immigrant to our society was enhanced (item 24). Conversely, and perhaps as a result of having had instruction almost exclusively in English throughout the course, the students' rating of the value of studying a foreign language for communication was decreased (item 30, 32, 47) as was their desire to travel abroad or sample firsthand the Spanish or Latin American culture (items 34, 35, 38). Thus, while the materials and instruction succeeded in making the students more receptive of foreign peoples and ideas it did little to improve the desire or confidence to interact with them directly. Apparently some attention to linguistic skills should have formed part of the curriculum to maintain a focus on the need to communicate with one's neighbors in addition to learning to appreciate their artistic and cultural endeavors and folklore.

Conclusion

Overall, the curriculum and materials designed for Spanish 210F proved successful. The students' attitude toward language learning and toward other cultures were generally affected in a positive sense. In light of reduced enrollments and recent attacks on the study of a second language, courses in Spanish American Folklore and the Arts may prove a viable alternative, at least where options of a cultural or literary vein, in the native language, are available. In the long run, however, the value of the cultural option perhaps will best be exemplified by helping students achieve a true world-perspective of the people and culture about them. From this standpoint alone, classes with a cultural orientation seem quite justifiable. But, to be truly effective, it would seem that courses which offer instruction about another culture, be it through folklore, art, music or literature, should include as well activities and exercises that help maintain and further the *active* language skills. Total inattention to the learner's previous training in speaking and understanding the language of the culture serves only to reinforce in the student's mind the idea that learning a foreign tongue is excessively difficult, unproductive, and a waste of time.

Footnotes

¹An abbreviated listing of topics is given in Appendix A. Readers interested in the complete course outline and study guides are invited to request same from the authors, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.

²New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 970.

³New York-Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.

⁴EDSTAT MAXFACTOR, intercorrelation and components analysis designed to maximize the variance extracted among the respective factors for each subsequent rotation of the correlation matrix.

⁵Wible Language Institute: 24 South Eighth Street/P.O. Box 870, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 18105.

⁶Audio Lingual Educational Press Inc.: 217 Laurel Road, East Northport, New York, 11731.

⁷The Record Hunter: 507 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10017.

⁸Educational Audio Visual Inc.: Pleasantville, New York, 10570.

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Appendix A **Course Outline: Spanish 210F** **FIRST UNIT**

- I. The Iberoamerican world: Spanish American Geography and History

SECOND UNIT

- I. Concept of Folklore and Folkloric Methodology
- II. Systematic Categories of Folklore: Folk Drama; Music; Social, Ergologic; Popular Arts; and Magic Folklore

THIRD UNIT

- I. The Nineteenth Century: from Neoclassicism to Impressionism
- II. The Twentieth Century Architecture, Sculpture and Painting

FOURTH UNIT

- I. The precolumbian and Colonial cultures and the Arts of Western and Central Mexico, and Peru.
- II. Spanish American Plateresque and Renaissance
- III. The Baroque

FIFTH UNIT

- I. Rediscovering the Spanish American Tradition: The Writers Movement
- II. Instruments: from European, Indian and Black Origin
- III. The Character of National Music
- IV. The History of "Musica Culta"

Appendix B **Audiovisual Materials**

Slides and Commentary⁵

The Heart of Argentina-Buenos Aires
Bolivian Indian, the By-Gone Centuries in Bolivia
La Paz, the Beautiful
Panoramic View of Chile
Spanish Influence in the Colombian Culture
Important Cities of Colombia
Domestic Industries in Ecuador
Important Cities in Ecuador
Asuncion: The River Port City
Ruins of Machu Picchu
The Incas' Culture Can Be Seen in Peru
From the Incas to the Spaniards
Spanish Culture of Venezuela

Slides⁶

Artesanias de Mexico
Fiestas y Tradiciones de Mexico
Monumentos y Arquitectura de Mexico

Records

Favorite Mexican Folk Songs⁷

The Four Suns-Carlos Chavez-Selections of the Mexican Ballet Folklore⁷

Ginestera-Boston Symphony⁸

Ginestera-String Quartet No. 2⁸

Latin American-Leonard Bernstein-New York Philharmonic⁷

Latin American Music

Traditional Mexican Songs⁶

Viva Mexico⁶

Appendix C

Spanish 210F: Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS:

Please consider each of the following statements with regard to *Spanish* and *the course you are now taking*, and respond to them as *honestly* as you can. The nature of your answers will have absolutely no bearing upon the grade you receive in the course, and, in fact, you are asked *not* to reveal your identity.

Do not write on the booklet itself; answer all questions by darkening the space on your IBM card corresponding to the letter of your choice. Begin responding with item number 1.

(Weight)

Darken Response A if you strongly agree with the statement (5)

Darken Response B if you agree with the statement (4)

Darken Response C if you neither agree nor disagree with the statement (3)

Darken Response D if you disagree with the Statement (2)

Darken Response E if you strongly disagree with the statement (1)

1. The last Spanish course I took was

- a. in high school
- b. Purdue's 102
- c. Purdue's 203
- d. Purdue's 210
- e. at another university

2. I received the following final grade for that course

- a. A
- b. B
- c. C
- d. D
- e. F

(X1) (X2) (D)

(Ethnocentrism)*

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- 2.0 1.7 -3 3. A whole-hearted commitment to the study of a foreign language and the culture endangers one's own identity.
- 3.6 3.6 — 4. I would rather work in the U.S. than in Europe.
- 3.6 3.7 +1 5. Foreign films are as a rule superior to Hollywood productions.**
- *Titles in parenthesis were not printed in the students' version. They are offered here for clarification for the reader.
- **Items scored with reverse polarity.
- 3.3 3.6 +3 6. American prestige in the world today is generally high.
- 3.4 3.6 +2 7. Continued effort should be made to encourage Americans to "See America First" in order to curb the flow of American dollars abroad.
- 3.7 2.6 -1 8. Through my experience in foreign-language study I have discovered some aspects of American culture are not as good as I had previously thought.**
- 2.3 2.4 +1 9. The best guarantee of our national security is for America to continue to build her military defense.
- 2.7 3.2 +5 10. It is only natural and right for each person to think that his family is better than any other.
- 2.4 2.7 +3 11. America may not be perfect, but the American way has brought us about as close as human beings can get to a perfect society. (SA)
- 1.7 1.8 +1 12. Foreigners are all right in their place, but they carry it too far when they get too familiar with us.
- 2.1 2.2 +1 13. The worst danger to real Americanism during the last 50 years has come from foreign ideas and agitators.

(Linguistic Motivation)

Below are *six* reasons students frequently give for studying Spanish. Please read each reason carefully and rate it, indicating the extent to which it is descriptive of your own case.

- 2.6 2.7 +1 14. I think it will some day be useful in getting a good job.
- 3.6 4.0 +4 15. It will help me better understand the Spanish and Latin American people and their way of life.
- 2.4 2.3 -1 16. One needs a good knowledge of at least one foreign language to merit social recognition.
- 3.4 3.3 -1 17. It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.

- 4.5 4.5 — 18. I need it in order to meet college requirements.
 2.1 2.0 —1 19. It should enable me to think and behave as do the Spanish speaking and Latin American people.

(Attitude Toward Foreign Culture)

- 3.8 3.7 —1 20. Educational programs in U.S. schools should emphasize more international areas.
 3.1 3.3 +2 21. Having to adjust to a lower standard of living in a foreign country would make my stay rather unpleasant.**
 4.5 4.4 —1 22. I think that a stay abroad for a year or more would be one of the most valuable experiences of my life.
 4.4 4.1 —3 23. Foreign travel is high on my list of things I want to do.
 3.8 4.3 +5 24. The immigrants who come to this country today no longer make a great contribution to the richness of our society.**

(Attitude Toward Foreign Language)

- 2.7 2.7 — 25. I would study a foreign language in school even if it were not required.
 2.6 2.4 —2 26. I would enjoy going to see foreign films in the original language.
 3.2 3.3 +1 27. Our lack of knowledge of foreign languages accounts for many of our political difficulties abroad.
 2.3 2.1 —2 28. I want to read the literature of a foreign language in the original.
 4.4 4.3 —1 29. I wish I could speak another language perfectly.
 3.4 3.9 +5 30. Knowledge of a foreign language is not really necessary for travel or business abroad as most well-educated foreigners speak English.**
 3.9 4.2 +3 31. If I planned to stay in another country, I would make a great effort to learn the language even though I could get along in English.
 3.5 4.0 +5 32. The study of a foreign language is mostly a waste of time.**
 2.3 2.3 — 33. I would prefer to study the culture and literature (in English translation) of a people rather than its language.**

(Spanophilia)

- 2.0 1.6 —4 34. When given a choice, I attend Spanish or Latin American rather than American films.
 2.6 2.1 —5 35. I read or browse through Spanish or Latin American magazines.

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- 3.7 3.3 —4 3.6. When eating out, I enjoy trying unfamiliar Spanish or Latin American dishes.
- 3.9 4.1 +2 37. I have made friends with Spanish or Latin American-speaking persons.
- 3.1 2.5 —6 38. I have no plans for travel to Spain or Latin America in the near future.**
- 2.4 2.5 +1 39. American values appear shallow and superficial when compared with Spanish and Latin American values rooted in centuries of traditions.
- 3.3 3.3 — 40. Franco, Castro, and former President Peron typify the arrogance of the Spanish and Latin American people.**
- 3.0 3.0 — 41. When compared with the old-world charm and beauty of a city like Madrid, la ciudad de Mexico, New York is a barren expanse of steel and cement.
- 2.5 2.8 +3 42. The Spanish and Latin American people are much more individualistic, less bound by social conformity than are Americans.
- 3.0 3.0 — 43. The Spanish and Latin American people as a whole tend to cling stubbornly to tradition, resisting progress that could improve their standards of living.**
- 2.7 2.7 — 44. Drinking coffee or milk with meals is preferable to the Spanish and Latin American custom of drinking wine.

(Desire to Learn Spanish)

- 3.7 3.6 —1 45. On the whole, I feel I am doing well in Spanish.
- 3.0 3.0 — 46. I enjoy studying Spanish.
- 2.8 3.5 +7 47. I wish there were less emphasis on speaking and understanding Spanish in this course.**
- 2.9 2.7 —2 48. Spanish is my least preferred course.**
- 3.7 3.0 —7 49. In my Spanish class, I am generally not prepared unless I know the instructor will ask for the assignment.**
- 2.9 2.8 +1 50. I resent having to spend so much time on Spanish at the expense of my other studies.**