

**Department of Romance Languages  
Hunter College-CUNY  
SPAN 370 Summer 2025**

Canarias y América: Conexiones literarias y culturales  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday  
10:00am-1:00pm



Professor: María Hernández-Ojeda  
Office hours by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The course entitled “The Canary Islands and the Americas: Literary and cultural connections” focuses on the formation of the cultural, literary and national identity of Canary Islanders from the indigenous period to our days, in relationship with the American continent. In order to examine this process, you will learn about the Literature, History and Geography of The Canary Islands in a Transatlantic context, particularly with Latin American nations. The Canary Islands were the first colonial experiment of Spain and a major geographical factor in Columbus’ arrival to the Americas. The islands became a laboratory for the colonization of America, including the introduction of slavery and sugar plantations.

The study of this exciting archipelago will help us understand the importance of a hybrid and complex region that is tied politically to Spain, geographically to Africa and emotionally to the Caribbean region. Furthermore, this course will challenge you to question the definition of fixed national identities.

The course will have a combination of class sessions, lectures, and field trips in the island of Gran Canaria. From Monday through Thursday, we will meet a total number of 45 hours. Fourteen sessions will take place from 10am-1pm. The days of the midterm and final exam we will meet for 1.5 hours each.

Prerequisite: SPAN 202 or SPAN 208

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Students will engage with course material and draw upon a non-traditional perspective of the colonization of the Canary Islands and the Americas.
- 2) Students will read literary, historical, and cultural texts to examine the life of Indigenous civilization in the Canary Islands to the present.
- 3) Students will write critical responses to the course readings.

4) Students will learn about the different identities in the archipelago through cultural visits and field trips to the House of Columbus, the Museo Canario, cave painting expeditions, and several other excursions.

#### GRADING

Participation.....	20%	
Oral presentation.....	20%	
Midterm.....	20%	
Final Exam.....	20%	
Final Project.....		20%

**PARTICIPATION:** Participation at all classes is required and expected. Each student is not allowed any unexcused absences without penalty. In order to assure active class discussion, it is crucial that students participate in class with assigned readings and tasks completed in their entirety. Students should not exit the room once the lesson has started. There will be a ten minute break somewhere around the midpoint of each class meeting.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** You are expected to read your work on the due date (see course calendar below).

**PRESENTATION:** Individually or in pairs, students will prepare a presentation for the class using PowerPoint. This oral evaluation should last no more than ten minutes and no less than five.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** You are expected to turn in your work on the due date (see course calendar below). In the case of excused absences, homework assignments are due before the next class day.

**MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAM:** The format of the midterm and final exam may include any combination of the following: short-answer identifications, information presented by students, passages for identification and commentary, and brief and/or long essay questions. Each exam will be cumulative. The Final exam is mandatory for all students.

**COURSE PROJECT:** Your course project is an eight to ten-page research paper, documented according to the MLA Style Sheet. These papers will be gathered and formatted into a literary magazine by the professor, with the permission of the student. All students should consult with the instructor regarding the details of their project. Due date: December 10.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Hunter College and CUNY have expressed a firm commitment to maintaining access for people with disabilities. Sometimes this necessitates special testtaking procedures or other accommodations for students. If any such students have registered for this course, the Office for Access and Accommodation will send me a memo identifying the accommodation you require. This information will remain confidential and I will only discuss these issues in private. If you need further information please call the Office for Access and Accommodation at 212-772-4891 or visit their website at

<http://studentservices.hunter.cuny.edu/DisabilitiesOffice.html> .

**ACADEMIC HONESTY-PLAGIARISM-CHEATING:**

"Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures."

"Any deliberate borrowing of the ideas, terms, statements or knowledge of others without clear and specific acknowledgement of the source is plagiarism. It is, in fact, intellectual theft. Serious students, scholars, and teachers agree that they cannot tolerate plagiarism. It is not, of course, plagiarism to borrow the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others if the source is clearly and specifically acknowledge. Plagiarism will result in disciplinary proceedings. A more detailed explanation of plagiarism and the accepted procedures for acknowledging sources is available from the Department of English or the Office of the Hunter College Senate" (Undergraduate Catalog, p. 49).

**GRADING SYSTEM:**

A+	100-97.5%	C+	79.9-77.5%
A	97.4-92.5%	C	77.4-70%
A-	92.4-90%	B+	89.9-87.5%
B	87.4-82.5%	D	66-63%
B-	82.4-80%	F	59-0%

\*Syllabus may be subject to changes

**TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR****Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup>**

Arrival at Gran Canaria Airport. Get settled at the university dorms.

**WEEK 1****Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup>**

On Monday students will visit the facilities at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. We will meet at 10am for an orientation session at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and a Historic Tour of Vegueta.

Trip to the Museo Canario. The permanent exhibition on display at the Canarian Museum is devoted solely to the aboriginal population of Gran Canaria, the canarios. The exhibition explains the way of life of this human group of berber origin who inhabited the islands from the second half of the first millennium BC to the 15th century, when the conquest and colonization by the Crown of Castile took place.

**Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>**

Topic: The Canary Islands before the Conquest I

Readings: Endechas aborígenes, anónimo. Escrito en piedra, José Farrujia de la Rosa.

### **Wednesday, July 16th**

Topic: The Conquest of the Canary Islands

Readings: Selections. Crónicas de la conquista de Canaria: Matritense, Ovetense y Lacunense. Gadifer de La Salle. *The Discovery of Mankind* (selections), David Abulafia.

### **Thursday, July 17th**

Historical field trip: **The Cueva Pintada de Galdar**. It is a rock chamber decorated with geometric paintings that lends its name to the present-day archaeological zone and museum center associated with the cave. The Galdar painted motifs are the most authentic manifestation of pre-Hispanic murals, an exceptional testimony to the artistic and symbolic expression of the early Canarians.

## WEEK 2

### **Monday, July 21st**

Topic: Desired geographies.

Readings: Selections of Historia de las Indias de Bartolomé de Las Casas, Le Canarien, Columbus' Diary, (first trip)

### **Tuesday, July 22nd**

Topic: Foundational literature of the Canary Islands and the Americas

Readings: Espejo de paciencia by Silvestre de Balboa, José de Anchieta, and selection of texts by other authors.

### **Wednesday, July 23rd**

Topic: Cuba and the Canary Islands. History and Literature

Readings: Encuentros y transformaciones en la construcción histórica de Las Antillas y las Islas Canarias. Selections of literary texts.

### **Thursday, July 24th**

**Historical field trip: Columbus House** The Christopher Columbus House is an architectural complex, including what was originally the Island Governors' House, and now functions as a five hundred years old museum. The rooms of the museum are mainly devoted to the New World and the role played by the Canary Islands in its Conquest of America.

## WEEK 3

### **Monday, July 28th**

MIDTERM EXAM

This day we will meet for 1.5 hours

### **Tuesday, July 29th**

Topic: Language, folklore and Atlantic identity

Readings: La décima by Maximiano Trapero. Aportación canaria a la población de América by José Pérez Vidal.

**Wednesday, July 30th**

Topic: Women writers from the Canary Islands and Latin America

Readings: Selections by Juana Fernández Ferraz, Nivaria Tejera, Mercedes Pinto, Josefina Pla.

**Thursday, July 31st**

Field trip: **Roque Bentayga**. Three rocks sit up at the mountain peaks on the island. Together they represent the perfect union between the natural landscape and the cultural landscape of the Bentayga, right on the spiritual axis of Gran Canaria's indigenous world.

WEEK 4

**Monday, August 4th**

Topic: Traditional music and plastic arts in the Canary Islands

Readings: TBD

**Tuesday, July 5th**

Topic: Contemporary novelists from the Canary Islands

Readings: selections

**Wednesday, July 7th**

Topic: Contemporary women filmmakers from the Canary Islands. Visit from filmmakers.

Readings: selections.

**Thursday, July 8th**

Conclusions. This day we will meet for 1.5 hours

FINAL EXAM

**Friday, July 9th**

Students will depart back home.

Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup>