



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Spain II Program, Summer 2026

SPAN 345 Topics: Cervantes' Short Fiction

Instructor: Prof. Stephen Hessel

Email: swhessel@bsu.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

In this course, students will read short fiction written by Spain's most famous author, Miguel de Cervantes, and investigate these works' role and relevance in contemporary Spanish society. This will lead to a deeper analysis of how canonical texts transcend their traditional interpretation and become culturally impactful in multiple and, at times, contradictory ways. The final product of this course will be a group video project that presents student findings and proposes ideas about how to best address this curious phenomenon. The course is taught entirely in Spanish.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students will:

- Practice Spanish at an appropriate level within interactive, real-world contexts.
- Cultivate a deep understanding of Hispanic culture and the production of culture in general by reading the works of Miguel de Cervantes and investigating their place within Spanish culture.
- Develop a nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences between culture in the United States and culture in Spain through comparative analysis of canonical works and their interpretations.
- Improve critical thinking skills through readings and discussions.
- Consider how the skills developed in this course will impact future careers and post-university life.
- Produce an incisive video about the impact of Cervantes's works on contemporary Spanish culture.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- Golden Age Spanish culture, history, and literature
- The use of literature from the past to analyze and better understand contemporary societies and cultures

5. Required Readings and Materials:

- Course materials to be posted, but all readings will be made available digitally and free of cost.

6. Graded Assignments:

Students will demonstrate the above learning outcomes through a group video project, weekly participation, discussion posts, a presentation, and reading quizzes. The final grade will be based on the following:

Class participation and preparation	30%	90–100	A
Group video project	30%	80-89	B
Reading quizzes	15%	70-79	C
Presentation	15%	60-69	D
Discussion posts	10%	≤ 59	F

*Note KUIS/does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

*BSU grades will be Credit/No Credit (without letter grades).

- Class Participation and Preparation. Students will submit a grade at the end of each week that they believe reflects their level of participation. The professor will modify that grade to match his assessment of the student's participation level. Students are expected to be present, prepared, and engage in the daily discussions and activities. While "A" grades may be common, "100%" will typically only be awarded to 1 student per week. The weekly grade will be based on: 1) the consistent and constant use of Spanish; 2) the student's engagement in conversations with peers; 3) the student's engagement in class-wide discussions; 4) the student's level of preparation for the topics addressed.
- Group Video Project. Student groups will choose a specific way in which the works of Miguel de Cervantes have an impact on contemporary Spanish culture, be it politically, artistically, or even economically. Research will include interviews with local stakeholders in Spanish literature and culture in addition to traditional research in libraries and on the internet. Students will then storyboard their video project and produce appropriate film

clips. During the final week, student groups will work with the professor to fine tune their project and edit it into a final cut that they will share with their classmates.

- Reading Quizzes. Short multiple-choice quizzes will be due the day a reading is discussed before students arrive at class. These are not timed and open book, so feel free to take the quiz while completing the reading.
- Presentations. Student groups will present an approach to the work of Cervantes to be discussed that week through a particular approach to its cultural importance—for example, literature, art and aesthetics, politics and policy, economics and tourism, etc. This is meant to prepare students for the final project, providing them the opportunity to pilot their ideas and practice the implementation of strategies. Each member of the group is responsible for at minimum 5 minutes and at maximum 15 minutes of the presentation. Please do not read a prepared script and the more interaction with the audience the better.
- Discussion Posts. Students will submit a 3-minute video discussion post in Spanish as a reaction to the topics and discussions of the past week. They will also watch and comment on the post of at least one classmate. These is a low-stakes assignments, and a student will receive 100% if they submit a 3-minute video in which they speak extemporaneously (**without a script**) and make at least one comment. Remember, making mistakes is the only way to get better.

7. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.
- With Instructor Approval: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors when permitted by the instructor.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

8. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

9. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations. If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.). Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment: Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.