



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Spain I Program, Summer 2027

SPAN 306 Experiencing Spanish Abroad: Legends, Myths and Mysteries of Spain

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: Castles, ghosts, forbidden caves, legendary heroes, haunted streets, and one of literature's most famous seducers... this course explores Spain through the stories that have captured its imagination for centuries. Using Segovia as its home base and traveling to Toledo, Salamanca, Valladolid, and Madrid, students will discover how legends and myths remain alive in monuments, city streets, local traditions, and literary works. From the Aqueduct of Segovia to the mysteries of Salamanca and the myth of Don Juan, students will examine both traditional versions of Spanish legends and literary reworkings by authors such as Bécquer, Cervantes, Zorrilla, and García Lorca. Through conversation, reading, field-based learning, and creative interpretation, students will improve their Spanish while experiencing Spain in a way that goes beyond guidebooks and tourist sites.

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:

Course Objectives. This course aims to:

- Introduce students to a range of Spanish legends, myths, and mystery narratives from different regions of Spain.
- Examine how these stories emerge from popular tradition and how they have been reworked by major Spanish authors.
- Explore the relationship among story, place, history, and cultural memory through site-based learning in Segovia, Toledo, Salamanca, Valladolid, and Madrid.
- Strengthen students' ability to understand, discuss, and interpret literary and cultural materials in Spanish.
- Encourage students to engage thoughtfully and creatively with Spanish culture through discussion, observation, writing, and performance.

Specific Learning Outcomes. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and summarize the main characters, plots, and settings of the legends studied in the course.
- Explain the geographical, historical, and cultural context of selected legends from Spain.
- Distinguish between legends in their popular/traditional forms and their literary reinterpretations by authors such as Cervantes, Bécquer, Zorrilla, and García Lorca.
- Interpret the relationship between story and place by connecting course readings to monuments, cities, and local traditions encountered during the study abroad experience.
- Express personal responses and interpretations in Spanish in ways that show engagement with course materials and cultural experiences.
- Demonstrate increased confidence and cultural awareness in engaging with Spanish language and culture in an immersive setting.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

This course examines how legends, myths, and mystery narratives shape Spanish cultural identity, regional traditions, and historical memory. The stories we will study emerge from popular tradition, and the course will consider both their traditional forms and their literary reinterpretations. Students will read excerpts from reworkings by some of Spain's most influential authors, including Cervantes, Zorrilla, and García Lorca. Many of these legends will also be studied in relation to the cities we visit, allowing students to experience firsthand the relationship among place, literature, and popular imagination.

Legends in connection with the cities we visit

- Segovia: the legends of the Aqueduct, the Alcázar, and Calle del Mal Consejo
- Toledo: Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer's "La ajorca de oro" and "El beso"
- Salamanca: La cueva de Salamanca in popular tradition and Cervantes's literary reworking of the legend
- Valladolid: The figure of Don Juan as one of Spain's most enduring cultural myths (excerpts from Tirso de Molina and José Zorrilla)

Historical Legends and National Memory: how legend reshapes history and contributes to ideas of heroism, conquest, religion, and nation

- La traición del Conde don Julián
- Don Pelayo y la Cruz de la Victoria
- Santiago Matamoros (and García Lorca's literary reworking of the legend)
- The legend of the Cid's victory after death

Popular Legends from Across Spain: comparison of local traditions across different regions of Spain

- La Santa Compañía (Galicia)
- Saint George / Sant Jordi and the dragon (Catalonia)
- Legends of submerged villages and other regional tales

6. Required Readings and Materials:

- Compilation of materials, available on KIS site (You can either print them all, or download them and have them available in your electronic device, for use both in class and out of class).
- Spanish/English dictionary or electronic version.
- EU30 for some out-of-class experiences.

7. Graded Assignments: Assignments in this course are designed to help students engage actively with Spanish legends and myths through discussion, oral communication, written work, site-based observation, and creative interpretation. All assignments and class participation will be completed in Spanish. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

20% Daily preparation and participation
20% Oral presentations
20% "My Own Take" videos
20% Written quizzes
20% Final project

Daily Preparation and Participation (20%). Students are expected to come to class prepared every day. This includes completing the assigned readings and any additional written, oral, or site-based tasks related to the cities we visit. Because this course relies heavily on discussion and active engagement, students should be ready to contribute regularly and thoughtfully in class.

Participation will be evaluated daily on a 5-point scale. The participation grade reflects not only how much a student speaks, but also the quality of their preparation, engagement, and contributions. Criteria include:

- Came to class prepared and ready to engage with the assigned materials
- Remained on task and showed respect for classmates, instructors, and the spaces we visit
- Used Spanish actively and consistently
- Contributed voluntarily to class discussion
- Offered thoughtful comments, questions, or insights

Oral Presentations (20%). Students will complete several individual oral presentations, both in and outside the classroom. These presentations are designed to help students connect course readings to their own observations and to broader cultural traditions in Spain.

1. Calentando motores. At the beginning of class, one student will give a brief presentation based on a photo they have taken in Spain. The image should show something that caught their attention—ideally something mysterious, symbolic, or

unusual. The student should explain where the photo was taken, why it stood out, and what questions or interpretations it raises. Approximately 2 minutes long.

2. Short presentations. Students will also prepare brief presentations on cultural or historical topics connected to the legends studied in class. For example, when discussing Santiago Matamoros, a student might present on the pilgrimage to Santiago; when discussing submerged villages, a student might research and present traditions associated with La noche de San Juan. These presentations should enrich class discussion by providing relevant cultural and historical context.

“My Own Take” Videos (20%). After discussing a legend in class, students will record an individual video of approximately 2–3 minutes. Whenever possible, the video should be recorded in a place connected to the legend or to one of its main themes. In each video, students should briefly explain the legend and then give their own take on it. Their response may be thoughtful, surprising, funny, or provocative, as long as it shows engagement with the story. Students might comment on why the legend stood out to them, what they find strange or memorable about it, how they interpret it, or what questions it raises for them. Videos will be uploaded to the class site or another designated platform, and may be discussed in class.

Written Quizzes (20%). Students will complete several written quizzes, approximately one per week, in Spanish. These quizzes are designed to help students keep up with the course readings and to check their understanding of the legends studied in class.

Quizzes will assess students' knowledge of:

- the main characters and plot of each legend,
- key vocabulary from the readings,
- and relevant geographical and historical context.

Students are expected to come to class having read and reviewed the assigned materials carefully.

Final Project (20%): Performing a Legend. For the final project, students will work in groups to adapt one of the legends studied in class into a short performance in Spanish. Each group will prepare a script and present the legend either live or in video format.

The goal of the project is not only to retell the story, but also to interpret it creatively and thoughtfully. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the legend's characters, themes, cultural context, and lasting appeal.

Final projects will be evaluated based on:

- preparation and collaboration,
- clarity and creativity,
- effective use of Spanish,
- and engagement with the themes of the course.

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A
80 – 89 B
70 – 79 C
60 – 69 D
Below 60 E (F)

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

8. 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 KUIS/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.].”

9. Attendance Policy:

KUIS 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.

10. 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.

11. 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/>.

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.