

## ISP 391 INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

**Area:** All areas

**Level:** 300

**Prerequisite:** Spanish ability as noted below, or permission of mentor

**Language of instruction:** Spanish, generally at least low-intermediate; *but* some projects or placements will require a higher level of Spanish; *and* some rare opportunities may be accomplished primarily in English or with only basic Spanish

**Credit:** 3 (4 with longer duration and additional assignments)

**Duration:** generally 10 weeks, minimum 20 hours of fieldwork per term, 5 hours per term in class or with mentor

**Mentor:**

**Contact:**

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An Independent Study Project (ISP) through the Spanish Institute offers an opportunity to devise and engage a **primary research or creative project through fieldwork** in or near Seville. The success of an ISP rests on three or four legs: your initiative; engagement with a Spanish Institute mentor; engagement with experts or informants at field locations; and, often, prior approval and support of an advisor on your home campus.

Another way of describing the ISP is to state clearly what it is not: it is not a research paper that you could undertake solely through internet or library resources (a worthy project, but not this one!). The **fieldwork component that can only be accomplished in Spain** – that involves engagement with people, organizations, phenomena, etc. that are encountered in Spain – is essential to the Spanish Institute ISP.

The ISP **might involve a deep dive into a topic that interests you**, through observation of people in action, engagement of informants, or shadowing the activities of an organization (versus doing the work of an organization, for which the Spanish Institute “Internship and Service-Learning Program” is more appropriate). It also **might involve creative or artistic production or training** under guidance of a Spanish Institute mentor and, in many cases, apprenticeship to a local artist, musician, choreographer, etc.

The ISP must be approved by the Spanish Institute before fieldwork commences, through discussion with your Spanish Institute mentor and a written proposal. Regular meetings with your Spanish Institute mentor are mandatory. You must keep a daily journal of your systematic reflections and activities regarding the ISP, and submit a final writeup of findings, or written explication of a creative project in the context of Seville and/or Spain, and make an oral presentation on your project and its context.

The ISP is a unique opportunity to utilize and develop linguistic skills and cultural understanding while forming new relationships with the members of the host culture related to your field of inquiry and allowing you to explore systematically your particular topic of interest. Your fieldwork will be a means of immersive integration in Spanish and Sevillian culture.

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## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- Define a research problem or phenomenon, or creative project, and from that build an achievable project
- Be proficient in a range of skills required to acquire primary data to support an inquiry, or to complete a creative/artistic project
- Demonstrate expertise in the subject of a project in a general context, and specifically in the context of contemporary Spain
- Utilize Spanish language and understanding of Spanish/Andalusian cultures sufficient for success in independent study or creative production

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Develop Cognitive and Critical Thinking Skills
  - Identify practical skills and attitudes, and ways of expressing them, that will prepare you for primary research and creative production, and ultimately for further academic, applied, or creative production, or meeting expectations of today's employers
  - Bridge classroom critical thinking skills to practical situations
  - Identify areas of improvement and corrective strategies for independent work
- Develop Attitudinal Skills
  - Demonstrate awareness of, and sensitivity to, informant/ activist/ artist/ practitioner diversity, inclusion, and equity
  - Enhance intercultural competence: a sensitivity and awareness that enables you to navigate relations in novel cultural milieus
  - Demonstrate tolerance for ambiguity in new and unfamiliar circumstances
  - Learn strategies for managing criticism or conflict
  - Learn and practice means of stress management
- Develop Behavioral Skills
  - Display professional demeanor in the context of the formal and informal milieus of your project work
  - Exercise networking skills to advance your project and create lasting relationships for potential future engagement
  - Exercise time management skills
  - Cultivate empathy for colleagues and clients
  - Establish work/life balance
- Develop Area Knowledge
  - Of the phenomenon, problem, organization, art form, etc., that is the focus of your project
  - Of the organization, sector, individuals, etc. with whom you are engaged to complete your project
  - Of the Spanish context of those noted above

- Utilize and develop linguistic skills and cultural understanding while forming new relationships with the members of the host culture related to your field of study or creation, and allowing you to systematically explore your particular topic of interest.
- Demonstrate reflection on the independent study/creative experience, including:
  - Ability to articulate what was learned and how it will be applicable to further learning, activism, engagement, production, or professional career goals
  - Identification of professions, creative production, or modes of community service and engagement, that may be of interest as a result of this experience
  - Identification of additional skills that will need to be developed to ensure readiness to build on the ISP experience, which might include learning a new technology, developing a broader network, additional coursework, etc.
- Integrate yourself into Spanish and Sevillian culture as a means to improve linguistic skill, cultural competence, and local knowledge

## DOCUMENTATION OF ISP ACTIVITY

Course assignments are outlined in the following table. They cover all aspects of the ISP experience. The final result will be a comprehensive account of the experience and its impact. The goal for this course is to encourage you to reflect on the varied subjects it covers, and not merely state facts and observations. Points are assigned to each assignment, totaling 100 points for a top mark in the course. See further notes on fulfilling these assignments in the “Academic Work” section below the table. If conditions warrant, modifications may be made to the specifications below, with due notice to students. In the composite, all projects, regardless of format or topic, require the following:

1. A specific theme or topic of investigation that is viable and feasible when factoring in the language abilities of the student, their previous field research experience, the designated time period, and the available resources.
2. An appropriate research methodology.
3. A significant amount of time in the field that requires interaction with members of the host culture that are directly involved with the research topic.
4. A final paper and oral presentation that is a reflection about and summary of key features of the experience.

Assignment	Description	Evaluation Points/ Due Date

Project Proposal	In approximately 500 words describe your intended project. What is the problem you wish to address; the topic you wish to learn about; the creative medium in which you wish to train or produce? What is an appropriate research methodology to accomplish your project? How is your project linked uniquely to Seville/Andalusia/ Spain? How are you prepared to undertake this project? What resources have you identified for it? What help will you need?	10 points  Second class or mentor session
Daily Journal	Write down your experiences and identify skills being developed by writing in a daily journal or blog. Identify what you have learned to date and how this will be relevant to your ISP goals. Record field encounters or interviews. Assess and reorient (as needed). Establish goals for the remainder of your ISP and actions to achieve those goals.  We recommend you keep a personal journal or diary as well, but strictly personal content is not to be included in this ISP daily journal. This journal will be collected and evaluated on a regular basis.  An entry for every ISP contact day is mandatory. Missed entries are penalized.	15 points  Entry every field day
Final Paper and Creative Output	Analyze your ISP experience. Are you interested in pursuing further research or production following on the ISP project? What skills do you need to develop to continue in this field? If not, why not?  What did you learn about: intercultural communication? Interpersonal communication? Conflict resolution? Ability to issue or receive criticism? Strategies to address weaknesses? Recognition of strengths?  If you were attached to an organization, business, troop, school, etc., how do your host's values and mission align with your values and priorities? What evidence did you discern of the host entity meeting (or not meeting) their stated values and mission?  Summarize your project activities and results, or new skills acquired (if any).  Did your research result in an actionable plan, or output of value to individuals or organizations with whom you engaged?	50 points  Due date tba

	<p>Record Creative/Artistic/Apprentice project output so that a portable, digital record may be retained.</p> <p>Write up appropriate background to your project, reflections, and findings in approximately twenty typed, double-spaced pages (5,000 - 6,000 words) for research projects, and ten pages (2,500 - 3,000 words) for creative/apprentice projects.</p>	
Final Oral Presentation	Fifteen-minute oral presentation to your Spanish Institute mentor (and class/cohort, if applicable), summarizing key information about your project and outcomes; career or academic insights; other salient takeaways from your ISP experience. Nearly all ISP participants will make this presentation in Spanish. If your ability in Spanish is sub-intermediate, discuss with your Spanish Institute mentor whether English is permissible. The presentation may not be read from a script, but powerpoint prompts are allowed.	15 points Date tba
Field Supervisor's Assessment	Submitted directly to the Spanish Institute mentor by the site supervisor utilizing, minimally, a standard Spanish Institute Internship/ISP Evaluation Form.	Date tba
Participation	Objective and subjective assessment of attitude, effectiveness, attendance, and more. The participation component applies to engagement with Spanish Institute instruction, mentorship, and activities, and also incorporates feedback from your external supervisor, as applicable.	10 points

Correspondence and rating scale			
Qualification	U.S. Correspondence	Scale (numerical)	Scale (percentages)
Outstanding	A +	97 - 100	97.0 - 100%
	A	94 - 96	94.0 - 96.9%
	A-	90 - 94	90.0 - 93.9%
Notable	B +	87 - 89	87.0 - 89.9%

Correspondence and rating scale			
	B	84 - 86	84.0 - 86.9%
	B-	80 - 83	80.0 - 83.9%
	C +	77 - 79	77.0 - 79.9%
	C	74 - 76	70.0 - 76.9%
	C-	70 - 73	70.0 - 73.9%
Pass	D	60 - 69	60.0 - 69.9
Pass	D-	50 - 59	50.0 - 59.9%
Fail	F	0 - 49	0.0 - 49.9%
Not present	W	Withdrawal	Withdrawal
Not present	INC	Incomplete	Incomplete

## ACADEMIC WORK

You will keep a journal as described in the table above, in which you note your progress and/or discoveries from each field session, as well as relevant reflections. The journal will be checked periodically by the Spanish Institute mentor to help facilitate the continued progress of the internship.

All submissions from the table above are mandatory and are graded independently of the final projects. The proposal and journal will help you to prepare your final paper and oral presentation.

**Research project:** You will use field research methodology that allows cultural immersion and language learning (oral interviews, ethnographies, case studies) in order to investigate a specific question or a topic of personal interest that will result in a deeper knowledge of the culture. You will establish measurable learning objectives for the ISP at the outset and monitor progress toward those objectives, as well as complete assignments. Credit for the ISP course is granted for the completion of the academic assignments related to the experience, not solely for hours of fieldwork that are completed.

**Creative/Arts/Apprenticeship Project:** You will learn or further develop ability in an art or creative form of expression, and learn its role in contemporary Spanish culture. The hours spent at the studio/school/etc. that are devoted to training or production comprise the majority of time required for this course. Each student will establish measurable learning objectives for the apprenticeship at the outset and monitor progress toward those objectives, as well as complete assignments. Credit for the apprenticeship course is granted for the completion of the creative project and academic assignments related to the experience, not solely for hours completed at the apprenticeship site.

## **Suggested Guidelines for Final Paper:**

You may structure your paper as you wish, as long as content addressing the relevant prompts from the table above and the notes below are incorporated. You may utilize titled sections or a logical, continuous narrative, per your preference and writing style.

### **General Introduction:**

Describe your background, motivations, and initial goals for the ISP.

### **Organizations or Individuals supporting your ISP:**

Show an understanding of the organization or external mentors, through a clear description including what they do/offer and how they function, and also through an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, of the general context in which they operate, and of the challenges they face. It should not be written in the first person.

### **The Intercultural Experience:**

Account for your experience and understanding of cultural differences: on a general scale, as a process of adjustment; and through specific examples related to human relationships, work environment and ethics, vision of life or society, and issues related to the sector of your organization or project.

### **The Professional Experience:**

Recount your ISP experience in terms of missions and tasks, but also in terms, e.g., of accomplishments, challenges, and developed skills or competencies. Discuss your project output in the context of its field, and in a Spanish context.

### **General Conclusion:**

Focus on the outcomes of your ISP experience, how you have evolved and how this experience will impact future professional or personal choices.

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The Independent Study Program lasts a minimum of 10 weeks organized into a minimum of 20 hours of field work per term, and 5 hours of meetings per term with the Spanish Institute mentor or in the classroom. The specific dates and times of your fieldwork will be determined in conjunction with your Spanish Institute and external mentors, in consultation with you. Prior to approving your project and making your placement the Spanish Institute will evaluate your language level and interests, in addition to needs or accommodations that you might require (which we asked you to disclose at the time of application to the Spanish Institute). Preceding the start of the course, you will meet with your Spanish Institute Faculty Mentor to receive the syllabus, discuss the course, and arrange ongoing contact for evaluation, questions, and concerns.

Credit for the ISP is granted for the completion of the academic assignments related to the experience. Participation in the ISP without submission of the academic work is not creditable. Full completion of the academic work without participation in the proposed and approved

fieldwork is not possible. A documented, unsatisfactory evaluation of your attitude, effectiveness, or attendance, by your external ISP supervisor or mentor, will result in penalty or course failure.

In order to ensure the intent of the course is being fulfilled and that you are gaining appropriate experience in the ISP, the Spanish Institute Faculty Mentor will contact the external supervisor, typically at midterm, to discuss your progress with your supervisor. The mentor/supervisor contacts may be electronic or on-site, as circumstances allow or warrant.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY EXPECTATIONS

The Spanish Institute for Global Education expects all members of the program to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. You are expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, you are asserting that the submission is your own work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the Spanish Institute's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. Simply stated, this is plagiarism, and is, in fact, intellectual theft. It is one of the most serious forms of academic misconduct. Plagiarism committed by a student will certainly result in course failure and may result in suspension or dismissal.

## GRADING PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Assignments will be graded based on satisfactory completion of each by the deadlines. Please refer to the point values and details in the table above and throughout this document. Attendance at all class or mentor sessions, and at all times expected by your site supervisor, is mandatory. Penalties apply for lack of attendance and punctuality.

- Each unexcused absence is 5% off the final grade
- Four or more unexcused absences = F for the course
- Unsubmitted written work = F (0 points) for the assignment in question
- Work submitted late = 1 point off the assignment per day
- Plagiarism = F (0 points) for the assignment in question
- Unsubmitted written work or absence for a presentation or exam = F (0 points) for the assignment in question

EXCUSED ABSENCES = Absence for illness excused by the certificate of a doctor

Written work submitted more than a week late will not receive credit (grade =F).

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### You, the ISP Participant

- Communicate with the external supervisor/mentor regarding individual or organization responsibilities and objectives and deliverables, as they may apply to your situation.

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- Adhere to professional work standards including: regular attendance, punctuality, working within agreed-upon hours, wearing appropriate attire as stated by the organization, and abiding by all conduct policies.
- Complete agreed-upon course assignments while meeting professional work obligations.
- Maintain a positive and constructive attitude in the context of the organization, Spanish Institute, and community.

#### **Site Supervisor**

- Provide site information including relevant conduct information.
- Set forth expectations for the work to be completed and associated timelines.
- Establish preferred method and frequency of communication with student.
- Identify opportunities for student to meet learning objectives.
- Introduce student to key people who can be of assistance in completing the project or for future networking.
- Oversee work.
- Conduct evaluation(s) and share performance feedback and skills development needs with student.
- Conduct and submit to the Spanish Institute timely final evaluation of student.

#### **Faculty Mentor**

- Approve, oversee, and grade academic assignments.
- Serve as primary contact for Site Supervisor regarding concerns with student performance.
- Help student to get the most from their experience through regular check-ins.
- Submit final grade for ISP.

## **LIBRARY RESEARCH**

Researching relevant texts written on the topic is an important step in the process for the proposal and the final paper, but the majority of the student's time should be spent in the field speaking the language and interacting with the locals. The ISP is not doing research in a library.

## **INTERACTION WITH LOCAL EXPERTS**

Locals who have studied your research topic often serve as important resources when approaching a new topic, choosing a location for conducting research, developing a proposal with appropriate methodology, and fitting the field work into the wider body of work when writing the final paper. Interviewing experts who have studied the topic, especially when they are part of the host culture, is helpful for establishing and refining the project but should not be the principal means of data collection and should not occupy the majority of your time. The majority of the time should be spent in the field with people who are directly involved in the research area. For example, a university professor or the director of an NGO who is an expert in the role of volunteers in the care and education of children can be an important resource for the project, but should not serve as a substitute for working directly with the volunteers in the field.

## USING INTERPRETERS, SURVEYS, AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Using a bilingual local to help translate interviews or conversations that you have recorded may be appropriate, but you should design your project and plan your questions in such a way that you are using and developing your own language skills. The topics and methodologies of the project (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) should be designed to adapt to your language level whenever possible. The objective here is for you to learn about your interest areas while directly interacting with people involved. The relationships that you form and the learning and growth you will experience doing this (that will be a part of the final paper) probably will become one of the most valuable and gratifying aspects of the project.

## ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE ISP

If you utilize informants for your project, you are subject to local ethical standards. Please refer to the Spanish Institute "Ethical Guidelines for the ISP" documents in Spanish and English, which contain "Informed Consent" forms for informants.

## SUMMARY

You should:

1. Choose a topic you are passionate about and is feasible.
2. Do something you would not be able to do at your home university.
3. Do a project that will enhance your linguistic and cultural learning.
4. Do a project that promotes interaction with locals with direct involvement in the research topic.

## RESOURCES

Whether for a research project or a creative project, the ISP requires discipline, time-management skills, and initiative. You must find resources relevant to your project, whether in print, on the internet, or through informants. If you have a hosting organization you must learn about it or the sector in which it works on your own, or with the assistance of individuals at the organization. You should consider the following resources a minimum of required reading to help contextualize your experience. These resources should lead you to others that will be useful to you. Search for resources as your curiosity and needs are stimulated. Some of these resources are oriented toward internship or service-learning, which are different from independent study, but some of the challenges of setting out on your project are similar, so that is where the relevance of those resources lies, and that suggests the broad net you should cast as you prepare yourself and contextualize your work. The Spanish Institute acknowledges and thanks numerous pedagogical resources whose shared ideas are incorporated in this course syllabus. Some of those sources have commercial origins; the Spanish Institute does not endorse or participate in those ventures.

Fieldwork Methods: an anthropologically informed Wiki

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Cultural\\_Anthropology/Book%3A\\_Cultural\\_Anthropology\\_\(Wikibook\)/3%3A\\_Anthropological\\_Methods/3.3%3A\\_Fieldwork\\_Methods](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Cultural_Anthropology/Book%3A_Cultural_Anthropology_(Wikibook)/3%3A_Anthropological_Methods/3.3%3A_Fieldwork_Methods)

Field Research: some useful links within this blog

<https://www.questionpro.com/blog/field-research/>

Research ethics in anthropology per the European Commission

[https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/ethics-guide-ethnog-anthrop\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/ethics-guide-ethnog-anthrop_en.pdf)

Intercultural competence:

<https://www.monash.edu/arts/monash-intercultural-lab/about-the-monash-intercultural-lab/what-is-intercultural-competence#:~:text=What%20is%20intercultural%20competence%2C%20and,backgrounds%20%E2%80%93%20at%20home%20or%20abroad.>

Country comparison:

<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/spain,the-usa/>

Personal development skills:

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/improve-your-personal-development-skills>

Emotional intelligence:

<https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/best-practices/recognizing-emotions-as-real-at-heart-of-developing-emotional-intelligence/>

Networking:

<https://hbr.org/2021/05/make-the-most-of-the-network-you-built-during-your-internship>

More on reflection, for the journal and final paper:

[Internship Reflection Guide - Northern Vermont University](#)

Experiential learning and learning styles:

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>