Universidad Pontificia Comillas
ICADE School of Business and Economics

OLÉ
Overview of Life in España

Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Rubén Abella
Office: Teachers room, east wing, 3rd floor
E-mail: rfabella@comillas.edu
Classes: Mon. 15.00 – 17.00 hrs. & Wed. 17.00 – 19.00 hrs. Classroom O-104
Office hours: Tues. 16.00 – 17.00 hrs. & Wed. 16.00 – 17.00 hrs. and by appointment

Textbook and other materials

- William Chislett (1), *Spain. What Everyone Needs to Know.* New York: Oxford University Press (pages 1-73).
- William Chislett (2), *Image and Reality: Contemporary Spain*.

Course Aims

This course explores contemporary issues and current events in everyday Spanish life and provides a comprehensive overview of the country's recent history since its political Transition to Democracy in 1975. Starting with an examination of the Spanish political system, its economic structure, and its socio-cultural identity and diversity, the course will guide students through a wide range of topics, including:

- Autonomous communities
- Immigration
- Gastronomy
- Celebrations and festivals
- Customs
- Sports
- Cinema
- Music
- The arts
- Television fiction
- Literature
- Cinema
- Fashion
- Future challenges

Learning and Teaching Strategy

This student-centered course will be taught by a mixture of lectures, analysis and debates. Students are expected to participate in the discussion of topics and issues. The pedagogical approach to the class is clearly Socratic so as to foster the students' active involvement in the learning experience.

AI

Level 2 of Perkins, Furze & MacVaugh's AI Assessment Scale (2024) will be applied in this course. AI may be used for pre-task individual and group activities such as brainstorming, outlining and initial research. This level focuses on the effective use of AI for planning, synthesis and ideation, but assessments should emphasize the students' ability to develop and refine these ideas independently.

More specifically, AI may be used in the following learning contexts:

• Web research: AI tools may be used in class activities in order to research, verify, and synthesize key course-related questions and topics. The course includes four AI-assisted fact-check tasks.

• Brainstorming and ideation: AI may be used as a creative stimulation tool prior to class debates.

Assessment

The final grade for this course is based on the following criteria:

- Midterm exam (13 Oct.) 20%
- Final exam (25 Nov.) 20%
- Essay (1 Dec.) 20%
- Four fact checks 40%

* **Exams** are multiple choice and may also include short answer questions. Exam questions will be based on the following sources of information: William Chislett's *Image and Reality. Contemporary Spain* and *Spain. What Everyone Needs to Know*; the content of the lectures; the study material provided on Moodle. The **essay** will be written by hand in the classroom on the appointed date. **Fact checks** is an activity to be developed in groups and with the optional assistance of AI tools.

* * **Students failing the course** may take a second-chance exam (or other form of evaluation, as determined by their professor) after the Fail grade has been officially published.

* * * **Students are expected to take notes by hand**. The use of personal computers and mobile phones is not allowed except in in-class AI-assisted tasks.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is a requirement of the course. Every 3 unjustified absences will result in the loss of 1 point off the final grade. A student with 10 or more unjustified absences will automatically fail the course regardless of quiz and participation grades.

Absences must be notified to the professor via email, including all relevant justifying documentation, as soon as possible and no later than 2 days after the absence has taken place.

Program

	DAY	TOPIC TYPE OF LEARNING ACTIVITY	REQUIRED READING
1	Mon, Sep 1	Introduction to the course Contemporary Spain: general features	
2	Wed, Sep 3	Spain's recent history (1) Transition to democracy 1975-82)	Chislett (1), Pag. 74-102

3	Mon, Sep 8	Spain's recent history (2) The socialist era 1982-1996 The return of the right 1996-2004	Chislett (1), Pag. 103-153
4	Wed, Sep 10	Spain's recent history (3) The socialists strike back 2004-2011 Mariano Rajoy 20011-2018 Pedro Sánchez 2018-present	Chislett (1), Pag. 154-186
5	Mon, Sep 15	Autonomous communities (1)	
6	Wed, Sep 17	Autonomous communities (2) Spanish food (1)	
7	Mon, Sep 22	Spanish food (2) Celebrations and festivals (1)	
8	Wed, Sep 24	Celebrations and festivals (2) Manners	
9	Mon, Sep 29	Cinema (1)	
10	Wed, Oct 1	Cinema (2)	
11	Mon, Oct 6	Cinema (3)	
12	Wed, Oct 8	REVISION SESSION	
13	Mon, Oct 13	MIDTERM EXAM	
14	Wed, Oct 15	Music (1)	
15	Mon, Oct 20	Music (2)	
16	Wed, Oct 22	Art (1)	
17	Mon, Oct 27	Art (2)	
18	Wed, Oct 29	Television fiction (1)	
19	Mon, Nov 3	Television fiction (2)	
20	Wed, Nov 5	Literature (1)	
21	Wed, Nov 12	Literature (2)	
22	Mon, Nov 17	Fashion	
23	Wed, Nov 19	Challenges	Chislett (2)
24	Mon, Nov 24	REVISION SESSION	
25	Wed, Nov 26	FINAL EXAM	
26	Mon, Dec 1	ESSAY	
27	Wed, Dec 3	What lies ahead?	