Why pursue Spanish language and literature at Brandeis University?

In addition to providing students with the knowledge, skills, and cultural information that are necessary in today’s workplace, the study of Hispanic and Latino languages, literature, and cultures helps to develop the critical and analytic skills needed to be an effective participant in local and national discussions. The study of the Spanish language in the context of literature, film, history, politics, and popular culture will allow students to follow international events with insight, opening up perspectives to make them informed and responsible members of the international community.

What will your curriculum look like?

Students have the option of completing a major or minor in Spanish language and literature.

The major requires nine courses, including three core courses:

- Spanish Composition, Grammar, and Stylistics (SPAN 106b)
- An introductory survey of literature and culture (SPAN 109b, SPAN 110a, or SPAN 111b)
- Seminar in Literary and Cultural Studies (SPAN 198a), taken in the senior year
- Six electives chosen from a wide range of topics on literature and culture

Additionally, students interested in receiving departmental honors may complete a senior thesis in the spring semester of their senior year.

The minor requires five courses:

- Spanish Composition, Grammar, and Stylistics (SPAN 106b)
- An introductory survey of literature and culture (SPAN 109b, SPAN 110a, or SPAN 111b)
- Three electives

Electives for the program include a wide variety of courses on literature, music, and visual and popular culture. Topics span at least five centuries, as well as different regions throughout Spain and Latin America. The curriculum uses a multidisciplinary approach in order that students achieve cultural and linguistic literacy in Spanish, as well as a deeper understanding of the Hispanic world. Moreover, because Latinos are the largest minority group in the United States, we offer students the opportunity to study, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the varied Latino communities within it.

The Senior Seminar

Students conclude the major in Spanish language and literature by participating in a senior seminar in which they choose and research a particular Hispanic or Latino cultural “text”—anything from a poem or novel to a play, film, newspaper column, or political campaign. They share with each other the process of researching and developing a thesis and presenting their research. The class culminates in an extended written analysis.

Hands-On Learning Experience

Most of our students choose to study abroad during all or part of the junior year. Students can count up to four courses taken abroad, two courses per semester, towards the major, and two towards the minor. These courses must be taught entirely in Spanish and must correspond to our definition of upper-level courses.

What else does the Spanish language and literature program offer?

Students are encouraged to explore interdisciplinary and intercultural connections across campus. The faculty in the program are themselves affiliated with the programs in film studies; Latin American studies; women’s and gender studies; and peace, conflict, and coexistence studies, and are happy to provide students with personal connections and academic advising. In addition, the program regularly cosponsors events such as documentary director Alex Gómez’s Voices Unheard, the singing/dancing troupe Perú Negro, and the music group Sol y Canto.

What kind of career and education options will you have?

Career opportunities for students who major in Spanish language and literature are diverse and multifaceted. Our majors find jobs in government agencies (the FBI, the U.N., and various offices in Washington, D.C.), as Foreign Service officers and translators, in social services and public relations in the U.S. and abroad, in the Peace Corps, the armed forces, and law enforcement. There are also professional career opportunities for our majors in private business (international relations and marketing in the U.S. and abroad), and in the paramedical and paralegal professions. Another promising career for Spanish majors is teaching at all levels. Many students also choose to pursue graduate studies in such fields as law, medicine, business, international relations, education, and social services.

How can you learn more?

Visit the program website at www.brandeis.edu/departments/rocl/spanish.html or contact the program chair, Professor James Mandrell, at mandrell@brandeis.edu.