Spanish for Written Communication in the Age of AI

Kristen Turpin, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer of Hispanic Studies
Department of Romance Studies
HISP 106: Spanish for Written Communication through Contemporary Culture

First (and only) language course that counts for the minor/major in Hispanic Studies. Writing Intensive.

Students will be able to:

- critically evaluate various types of written texts in Spanish, **including those produced by AI**
- produce original texts of various genres and modes of expression.
- tailor their writing so that it is clear and persuasive for a specific audience.
- apply knowledge of cultural differences when analyzing and composing written texts.
Objectives for bringing AI into the classroom

Attitudes and behaviors

1. Discourage use (writing = thinking)
2. Position AI-generated texts as texts that merit scrutiny and critique
3. Prompt discussion about what constitutes effective writing
4. Increase student confidence in their own writing/thinking ability in Spanish
Approach that was implemented in two different units

- Write to think in class
- Analyze text that a human wrote
- Analyze an AI text
- Write composition outside of class
Unit 3: film analysis → professional email

**Write to think in class**
- Write a formal email asking ROMS department chair for funds for a movie night
- Revise their own work to make it more professional

**Analyze text that a human wrote**
- Learn more about professional correspondence

**Analyze an AI text**
- Analyze how ChatGPT responded to the same prompt
  - Content = lacking
  - Register = inconsistent
  - Lexical precision = excellent

**Write composition outside of class**
- Professional email: new film for BPS curriculum
- Students were allowed to consult AI for lexical matters, with footnote for documentation
Crónica de una muerte anunciada
## Unit 4: literary analysis → academic essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write to think in class</th>
<th>Analyze text that a human wrote</th>
<th>Analyze an AI text</th>
<th>Write composition outside of class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics of interest for final composition</td>
<td>A-quality essay written by former student</td>
<td>Topic: religious allegory</td>
<td>Academic essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions they want to consider</td>
<td>Topic: religious allegory</td>
<td>Critiqued ChatGPT suggestions for:</td>
<td>Students were allowed to consult AI for brainstorming, with footnote for documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify thesis and argumentative structure</td>
<td>thesis statement, logical outline, textual evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary / opinion / criticism / textual evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tengo que escribir un ensayo académico sobre Crónica de una muerte anunciada, de Gabriel García Márquez, y me gustaría escribir sobre las similitudes entre Santiago Nasar y Jesús Cristo. ¿Podrías sugerir una tesis para este ensayo?

Claro, una posible tesis para un ensayo que explore las similitudes entre Santiago Nasar y Jesús Cristo en "Crónica de una muerte anunciada" de Gabriel García Márquez podría ser:

"A través de un análisis detallado de las características y experiencias de Santiago Nasar y Jesús Cristo en 'Crónica de una muerte anunciada', se evidencia la presencia de paralelismos significativos que revelan la representación de Santiago como un símbolo secular que comparte similitudes simbólicas y narrativas con la figura de Jesús Cristo, ofreciendo una reflexión sobre la naturaleza humana, la redención y la tragedia en la obra de Gabriel García Márquez."

Esta tesis proporciona una base sólida para explorar y comparar las similitudes entre ambos personajes, lo que te permitirá desarrollar un ensayo detallado y analítico sobre cómo García Márquez podría haber intencionalmente creado similitudes entre Santiago Nasar y Jesús Cristo en su obra literaria.

¿Qué piensas de la tesis que escribí? ¿Cómo se compara con la tesis del estudiante de Hisp 106?

"En realidad, la muerte de Santiago Nasar funciona como una alegoría moderna de la muerte de Cristo. García Márquez usa este recuento para ejemplificar la culpa del pueblo y para criticar ciertos aspectos de la religión."

La tesis que escribiste simplemente resume la novela. Básicamente dice "Hay paralelismos significativos entre el personaje de Santiago y la figura de Jesús Cristo." Según mi profesora, mi tesis debe explicar o..."
OBJECTIVES

1. Discourage use
2. Position AI-generated texts as texts that merit scrutiny and critique
3. Prompt discussion about what constitutes effective writing
4. Increase student confidence in their own writing/thinking ability in Spanish
Common themes in student reflections

- “Didn’t change my opinion about ChatGPT” (many students are wary of it)
- “A tool that only be used effectively in very specific ways”
- “Better to just avoid it entirely”
- There are obvious differences between writing by humans versus by AI
- Students use AI when they don’t feel prepared or confident in the work they are asked to do; there’s minimal motivation to use it when professors provide the scaffolding that students need to achieve the learning outcomes
Students are already dialoguing with AI, or they have minimal experience with it. How can we prepare them to scrutinize the texts that it generates?