

ESP 1101. Introduction to Spanish Culture

Guidelines for the Midterm exam

- Before writing the exam on the booklet provided in class on Wednesday 9th October 2013, you are given the opportunity to research the topic at home.
- Your answer should be based, not only on your lecture notes, but also on the relevant documents posted on Virtual Campus. You will get additional points for referring to them.
- Include only relevant information and try to be fair and balanced by presenting all sides of an argument.
- The questions listed after each topic are meant to serve as a rough guide. Answer all of them, but not necessarily in the order in which they appear.
- Be clear and precise in your answers. Do not waffle (write evasively), go off a tangent or write anything which is not clearly relevant to your topic and/or your argument.
- Use your own words. Do not memorize quotations.
- Please note that, during the exam, you will not be allowed to consult any documents, handwritten or printed, or to use your laptop or any other electronic device.

ESP 1101. Introduction to Spanish Culture (Fall 2013)

Duration: 1 hour

Choose ONE topic and answer ALL the questions below it

You may add more information or elaborate on some of the questions, if you deem it relevant.

TOPIC 1. Caves of Altamira and Cave Art.

How, when and where were the Altamira caves discovered? Describe as much of their shape and form as you can. What kind of animals are depicted on their walls and ceilings? What kind of tools, pigments, brushes and techniques were used to paint these pictures? Mention at least three different theories which seek to explain the purpose and significance of these paintings. Which one of them do you consider the more persuasive? Explain why. Why are the Caves of Altamira still important to our understanding of Spanish culture?

TOPIC 2. Hispania. Art and Architecture (218 BCE-476 CE)

Give a brief account of the Roman conquest and "Romanization" of Spain. What are the most important Roman buildings left in Spain today? What were their main function? Describe two of them in some detail. Describe a typical Roman house in Hispania. Describe the subject matter of one of the larger Roman mosaics that have been discovered in a house in Spain. Why is Roman culture still important to our understanding of Spanish culture?

TOPIC 3. The Visigoths in Spain (476-711)

Who were the Visigoths and where did they come from? When (after what important historical event) and why did the Visigoths come to Spain? What was their religion? What were the major differences between the Visigoths and the Hispano-romans, especially as regards their social structure and legal status? When (after what important historical event) and why did they start to discriminate against the Jewish population of Spain? What are the Visigoths' main contributions to Spanish society, culture and the arts? Who was Isidore of Seville and why is he important? Why is Visigothic culture still important to our understanding of Spanish culture?

TOPIC 4. Córdoba and the Great Mosque (711-1031)

Give a brief account of the Muslim conquest of Spain. Was the whole peninsula occupied? How were the Muslim forces received by the Hispano-roman population and by the Jewish community? Why is Abd-al-Rahman I, the fugitive prince (731-788), important in the history of al-Andalus? What were the two main ethnic groups into which the Muslim occupiers were divided? What was the principle of *convivencia* and how did it work in al-Andalus during this period? Give a brief description of the Great Mosque of Córdoba, and explain the significance of its decoration and architecture. Why is Arab culture still important to our understanding of Spanish culture?