

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS AT DALLAS
SPAN 5345 Syllabus
Advance Spanish for Legal Professionals

Fall 2025			
Department of	Languages, Linguistics, and Rhetoric	Division of	Liberal Arts and Sciences
Instructor Name:	Prof. Manuel R. Benzvi		
Office Location:	FH 208		
Office Phone:	(972) 338-1330		
Email Address:	Manuel.Benzvi@untDallas.edu		
Office Hours:	Wednesday 5:30 to 7:30 pm or by appointment		
Virtual Office Hours:	By appointment via zoom		
Classroom Format:	Hybrid, face-to-face Friday		
Classroom Location:	FH 240		
Class Meeting Days and Times:	Fridays 5:30 – 8:20 pm		
	Advanced Spanish for Legal Professionals This course is designed for law and graduate students. It prepares students to communicate effectively using cultural knowledge in Hispanic contexts. Students practice with client–practitioner simulations, case scenarios, document interpretation, legal research, and authentic community engagement.		

Prerequisites:	Consent by department instructor
Co-requisites:	N/A
Required Texts:	<p>SPANISH FOR LAWYERS 1st EDITION FOUNDATION PRESS VICTORIA ORTIZ</p> <p>ISBN-10 1609302168</p> <p>ISBN-13 978-1609302160</p>
Access to Learning Resources	<p>UNT Dallas Library (Founders Hall) Phone: (972) 780- 1616 Web: : http://www.untdallas.edu/library Email: Library@untdallas.edu</p> <p>UNT Dallas Bookstore (Building 1) Phone: (972) 780-3652 Web: http://www.untdallas.edu/bookstore Email: untdallas@bkstr.com</p>

Course Goals	The goal of this course is to develop students' ability to use advanced Spanish in legal contexts by integrating linguistic proficiency, cultural competence, and professional practice. By the end of the semester, students will be able to analyze and interpret legal documents in Spanish, engage in simulated client–attorney interactions, conduct research relevant to Hispanic legal issues, and apply their skills in real-world or community-based scenarios to promote equitable access to justice.
<p>Learning Objectives</p> <p>By the end of this course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply advanced Spanish legal terminology to interpret, draft, and analyze documents such as contracts, affidavits, and pleadings. 2. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in Spanish through simulated client–attorney interactions, interviews, and courtroom scenarios. 3. Conduct legal research in Spanish, evaluating statutes, case law, and secondary sources from Hispanic jurisdictions to compare with U.S. legal systems. 4. Critically assess the role of language and culture in access to justice, producing a research project that connects Spanish proficiency with ethical and professional responsibilities in the legal field. 	

Skills Learned in the Course

1. **Legal Terminology Mastery**
 - Accurately using specialized Spanish vocabulary in areas such as contracts, criminal law, immigration, and family law.
2. **Bilingual Legal Communication**
 - Conducting client interviews, consultations, and courtroom simulations effectively in Spanish.
3. **Legal Translation & Interpretation**
 - Translating and interpreting documents (e.g., affidavits, contracts, witness statements) with precision and cultural sensitivity.
4. **Comparative Legal Research**
 - Researching and analyzing Spanish-language legal sources and comparing Hispanic legal systems with the U.S. system.
5. **Professional & Ethical Application**

- Applying language skills to real-world scenarios that enhance access to justice and demonstrate awareness of cultural and ethical responsibilities.

Course Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

Attendance and Participation: synchronous and asynchronous presence is a vital portion of the course.

Exams: written tests designed to measure knowledge of presented course material.

Quizzes and Activities: written and oral assignments designed to supplement and reinforce course material.

Essays: essays are designed to measure formatted written knowledge of the theme covered.

Aural and Oral Assessments: - aural and oral presentation(s) designed to measure ability to apply presented course material on the research topic assigned in the class.

Grading Matrix

Instrument	Percentage
Attendance & Participation	20
Quizzes and Activities	20
Gramática & Ortografía	20
Aural and Oral Assessments	10
Exams	30
Total:	100

Grade determination based on average of all quizzes and final:

A = 90 - 100
 B = 80 - 89
 C = 70 - 79
 D = 60 - 69
 F = 59 or less

Course Schedule

Face-to-Face Course Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated in class or via class email or Canvas announcement. Additional readings and activities may be added.

CALENDARIO TENTATIVO DE TEMAS Y ENTREGAS DE TAREAS

Agosto

29 ago

- Presentación del curso, syllabus y expectativas
 - Introducción: Español jurídico en EE.UU. y el contexto texano
 - Actividad inicial: Simulación breve cliente–abogado
 - Asignación: Lectura académica sobre el español en el derecho + reflexión escrita
-

Septiembre

4 sep

- Tema: Terminología legal básica en español (civil vs. penal)
- Actividad: Glosario colaborativo

11 sep

- Tema: El sistema judicial en países hispanos vs. EE.UU.
- Actividad: Debate comparativo
- Proyecto de investigación: Selección de tema individual

18 sep

- Tema: Redacción de documentos legales en español (cartas poder, contratos simples)
- Actividad: Taller de redacción con modelo

25 sep

- Tema: Ética y cultura jurídica hispana
 - Actividad: Estudio de caso con discusión guiada
-

Octubre

2 oct

- Tema: Lenguaje forense y procedimientos penales en español
- Actividad: Análisis de vocabulario especializado

9 oct

- Tema: Simulación de entrevista abogado–cliente en español
- Grabación en clase con retroalimentación

16 oct

- Tema: Traducción e interpretación jurídica
- Actividad: Traducción breve de un fallo judicial

23 oct

- Tema: Migración, asilo y derecho de familia
- Invitado especial (abogado o juez bilingüe)

30 oct

- Tema: Redacción avanzada – demandas y escritos procesales
- Entrega: Borrador de avance de investigación

Noviembre

6 nov

- Tema: Derecho laboral y contratos en español
- Actividad: Análisis de un contrato laboral bilingüe

13 nov

- Tema: Derechos humanos y derecho internacional en español
- Actividad: Ensayo corto aplicado al caso de un país latinoamericano

20 nov

- Tema: Presentación de avances de investigación (orales)
- Retroalimentación grupal

27 nov (Asincrónica, Acción de Gracias)

- Avance final escrito del proyecto de investigación

Diciembre

4 dic

- Tema: Juicio simulado (moot court) en español
- Integración de vocabulario, redacción y ética

11 dic

- Entrega final: Proyecto de investigación escrito + presentación grabada

Proyecto de investigación (componente de maestría)

- Tema libre dentro del **español jurídico** (ej. traducción jurídica, análisis comparativo de sistemas legales, terminología en un área del derecho, impacto de la lengua en acceso a la justicia).
- Entregables:
 - Propuesta (11 sep)
 - Avance escrito (30 oct)
 - Presentación oral (20 nov)
 - Entrega final (11 dic)

University Policies and Procedures

Students with Disabilities (ADA Compliance) - Chapter 7(7.004) Disability Accommodations for Students:

The University of North Texas at Dallas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. **Students seeking accommodations must first register with the Disability Services Office (DSO) to verify their eligibility.** If a disability is verified, the DSO will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, DSO notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. **Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet/communicate with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.** Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. **Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.** For additional information see [Disability Services Office](#). You may also contact them by phone at 972-338-1777; by email at UNTDisability@untDallas.edu or at Building PL, room 1104.

Disruptive Behavior in an Instructional Setting:

Students are expected to engage with the instructor and other students in this class in a respectful and civil manner at all times to promote a classroom environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Students who engage in disruptive behavior will be directed to leave the classroom. A student who is directed to leave class due to disruptive behavior is not permitted to return to class until the student meets with a representative from the Dean of Students Office. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the Dean of Students before class meets again and to provide the instructor confirmation of the meeting. A student who is directed to leave class will be assigned an unexcused absent for that class

period and any other classes the student misses as a result of not meeting with the Dean of Students. The student is responsible for material missed during all absences and the instructor is not responsible for providing missed material. In addition, the student will be assigned a failing grade for assignments, quizzes or examinations missed and will not be allowed to make up the work.

The Code of Student's Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Policy 7.001) describes disruption as the obstructing or interfering with university functions or activity, including any behavior that interferes with students, faculty, or staff access to an appropriate educational environment. Examples of disruptive behavior that may result in a student being directed to leave the classroom include but are not limited to: failure to comply with reasonable directive of University officials, action or combination of actions that unreasonably interfere with, hinder, obstruct, or prevents the right of others to freely participate, threatening, assaulting, or causing harm to oneself or to another, uttering any words or performing any acts that cause physical injury, or threaten any individual, or interfere with any individual's rightful actions, and harassment. You are encouraged to read the Code of Student's Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct for more information related to behaviors that could be considered disruptive.

Canvas Instructure Accessibility Statement:

University of North Texas at Dallas is committed to ensuring its online and hybrid courses are usable by all students and faculty including those with disabilities. If you encounter any difficulties with technologies, please contact our ITSS Department. To better assist them, you would want to have the operating system, web browser and information on any assistive technology being used. Canvas Instructure Accessibility Statement is also provided.

NOTE: Additional instructional technology tools, such as Turnitin, Respondus, Panopto, and publisher cartridge content (i.e. MyLab, Pearson, etc.) may NOT be fully ADA compliant. Please contact our Disability Office should you require additional assistance utilizing any of these tools.

Course Evaluation Policy:

Student's evaluations of teaching effectiveness is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT Dallas. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider students' evaluations to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Assignment Policy:

Papers must be formatted, typed and checked for spell. **NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED!** Late work is only accepted only with the instructor's prior approval. *Late school work will only be accepted only with proper documentation and/or the instructor's prior approval due to a special circumstance. Even if the work is accepted, **without proper documentation a late penalty will always apply.** In some circumstances, a student may be allowed to re-submit an assignment on which a low grade was achieved. However, the student **MUST** obtain the instructor's approval to re-submit an assignment. Assignments must be re-submitted within one week of receiving feedback from the instructor. All papers must be typed. Assignments must be submitted to Blackboard or to the teacher. **Students who need help with Blackboard should contact the Student Help Desk at 972-338-5580 or UNTDDistance@unt.edu.***

Exam Policy:

Exams should be taken as scheduled. **No makeup examinations will be allowed except for documented emergencies (See Student Handbook).** Tests will contain information from the textbook as well as information discussed in class that may not be in the textbook. Information from the textbook may be included on tests even if it is not discussed in class. The availability of make-up tests will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Make-up tests may contain a different selection of questions than was on the regular test. Online exams and the ability to retake is solely at the instructor's discretion. NOTE: Online exams may be proctored on campus per instructor's discretion.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. You are expected to abide by the University's code of Academic Integrity policy. Any person suspected of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) will be handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to UNT Dallas' Student Code of Academic Integrity for complete provisions of this code. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

Web-based Plagiarism Detection: Please be aware in some online or hybrid courses, students may be required to submit written assignments to Turnitin, a web-based plagiarism detection service, or another method. If submitting to Turnitin, please remove your title page and other personal information.

Classroom Policies

Online Attendance and Participation:

The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Class attendance in the Canvas classroom and participation is expected because the class is designed as a shared learning experience, and because essential information not in the textbook will be discussed in the discussion board. Online presence and participation in all class discussions is essential to the integration of course material and your ability to demonstrate proficiency.

Attendance for this online or hybrid course is considered when you are logged in and active in Canvas, i.e., posting assignments, taking quizzes, or completing Discussion Boards. To maintain financial aid award eligibility, activity must occur before the census date of the session or term of the course. Refer to UNT Dallas' Registrar for specific dates. If you are absent/not active in the course shell, it is YOUR responsibility to let the instructor know immediately, upon your return, the reason for your absence if it is to be excused. All instructors must follow university policy 7.005 covering excused absences; however, it is the instructor's discretion, as outlined in the course syllabus, of how unexcused absences may or may not count against successful completion of the course.

Inclement Weather and Online Classes: Online classes may or may not be effected by campus closures due to inclement weather. Unless otherwise notified by your instructor via e-mail, online messaging, or online announcement, students should assume that assignments are due as scheduled.

Online "Netiquette":

In any social interaction, certain rules of etiquette are expected and contribute to more enjoyable and productive communication. Emails, Discussion Board messages and/or any other forms of written

communication in the online environment should use proper “netiquette” (i.e., no writing in all caps (usually denotes yelling), no curse words, and no “flaming” messages (angry, personal attacks)).

Racial, ethnic, or gender slurs will not be tolerated, nor will pornography of any kind.

Any violation of online netiquette may result in a loss of points or removal from the course and referral to the Dean of Students, including warnings and other sanctions in accordance with the University’s policies and procedures. Refer to [UNT Dallas Student Code of Conduct](#). Respect is a given principle in all online communication. Therefore, please be sure to proofread all of your written communication prior to submission.

Diversity/Tolerance Policy:

Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions in the online environment. However, offensive & inappropriate language (swearing) and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses will not be tolerated. Disruptions which violate the Code of Student Conduct will be referred to the Dean of Students as the instructor deems appropriate.

Technology Assistance: In order to successfully access the materials in an online or hybrid course, UNT Dallas advises that your computer be equipped with the minimum system requirements listed on the first page of the syllabus.

If you experience difficulty accessing or using components of the course, try using Google Chrome browser. If you still experience technical difficulties, first, notify your instructor.

If the problem is still not resolved, call Student Assistance (Distance Learning) at the phone number listed on the first page of the syllabus. Also, no matter what browser you use, always enable pop-ups.

For more information see:

- [UNT Dallas Canvas Technical Requirements](#)
- [Canvas Instructure Supported & Unsupported Operating Systems](#).