

Course Prospectus
SPAN 3400. 301 “Carefully”: Women’s Narrative in Francoist Spain
University of Pennsylvania, School of Arts & Sciences
Department of Spanish & Portuguese (Spring **2025**)
Instructor: **Lidia León-Blázquez, PhD.**

Course Description:

What does it mean to be a woman with intellectual aspirations living and working under an authoritarian, ultra-patriarchal, national-catholic dictatorship? As ironic as it may sound, while undoing all the Spanish Second Republic’s gender equality policies, Francoism (1939-1975) benefited symbolically from allowing *some* women into the lettered arena and official publication circuits –often even launching them through literary awards. But what types of novels and short stories were they expected and encouraged to write? What did they *really* write? This course explores authors who tried to subtly convey subversive political, social, and feminist messages amid the censorship-controlled panorama, as well as Francoist writers striving to reconcile their conservative ideology with their frustrating daily experiences—all of them cautiously walking a very fine line.

Trigger Warning:

Please be aware that, due to the topics that concerned these women writers, our readings will sometimes include allusions to sensitive subjects that may be disturbing for some readers, such as gender violence, violence against children and/or by children, sexual violence, violence against minorities, political violence, and violence towards animals.

Course Objectives:

Throughout this course, students will...

- obtain a panoramic perspective of the Spanish literature written by women during the 1940s-70s.
- consolidate their historical knowledge about Spain, especially during the Francoist dictatorship.
- become familiar with theoretical literary concepts and debates on sexuality, gender and literary studies.
- approach texts through a critical intersectional-feminist lens.
- develop reading and interpretative practices that focus not just on content but also form.
- exercise their critical thinking skills.
- keep developing their reading skills and their written and oral communication skills in Spanish.

Prerequisites:

- ✓ To enroll in Spanish 3400, students must have previously completed successfully **Spanish 1800, 1900, or another 3000-level seminar at Penn.**

Class Structure for Spring 2025:

- SPAN 3400-301 is an advanced level, discussion-based literary seminar. For that reason, we will **not** have recorded lectures to watch asynchronously.
- This course meets in person for three hours each week. A typical week will have two meetings during the published course time: MW 03:30-04:59 pm.

- These class meetings will be used to discuss the texts, which will be previously read and annotated by students in preparation for each class. Active participation in class discussion will be a central aspect of the course.
- All texts will be read in Spanish, classes will be taught in Spanish, and students are expected to speak also in Spanish.

Outline of Assignments:

To be decided. Detailed plans will be published in advance on Canvas Calendar.

Tentative grade distribution (subject to change):

- **20% Preparation, Attendance, and Class Participation.** We will have frequent quizzes to check completion and understanding of assigned readings, and to jump-start our class conversations; there will be no make-ups for missing quizzes, but we will drop the 1 lowest score. Quality and consistency of contributions will also be taken into consideration for this portion of the grade.
 - **20% Class presentations.** Students will be assigned to do brief (approximately 5-10 minutes) introductions about the authors, the context, and/or the most relevant bibliography on the readings.
 - **20% Blog posts** (1 paragraph). We will have weekly entries in the course blog. They will generally consist of a short question on a topic that we did not get to develop in depth during class time. Students can answer the instructor's question or respond to some of their classmates' comments. These blog posts will be evaluated in terms of the quality of their contribution to our discussion, and they must be done on time *before* the next/assigned class; there will be no make-ups for missing blog posts.
 - **20% Midterm short paper** (in class). This paper may take the form of a reflection essay about a given question (if so, students will be allowed to use a printed copy of the novel/s for reference), or of a text commentary on a passage selected by the instructor. A text commentary is an in-depth analysis of a short snippet of a reading to understand as many details as possible. It is not a paraphrase of the fragment –saying the same thing in other words–, but rather a close reading exercise on the words, images, sentences, and metaphors in the text.
 - **20% Final short paper** (in class). Very similar to the midterm paper, the final will also consist of either a given question to develop in writing about one of the read texts (again, students will be able to use their class notes, a handheld dictionary, and a printed copy of the novel/s or short stories), or of a text commentary (again, students will be provided with the text excerpts to analyze).
- ☆ Per departmental policy, grades are not negotiable, there is no curve, and extra credit is not an option.
- ★ If a student wants to use this class to complete the research requirement for the Hispanic major, they must talk to the instructor and design a working plan to write a 12-15-page research essay, under the supervision of the instructor and with the approval of the Undergraduate Chair. The student will select a topic that has been particularly interesting to them throughout the seminar and will develop their ideas in depth, supporting them with bibliography.