

## Spanish Podcast Script

Alex:

Hello and welcome to Iowa State University's Podcast program on languages and literatures! My name is Alex Ely and I'll be your host for today's show on the Spanish program at ISU. Whether you have no experience studying Spanish, or a few years of it from high school, there's no reason to stop now! Iowa State has a great Spanish program with a lot to offer. Today we have a fascinating show where we will be taking a little bit about the language itself, Spanish and Latin American culture, study abroad opportunities as well as provide you with various interviews with faculty members and alumni of the Spanish department.

The Spanish language has become so widely spoken here in the U.S. that it would be difficult to not regularly communicate with Spanish-speakers or not see billboards or advertisements in Spanish. Spanish is becoming the U.S.'s second language. Did you know that there are over 350 million native Spanish speakers from all over the globe: Europe, South America, North American, Africa, and Asia? Some sources consider Spanish to be the world's second most important language, after English. Spanish originally developed from a blend of Latin, Basque from the Northern part of the Iberian Peninsula, and from Arabic on the south. Although there are many Spanish dialects that differ according to pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, but generally all Spanish speakers can understand each other. We interviewed Chad Gasta to tell us a little bit about this.

Chad:

I think that all students should consider learning another language. If it's not Spanish, French, if it's not French, Italian or German or Japanese or Chinese or whatever. You're never going to be worse off for learning another language and you're certainly never going to be worse off for learning several other languages. As I reflect back on my time here at Iowa State and in my undergraduate and graduate years I wish I had learned several languages, not only to travel and meet people and experience things first hand. If I had decided to go into law or if I had

decided to go into business, and I have an extensive business background because of my family, those languages would be very very helpful today. I think there are several reasons why students coming into Iowa State would want to learn a second language. It's going to open them up to greater possibilities in the job market down the line; they are going to be much better communicators, they are going to be more effective writers, they are going to be better critical thinkers because learning a language is a lot like finding your way through a little maze from time to time and finding the relevant answers to a problem so critical thinking skills and writing skills and basic oral abilities are all the things that we teach but they're all the things that students perfect.

Finding a job is going to be a big factor. If you know a second language your more likely than someone who doesn't to get that position. If you know several other languages then you're going to be the first person they send abroad, you're going to be the first person that your company decides to send to even places where your language isn't spoken. I've had several students who've been sent to Africa or to Russia, to France even though they don't speak those languages primarily because they have the cultural background to learn how to function in those communities, how to navigate airports and train stations and buy tickets and learn the necessary cultural values of those communities so they can function professionally and properly.

Language is a key to understanding other cultures; it's a key to getting a better job; it's a key to simply making your life more fruitful. The opportunities just to travel with friends or with family as you get older and you have a family to show to your children or your loved ones that you have this understanding about places that they themselves don't have yet is really really a fantastic thing and learning languages can open so many doors for us not just professionally but personally. Those are reasons why I think all students should consider learning a second language and if Spanish is the language that you have already started learning then you should continue, you should learn to perfect those skills because ultimately not only will it make you a better

person, it will make you a better employee and your more likely to have more career options.

Alex:

It's nearly impossible to generalize Spanish, Latin American, or Hispanic culture. Each country and many times each region within the country has its own unique culture or language that sets it apart from the others. Spain, for example, has 17 peninsular provinces that have unique cuisine, music, dialects, or even language! In the Northeast province of Spain, in Catalonia, they speak Catalan, although Castilian is generally understood and spoken too because it's the official form of Spanish. We interviewed Dean Whiteford on the Spanish language and culture.

Dean:

Language is an introduction to a culture or to cultures. It's hard to imagine that somebody could understand Iowa culture without speaking English and similarly it's hard to imagine that one could understand the cultures of Latin America, and please note that I said cultures because there's a great deal of diversity within Mexico, cultural diversity and linguistic diversity. Never the less, whether you are learning Otomi or Zapotec, Mije or Mishtec or Spanish, one way in which you can understand the culture is to understand the language so that really becomes a crucial element as an anthropologist in trying to study and understand other cultures.

Several layers of advice, if possible, learn it early. There are so many ways of learning right now; we're looking at some fascinating technology right in front of us so the simple idea of sitting in a classroom and reading together is no longer the way in which languages should be taught, certainly not the only way. We can introduce students to short trips to Latin America, whether they are over the Christmas break or spring break to places like Costa Rica or Mexico in which their appetites get wetted and they see the importance of learning Spanish and then come back and enroll in Spanish. I think that if we look at learning a language as part and parcel of understanding a culture and learning cultures that

presumably we do a more effective job of recruiting people into becoming, if not multi-lingual, at least appreciative of the importance of knowing several languages.

Alex:

The Spanish program is an ever-evolving and exciting program of study. There's a lot to offer! If you're interested in taking Spanish at Iowa State, you've got quite a variety of options. Your choices can range from a Minor to a Second-Major option, known as LCP, or Language for Culture and Professions. No matter what course of study you are looking for, there's a program to fit your needs. The Spanish Major at ISU consists of an extensive array of courses including grammar and composition, conversation, culture, history, and of course literature! The subjects vary from: culture and civilizations of Spain and Latin America, Women in Literature, Film, Translation, Phonetics, internships abroad, and Hispanic art.

The Latin American studies program promotes activities and outreach in areas related to Latin America that enrich the intellectual and cultural lives of students, staff and faculty at ISU. It is a interdisciplinary undergraduate program that leads to a certificate in Latin American studies. Let's listen to Professor Kathy Leonard to learn more about the LAS program.

As you can tell, there's a wide variety of courses you can take to complete a Spanish Major.

The LCP program, or Languages for Cultures and Professions, is a great opportunity for students of business or engineering to combine their studies with a language. The program is tailored to fit students' primary major. But I'll let Spanish Professor Chad Gasta tell you more about the LCP Program and also why you should study Spanish in the first place!!

Kathy:

We're also developing a certificate program which we hope to have in place by fall. This is an interdisciplinary program that will allow students toward a certificate which once again is interdisciplinary; they would take courses in foreign languages, history, anthropology, political science. Once we get the certificate up and running the students will be able to take a wide variety of courses that will apply to the certificate. Obviously we want them to take languages that are spoken in Latin America, so Spanish and Portuguese, those courses we do offer here. If a student came in with another language for example an indigenous language like Quechua or Imara, we would also be very happy to accept that as part of the requirements for the certificate.

Students can take history in Latin America offered from the history department. We have courses in anthropology, Indian studies, courses in Portuguese, courses in Spanish, a wide variety of courses in Spanish, linguistics, literature and so on. We think it will help prepare students for a wide variety of careers, international, business, anything that is really international. Anyone that wants to teach would have a very good background. Just anywhere in the global workplace we think these courses will benefit students because they will be much more well rounded when they finish the certificate.

Alex:

As you can tell there is a wide variety of courses you can take to complete a Spanish major. Up next, we have an interview with a Spanish department alumni, Gary Stall, who currently works for the United Nations. He has done some interesting things with his degree in Spanish and has some good advice for applying language skills in the business world.

Gary:

I work with United Nations children's fund UNICEF. My official title is deputy director of the program funding office which means I work in the part of the organization that maintains relations with donor governments and brings in money. About two-thirds of our annual budget, our funding, comes from governments

and I'm individually responsible to coordinate international assistance for humanitarian needs. I accidentally took a couple of language classes and loved Spanish and Portuguese. I did a year abroad between high school and college; I did a year in Australia, and really really enjoyed that with the rotary exchange program. I really enjoyed that. So it was a slightly different culture but not a different language, and then I came back here and I couldn't walk for a whole semester because my leg was in this iron thing because I had a bad accident and I lived near Pearson hall so I took languages and it changed the rest of my life. Having a structured major or minor in a language is good and for jobs where the requirement the employer is looking for is someone who can maybe read a manual in Spanish or write back and forth on email in Spanish or whatever language, that would be sufficient qualifications. What most employers, be it public or private sectors, are looking for are people who are a little more on the bicultural side so yes, you need the language skills, but honestly employers are much more interested in someone who can take out the head of their Bogotá office who shows up and doesn't happen to speak English, you can take them out to lunch, or who can fly down to the office in Arequipa and close a business deal. That's something that you gain almost exclusively through emersion through living someplace. So if you really want to speak good Spanish, part of your plan should be to spend some time in a Spanish speaking environment, preferably with as few English speakers as possible around you.

Alex:

The study abroad opportunities for Spanish students are endless. Some of the major programs offered for Spanish minors and majors are: The Alicante summer program in Spain, and the semester long program in Cáceres, Spain. There is also a semester long program in Cuernavaca, Mexico. This summer the department is offering an exciting 6-week trip to beautiful Arequipa, Peru called **In the Footsteps of the Inca**, where you will be studying in Peru's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city that was declared by UNESCO a World Heritage Site. You can earn up to 9 credits during only 6 weeks. You will be taking 6 credits worth of class and another 3 credits for an arranged community service project.

This is a unique experience to capture not only the beauty and history of the city and the region, but also the culture and interacting with the community. The program will run next May 25 through July 15. For more information, check out the link on our Podcast website.

If you want to practice your Spanish skills, no matter what skill level you are at, join the Spanish Club's conversation tables during the semester. The Conversation Tables consists of Spanish-speakers of all levels getting together at a café or central location to play games and hang out, while speaking Spanish.

If you're looking for volunteering opportunities check out the Ames Free Medical Clinic in downtown Ames. They are always in need of Spanish speakers of all levels!

Once you've taken a number of upper level Spanish courses, Sigma Delta Pi, or the National Hispanic Honor Society, recognizes your hard work and achievements and as academic recognition you will be able to become a member of the well-respected Honor Society through Iowa State's Sigma Delta Pi chapter. This organization is not only involved with the Spanish Department at ISU, but it also reaches out to the community as well. For example, this semester they offered studying sessions during Finals week for 100 and 200 level Spanish students. They also are involved with various community service projects around the Story Country area, such as teaching English to the Latino community in Ames at St. Cecelia's Church. We spoke with Chad Gasta about Sigma Delta Pi and the Spanish Club.

Chad:

Yea, we're fortunate here in the Department of World Languages and Cultures to have several dedicated faculty that offer a number of extracurricular activities to students who are interested in joining. In Spanish for example we routinely offer film festivals, of course we sponsor the Spanish Club, one of my colleagues is the advisor for the Spanish Club, a group of students who

really love to get together and talk about Hispanic culture and to talk Spanish informally and help each other improve. We also have Sigma Delta Pi which is a national Hispanic honor society that many students join. That is a tribute to not only their academic background but also their community volunteerism so to speak because that group gets together and they try to do things to help other students but also help other community members. The university of course is also heavily involved in Latino Heritage Month here on campus. We encourage the students to participate in those events both here at Iowa State as well as in Des Moines. A number of other activities come up along the way, speakers, short visits to museums or other things in the city, sometimes sponsored by the department sometimes sponsored by the student groups. Just a broad range of things that are happening on campus we like to get our students to participate in.

Alex:

Well, that's the Spanish Program. I hope I have provided you with enough information to get you to go talk with the advisors at the World Languages and Cultures Department! As you can already see, the Spanish program has a ton to offer for students and also the community. Also, don't miss out on the great study abroad program available! Remember, these are once in a lifetime opportunities so don't miss out on all the fun and adventure! If you would like to send us feedback, you can write us an email at [podcast@iastate.edu](mailto:podcast@iastate.edu). Thanks again and we will see you next time. And before we finish congratulations to Lori Lynch, our former producer, who graduated in December of last year. The podcast program team wishes her good luck and success in her future endeavors. Thank you Lori for your invaluable help. Also we welcome Laura Centeno-Diaz aboard

This project is an initiative of the ISU Foreign Language Learning Resource Center, and was funded in part by a recruitment and retention grant from the Professional and Scientific Council, and the ISU Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Laura Centeno-Diaz is our show coordinator, Daniel Francis is our sound editor, Mehmet Sahin is our interviewer and advisor, Keith Swanson is our technical support, Julio Rodriguez is our advisor, and my self, Alex Ely, am your host. The music for this show is under Creative Commons license. For details,

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