



IFE course syllabus

Course title

Asturias and the Dynamics of Social Transformation

Course taught by

Rubén Vega García

Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Oviedo, Rubén Vega's doctoral thesis examined industrial crisis and social unrest in Gijón (1975-1995). For the last twenty years Rubén Vega has been conducting research on the Franco years and the democratic transition, along with research on the not-for-profit milieu, the culture of work and workers' movements, social movements and the process of de-industrialization, taking a local and regional approach, resulting in several publications. From 1998 – 2003 he directed the Juan Muñiz Zapico Foundation, coordinating several research teams. Rubén Vega is a member of an international research group studying shipyards worldwide, and is also the director of the Oral Archives for the Social History of Asturias.

Purpose of the course

The purpose of the course is to provide a grasp of contemporary Spanish social, economic and political reality, in order to prepare students to participate more fully in local and national society, especially once they take up duties as full-time interns.

As an element in the IFE preparatory session in Asturias, the course – like all IFE preparatory courses - is intended for non-specialists as they prepare for integration and participation regardless of their subject of concentration. By the end of the course students will have acquired a coherent, analytical and practical view of life in Asturian society today and of Asturias within Spain.

Description of the course

The approach of this course is pluridisciplinary and thematic, highlighting important aspects of contemporary Spanish society, recent transformations, historical vestiges, and current debate on hot issues. The same approach is then employed to examine Asturian society, including the socio-economic context, as well as issues of identity and contemporary cultural creativity. The various facets examined then serve to illustrate and explain the Spanish particularity of autonomous communities within a nation-state, in the case of Asturias.

Course format

The format of this course has been designed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness in light of the constraints of a course offered intensively over a short period of time. Accordingly, the course comprises two types of sessions, with lecture/seminar meetings alternating with discussion sections. Students are expected to participate in both informal debate and discussion as well as formal presentations (oral exposés, press reviews, and the like).

Each course of the preparatory session also includes appropriate local site visits.

This course meets approximately 48 hours, including mandatory site visits. In addition the course is linked to two multi-day mandatory excursions with lecture-visits, to two other sites in northern Spain (Bilbao and Santiago).

Course outline

- 1** Asturias in Spain: Asturian identity, historical roots and current context.
- 2** Spain today: European belonging and separatist tensions.
European-ness, Hispanity, Spanish nationalism and peripheral nationalisms.
- 3** Social change: demographics, family, gender and generations.
- 4** Church and Religion(s): From the "Spiritual Reservoir of the West" to secularization.
- 5** The weight of the past: Debate and polemic over history and the role of memory concerning the Civil War, dictatorship and transition.
- 6** Migration: A country of emigration now Europe's southern boundary.

- 7 Crises: Welfare state under pressure, economic crisis, austerity
- 8 A geography of Asturias: Environment and anthropic pressure
- 9 Asturias in crisis: A long industrial decline
- 10 Labor in decline: Social conflicts in a post-industrial context
- 11 An aging society: Young retirees and youthful migration
- 12 Memories of an industrial past in Asturian society and culture
- 13 Cultural heritage / nature's paradise
- 14 Asturian language and culture at the beginning of the 21st century
- 15 Documentary cinema on Asturias today
- 16 Music in Asturias: A contemporary soundtrack

Suggested bibliography

Alonso Poblacion, E. y Pemán Mariño, D., *Juventud urbana en Asturias*, Consejo de la Juventud, Oviedo, 2007.

Álvarez Junco, J., *Dioses útiles. Naciones y nacionalismos*, Galaxia Gutemberg, Madrid, 2016.

Fernández Pérez, A. (Ed.), *Historia de Asturias*, KRK, Oviedo, 2005.

Foundation Alternativas, *Informe sobre el estado de la cultura en España 2016*, Catarata, Madrid, 2016.

Foundation Alternativas, *Informe sobre la democracia en España 2015*, Catarata, Madrid, 2015.

Foundation FOESSA, *VII Informe sobre exclusión y desarrollo social en España*, Caritas, Madrid, 2014.

Rodríguez Muñoz, J., *Los asturianos. Raíces sociales y culturales de una identidad*, Prensa asturiana, Oviedo, 2005.

Vega García, R., *Crisis industrial y conflicto social. Gijón 1975-1995*, Trea, Gijón, 1998.

Grading

Student work is evaluated on the basis of a mid-term essay and a written examination at the end of the course, the grades for which are averaged with the participation grade based on oral presentations, press reviews and discussion participation.

Equivalent in American university course offerings

Sociology of Contemporary Spain, Modern Spanish Society (cultural studies).