COURSE: SPAN 380S: MOSAIC: JEWS, MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS AND THE SPANISH EXPERIENCE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explains the presence of these cultures in Spain and studies the influences of Jews and Muslims in the country’s political, intellectual and artistic life starting at the earliest stages and continuing through the establishment of the Spanish nation as an identity to the present day.

With the arrival of the Muslims in 711, the Peninsula became the paradigm of the peoples of the Book, the dhimmis, to which Islam conceded special protection. Islam recognized and emphasized a fact: Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism were the spiritual descendants of Abraham, the shepherd from Ur; Eastern geographical origins and the belief in a personal, transcendent and exclusive God revealed to humans. All three religions could recognize God of Israel as theirs. The three communities were forced to cohabit the Peninsula under difficult conditions, given that none of them was prepared to defeat the other two. They waged war frequently and they viewed each other with fear and disdain, but they also exerted reciprocal influences; a common heritage -the belief in a Creator who transcended the world- constituted an inevitable force for unity.

We should recognize the three religions’ coexistence as distinctly characteristic of the Spanish Middle Age (moment in which the fabric of today’s Spain was formed). In the words of Américo Castro in his work The Historical Reality of Spain: “Peninsular life was reconstructed after the Muslim occupation, following the lines of caste system based on the identities of Christian, Moorish and Jewish persons. When Moors and Jews disappeared from the social scene, a person’s quality of being “castizo” or “old Christian” remained quite esteemed (...) The cohabitation of the three castes which had allowed for Christian hegemony was broken and forgotten, Jewish and Moorish collaboration ceased, and “old Christians”, deprived of common projects, became immobilized.”

We can conclude that Christians, Muslims and Jews, though in reciprocal conflict, mutually influenced each other to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish the contributions of each sector to the common heritage of Spanish culture. In the words of Antonio Tovar, this course may help “get to the thorns in our existence as a people”.

MATERIAL:
López-Ibor, Marta
Los judíos en España.

Watt, Montogomery
La España Islámica.

Photocopies of other texts will be handed out as well, and these will be worked on at home and commented upon in class.

GRADING:

The student will write two paragraphs, with an average length of 250 to 300 words each, during the course.

During the course, tests will be administered to measure students’ progress. At the end of the course, there will be a comprehensive final exam.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Participation</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) Test</td>
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<td>3) Text commentary</td>
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<td>3) Final exam</td>
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* Participation note: The student will receive a participation grade that will reflect, not only quality of participation, but the initiative shown by the student in the different activities of the course.

Each student will have to make an oral presentation about a subject dealing with the program. The grade for that presentation will have the same value as a test.

Students will receive the material to be covered the next day, read it at home and discuss it in class during the following session.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


COURSE CONTENT:


Text: García Moreno, pgs. 39-69 / López Ibor, pgs. 24-25

Day 3: Topic 2.
In the crossroads of civilization: the Arabic conquests, Opening or closing?: the arrival of the Muslims in Spain.


Text: Watt, pgs. 11-22.
López Ibor, pgs. 24-27.
Mendez Bejarano, pgs. 21-27.

Day 4: Topic 3.
Omeya Spain.


The Jews under Muslim government:

Text: Suarez Fernandez, pgs. 35-61.

Day 6: Topic 5.
Co-existence.
Jewish emigration to the Christian kingdoms.

Text: López Ibor, pgs. 29-66.

Day 7: Topic 6.
The end of Arab domination in Spain.
Reasons for the fall. The Taifas (see above) (1009-91). The Berber Empires: Almoravids and Almohads. Spain during Almohad domination.

Text: Watt, pgs. 92-123.

Day 8: Topic 7.
The social structure of Muslim Spain.


(Answer the questions up to page 198. The rest, up to page 220, are to be read for discussion in class.)

Day 9: Topic 8.
Everyday life in Muslim Spain.
Culture and arts under the Umayyads.

The importance of Islamic Spain.

Day 12: Topic 11.
The Spanish Inquisition.
The establishment of the Inquisition. Toward a rational occupation of the territory: the geographic cover. A social control without any limits? The Inquisition’s power. The centralizing power of the Inquisition: control of the hierarchy. Who were the Inquisitors or what was the nature of their power? The means of power: men and resources. The problem of relatives. Supplementary militia or pressure group?