

Spanish language

STUDY GUIDE – SPRING 2025

Changes may occur.

04.12.24

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Self-study	3
3. Course Content	4
Part 1 – Being a student in Costa Rica	4
Part 2 - Course organization	5
Part 3 - Evaluations	7
4. Overview: evaluation dates	8
5. Internet resources	9

1. Introduction

This Study Guide is a supplement to the Course Description of the three Spanish courses: Spanish Grammar and writing, Spanish reading comprehension, and Pronunciation and oral expression. It will give information about the courses and advice on how best to study and carry out the different tasks.

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2. Self-study

The self-study period comprehends 4 weeks before your arrival to Costa Rica. It starts the 23th of December and ends the 17th of January. The 16th of December you will get an email with a pdf brochure with exercises to complete which is called “Self-study assignment” in according to the Spanish level you have reported to Kulturstudier.”. In this documents there will be some important instructions given in English, but we recommend you to always have a dictionary when doing the exercises.

You must print the “Self-study assignment” brochure and complete it with pen or pencil before your travel to Costa Rica. You must take this printed and full-filled brochure to Costa Rica. One of your Spanish professors there will receive the document. If you have any question regarding the self-study period, please contact Mauricio Sánchez Hernández mauricio@kulturstudier.org

3. Course Content

This section provides information about the different sections of the three Spanish subjects taught: Spanish Grammar and writing, Spanish reading comprehension in context, and Pronunciation and oral expression. Each of these courses are taught in three levels of Spanish (0,1,2), that is why the first week of classes students should take a Spanish placement test to be assigned in the right level of Spanish.

Part 1: Being a student in Costa Rica

When studying Spanish with Kulturstudier / UISIL you will experience that we have an academic approach to the studies. This will by no means say it is not a practical course, on the contrary, we wish to develop your language skills so you can use the language in different settings. What it means is that by completion of the course you should be able to talk, read, write and understand the language

satisfactorily. Spanish grammar students will go deeper into the structure of the language to gain teaching skills.

● **How to study a language and navigate through a new culture?**

Those of us who have not learned Spanish from childhood have to take the longer way and work actively to learn and understand the language. In Kulturstudier / UISIL we think we have laid a good foundation for your learning by giving you guidance and instructions in the language at the same time as you live in a country where it is the mother tongue. Nevertheless, it is just a starting point, and it is your responsibility to participate actively in classes and discussions. However, we do have some useful tips on how you can get the most out of your studies:

A. Work actively from day 1

It is not a good idea to postpone reading and practicing, something that is more doable with typical reading subjects. What you learn each new lesson will build on what you have learned previously, and if you do not have control on course progression you will quickly reach a point where you do not understand what is being explained. In the beginning there will inevitably be a lot of studying and practicing, but if you put in some well-spent time here it won't be long until you can cruise the town practicing your Spanish. In addition, we advise you to continue using www.duolingo.com to practice your Spanish before you arrive to Costa Rica.

B. Practice with confidence what you have learned immediately and do not be shy, rather smile!

The best way to remember what you have studied is to use it immediately. For instance, if you are learning the different verbs, make sentences where you get use of the things you have learned and use them when meeting local people. Costa Rican people are very welcoming and helpful with foreigners. It is very natural that beginners in a new language feel sometimes "little smart" and "little silly" when talking Spanish with native people because you cannot express everything you wish to express, and you make many mistakes. Take this somehow "awkward situation" with a smile and you will see that most locals feel happy and proud to meet and help foreigners who have a positive attitude and interest to know their language and culture.

C. Find a study buddy

When you are learning a new language, you can always talk to the wall, however, far more interesting (and educational!) is to find someone to study with. Get together two or three, listen to each other and make conversation in Spanish.

D. Talk to the other students

It is never natural for people with the same mother tongue (i.e. Norwegian, German, English) to talk together in a different language. But: it is very useful! Arrange with some of your fellow students to only speak Spanish at certain times of the day. For instance, start by only speaking Spanish during breakfast, and then maybe expand to lunch after a while. It takes a bit of discipline, but it works!

E. Look for situations where you can use the language and experience the local culture

You are in a Spanish speaking country. Persons in Latin-America are easy to get in contact with, but if you only hang around your fellow foreign friends, it is hard for the locals to get in contact with you. Find free-time activities and go to places where you can meet the locals. Make sure you do not let

one person in your student group always take the word in Spanish. That person will learn a lot, but you should be practicing your Spanish too!

F. Be perseverant, engaged, and strategic in the classroom

All classes will be taught in Spanish language. Particularly the first weeks could be very challenging. Teachers do not expect that you understand **absolutely everything** they explain in Spanish. They will use a language level and vocabulary which is correspondent with your own level and their goal is that you understand most of the contents. This methodology will help you to get used to listening the phonetics and help your brain to always try to understand Spanish when you hear it.

G. Live some periods with a Costa Rican family, do some volunteer work and have a positive attitude when visiting community-based organizations.

Evidently, real and direct contact with local society is the most effective way of learning a language, but there are also other benefits. Through real life interaction you will get aware of differences and similarities between your own culture and the Costa Rican culture. When you are living on your own or with other foreign students you will only be able to scratch the surface of the Costa Rican culture. Having to live or work and communicate with Costa Ricans will definitively help you to discover the fabric of the local society: their way of being and their daily rituals and habits. You will get a deeper understanding of the worldview and lifestyle of the people in this country. This will help to broaden your vision of modern multicultural societies and increase your understanding and sensibility when meeting new people later-on in life, as you will acquire a new set of interpersonal skills. These kinds of experiences also build confidence: The challenges you face when trying to live and communicate with a host family member or a local will build your sense of self-confidence and independence. Being outside your comfort zone can help you learn a lot not just about the language but about yourself too.

Part 2: Course content and organization

Most of the Spanish classes occur each week between 08:00 am - 14:00 pm from Monday to Thursday. Occasionally there could be some academic activities on Fridays (a couple of times during the whole program). A couple of times each month you could have some lessons at afternoon. The detailed schedule and the Spanish group distribution with the name of the students will be published on the Facebook group and shared by email no later than Tuesday 21th of January. Each student will course 15 Spanish lessons (at the classroom) per week with obligatory attendance. In addition, there will be three day-excursions and two overnight field trip where students will practice the language in real life situations.

All three Spanish courses will be organized in four different kinds of weekly lessons:

Intro (Introductory lesson): Explanation of the contents to learn during the respective week

Práctica (Practice lessons): Lessons where students solve different exercises and tasks in order to master the specific academic goals for that week.

Evaluación (Evaluation lessons): Feedback, evaluation and assessment of expected and achieved individual progression that week. Quizzes and other submissions will be conducted during these lessons.

- **Absence rules at UISIL.**

It is obligatory to attend at least 80% of Spanish lessons for each course to qualify to take the final exam. In addition, each Spanish course has an evaluation value called "Class participation" which represents 15% of your final grade. If your absence in a specific course surpasses 10 lessons this value will be significantly affected. The only valid reasons for retake / replace an evaluation (quiz, test or presentation) is because of overnight field trip participation or sickness with its respective doctor's note.

- **Course books**

Students in Spanish level 0 will use [Aula América 1](#) as the course book. Students in Spanish level 1 will use [Campus Sur A1- B1](#) and students in Spanish level 2 will use Aula Internacional 4 in addition to some materials that will be shared in Costa Rica. You must have the course book with you every lesson. It will be also necessary to take with you the dictionary and the Spanish grammar book many times.

- **Course organization table (classroom lessons)**

	Pronunciation and Oral Expression	Spanish grammar and writing	Spanish reading comprehension
Intro	1 lesson per week	1 lesson per week	1 lesson per week
Practice	3 lessons per week	3 lessons per week	3 lessons per week
Feedback/ Evaluation	1 lesson per week	1 lesson per week	1 lesson per week

- **Experiential learning visits to Costa Rican community-based organisations:**

Many readings you will have in the course called "Spanish Reading comprehension" consist of cultural and environmental information related to the local context. In the case of Level 2, this course will cover information related to Latin American and Spanish History. This course has a transdisciplinary approach through the incorporation of some relevant contents from the Sustainability course. Thus, several texts will favour the comprehension of the social-environmental context in Costa Rica and Latin America. Aiming to reinforce the understanding of these readings, several excursions and visits to community-based organizations will be undertaken, such as women cooperatives, reforestation projects, indigenous groups, farmer's market, local primary schools, etc.

All visits have an ecological and experiential approach which means that students will actively participate and interact with local people in their biocultural context to provide experiences that integrate cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and environmental learning. These experiences are also considered a part of the course "Pronunciation and oral expression in Spanish". Furthermore, activities such as making chocolate directly from the cacao tree, harvesting organic coffee or sugar cane in rural cooperatives, packing tropical medicinal herbs, participating in indigenous handcraft and mask art, painting murals with an environmental consciousness thematic in primary school with a

local artist, are good example of some eco-sensorial experiences which are valuable and enriching for the individual, but which also promote the civic engagement and the collective action of the students as a group who seeks to have a positive impact on the local society.

● **Host family stay (five weeks) : Longo Mai (four nights) and ASOFEQUE (four weeks)**

The host family stay in Longo Mai and ASOFEQUE will offer you the opportunity to internalize Spanish language by using the most effective method: it is much easier to learn and understand a language if you spend time immersed in the culture of the country. Your Spanish level will get accelerate learning as you are forced to practice and challenge your language skills every day. Kulturstudier staff will be available in Longo Mai rural community during your stay. ASOFEQUE families live in Quebradas, just a couple of kilometres from UISIL university in San Isidro. The ASOFEQUE stay also features one night stay in FUDEBIOL reforestation project.

Part 3: Evaluation

UISIL uses the following grading for all the subjects.

Grading Scale

90 - 100%	A	Excellent
80 - 89 %	B	Good
70 - 79%	C	Fair
Less than 70%		Failed

Spanish reading comprehension (Evaluation for Level 0 and 1) Level 2 has a different structure

- Final exam (90 minutes written exam at university): Week 16. Monday 5th of May. Exact time to be announced
- Evaluation summary:

activities	Evaluation	Quantity	Value	Total
"Lecto-escritura" test		2	15%	30 %
Fotoblog		1	20%	20 %
Final exam		1	35 %	40 %
Class participation				15 %
Total				100 %

Spanish Grammar and writing (Evaluation for Level 0 and 1) Level 2 has a different structure

- Final exam (90 minutes written exam at university): Week 16. Monday 5th of May. Exact time to be announced

Evaluation summary:

Evaluation activities	Quantity	Value	Total
Quizzes	5	10 %	50 %
Final exam	1	35 %	35 %
Class participation			15 %
Total			100 %

Pronunciation and oral expression (Evaluation for Level 0 and 1) Level 2 has a different structure

- Oral exam: 15–20 minutes presentation and conversation with two sensors.
- Week 15: Either Tuesday 29th or Wednesday 30th of April
- Evaluation summary:

Evaluation activities	Quantity	Value	Total
Tests	3	10%	30 %
Presentations	2	10 %	20%
Final exam (Oral exam)	1	30 %	35 %
Class participation			15 %
Total			100 %

4. Overview: Evaluation dates (LEVEL 2 will have different dates)

Evaluations and exams in Costa Rica (Usually on Thursdays)

		Spanish Grammar	Spanish reading comprehension	Pronunciation and oral expression in Spanish
Week	Dates	Diagnostic test on Monday 20th of January		
1	20-24 Jan			
2	27 Jan-31 Jan			TEST 1 (10%)
3	3-7 Feb	QUIZ 1 (10%)		
4	10-14 Feb		COMPREHENSION TEST 1 (15%)	
5	17-21 Feb	QUIZ 2 (10%)		PRESENTATION 1(10%)
6	24-28 Feb			
7	3-7 March	QUIZ 3 (10%)		TEST 2 (10%)
8	10-14 March			
9	17-21 March		COMPREHENSION TEST 2 (15%)	
10	24-28 March	QUIZ 4 (10%)		TEST 3 (10%)
11	31 March-3 April			
12	7-11 April	QUIZ 5 (10%)		PRESENTATION 2 (10%)
13	14-18 april	STUDY WEEK (Eastern)	STUDY WEEK (Eastern)	STUDY WEEK (Eastern)
14	21 -25 april		FOTOBLOG (20%)	
15	28 april-2 may			ORAL EXAM 35%
16	5 may- 8 may	FINAL EXAM 35%	FINAL EXAM 35%	
		PARTICIPATION 15%	PARTIPATION 15%	PARTICIPATION 15%

5. Internet resources

● Internet resources

It is important to register and activate a student account in [Campus Difusión \(difusion.com\)](http://www.difusion.com). In this website you will be able to download / use relevant audios, videos, interactive exercises and other online resources associated with *Aula América 1 and Campus Sur*. During the first weeks in San Isidro you will get guidance on how to find / download these online resources.

In addition to preparing for the studies in Costa Rica we suggest that you become familiar with the country and the continent before you travel. There are many good internet pages that will give you good introductions to what the country has to offer. Some of the pages are:

Facts on Costa Rica

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19414068>

Newspapers:

An overview of different newspapers with their own website:

<https://www.prensaescrita.com/america/costarica.php>

Latin America groups (in Norwegian):

<http://www.latin-amerikagruppene.no/Medieklipp/index.html>

The Economist (Political magazine with focus on economic news, there is a section of news about Latin America): <http://www.economist.com/world/la/>

Tourist websites:

Official website side: <https://www.visitcostarica.com/en>

Dictionaries:

Tritrans (Norwegian-Spanish-English): <http://www.tritrans.net/>

Word reference (English-Spanish): www.wordreference.com

Lexin (Norwegian-English): <http://decentius.hit.uib.no/lexin.html>

Jergas de habla hispana (local slang from the different Spanish speaking countries, check out the site for Argentina): <http://www.jergasdehablahispana.org>

Grammatical exercises:

Spanish home (has everything regarding grammatical exercises and explanations): <http://www.spanishhome.com/>

Spanish Language and Culture: <http://www.colby.edu/~bknelson/SLC/index.php>

GREI – grammatical interactive game: <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/grei/>