SPAN 6400
Fall 2018
Spanish Pragmatics: Pero, ¿qué quieres decir?

This graduate level course provides a practical introduction to Spanish pragmatics, an interdisciplinary branch of linguistics that focuses on contextually-situated language. No previous coursework is required to take this course.

The course begins with an overview of the building blocks used to construct contextual meaning in Spanish. Then the course will move to an in-depth consideration of ways in which Spanish speakers constitute actual social actions with their words. Next, students will learn how Spanish language discourse itself is constructed according to culturally relative norms that involve various rituals, formulas, and strategies of politeness that vary both crosslinguistically (between Spanish and other languages like English) and even dialectally (among different Spanish-speaking communities around the world). Class readings, fun assignments, and the final research paper will all lead students to explore why we communicate the way we do in Spanish, with a particular emphasis on the dual importance of what we say in Spanish and how we choose to say it.

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