OVERVIEW

USAC offers courses in Spanish language at eight program sites in three countries: Chile (Santiago); Costa Rica (Heredia, Puntarenas, and San Ramón); and Spain (Alicante, Bilbao, Madrid, and San Sebastián). Spanish language courses are offered from elementary through advanced levels at all program locations and include conversation courses.

INTENSIVE LANGUAGE STUDY

Spanish language courses are offered in an intensive format on USAC programs. Intensive language study allows students to complete up to two years of language study in one semester. Options vary by USAC program location, but students typically enroll in 2, 3, or 4 language courses during each semester, depending on their level and program location. These courses are taught sequentially and are referred to as “tracks.” During the summer or January programs, one language course can be completed in each 3-5 week session. More information on language tracks at each program site can be found on the USAC website and in the USAC catalog.

SPANISH LANGUAGE COORDINATOR

Given the number and variety of Spanish courses offered, USAC employs a Spanish Language Coordinator who oversees the design and implementation of the Spanish language curriculum at all USAC programs sites. Dr. Asunción Martínez Arbelaiz (Ph.D, Linguistics, Cornell University) has been the USAC Spanish Language Coordinator since 2001. Her primary role is to ensure the quality and consistency of the Spanish language curriculum not only between program sites, but also ensuring that it complies with US standards and compatibility. Dr. Martínez actively contributes to the field of language acquisition and language pedagogy through publications and participation in professional conferences.

The responsibilities of the Spanish Language Coordinator include:

- familiarization of the curriculum design of Spanish courses offered by US colleges and universities
- develop and revise, as appropriate, student learning outcomes for each Spanish course
- design Spanish courses that pursue those student learning outcomes and are consistent with typical US university requirements in regards to curriculum content and evaluation methods
- select appropriate course textbooks for each Spanish language course: US textbooks for Chile and Costa Rica programs and textbooks printed in Spain for the Spanish programs
- choose readers or literature that are culturally appropriate for each site and work with faculty to create reading guides
- periodically meet with faculty to exchange ideas regarding language teaching techniques, materials, class management and assessment
- maintain a website where USAC faculty share their pedagogical materials
- read and summarize student evaluations from every Spanish course; sharing the results with the faculty, Resident Directors, and USAC Central Office; suggest areas of improvement, when needed
- design assessment instruments to gauge language development; interpret results of assessments to guide continued curriculum development
- stay abreast of, conduct, and publish original research in the field of second language acquisition and in the subfield of language acquisition in the study abroad context

Questions related to the Spanish language curriculum can be directed to Dr. Asunción Martínez Arbelaiz at asuncion@usac.unr.edu.