

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

APPROVAL PAGE

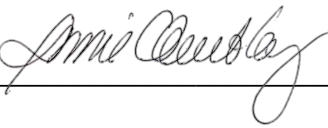
Proposal Title: Restructuring of Spanish Language Sequences

College: Liberal Arts

Department: Chicano Studies, Languages and Linguistics

DEPARTMENT CHAIR- Annie Tremblay

I have read the enclosed proposal and approve this proposal on behalf of the department.



Signature

08/20/2026

Date

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR – Selfa Chew-Melendez

I have read the enclosed documents and approve the proposal on behalf of the college curriculum committee.

Signature

Date

COLLEGE DEAN – Anadeli Bencomo

I have read the enclosed documents and approve the proposal on behalf of the college. I certify that the necessary funds will be allocated by the college in support of this proposal.

Signature

Date

CURRICULUM CHANGE MEMO

Date: August 19, 2026

From: Elena Foulis, Chic. Studies, Langs., and Ling. *Elena Foulis*

Through: Annie Tremblay, Chair, Chic. St., Lgs., and Ling. *Annie Tremblay*

Through: Anadeli Bencomo, Dean, College of Liberal Arts

To: Selfa Chew-Melendez, Chair, Liberal Arts Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Proposal Title: Restructuring of Spanish Language Sequences

Select the proposal content (select as many as apply) and provide the rationale.

Content

- ☐ New program or ☐ Program Change
 - ☐ Bachelor's
 - ☐ Master's
 - ☐ Doctoral/Professional
 - ☐ Certificate
 - ☐ Fast Track
 - ☐ Minor
 - ☐ Concentration/Track
- ☐ New Course
- ☐ Closure (program, certificate, minor, concentration)
- ☐ Change
 - ☐ CIP Code
 - ☐ Program/certificate SCH
 - ☒ Course Title
 - ☒ Course Description
 - ☐ Course Prerequisite/Restriction
 - ☐ Graduate Program Admission Requirements

Rationale

The Department of Chicano Studies, Languages, and Linguistics proposes collapsing its two Spanish language sequences (SPAN 1301, 1302, 2301, and 2302, intended for second-language learners, and SPAN 2303 and 2304, intended for heritage speakers) into one (SPAN 1301-2302), with heritage speakers being the assumed default student population and

with language instructions being tailored to second-language learners on an as-needed basis. Heritage speakers are the primary student population in both tracks, with less verbal speakers falling into the second-language track.

COURSE CHANGE FORM

COPY OF CATALOG PAGE NOT REQUIRED

All fields below are required

College : Liberal Arts
Term : Fall 2027

Department : Chicano Studies, Languages and Linguistics

Effective

Rationale for changing the course:

UTEP's Spanish program has historically been organized around two curricular tracks, conventionally designated for "native speakers" (heritage speakers) and "non-native" speakers (second-language learners). This division, however, has never reflected the linguistic profiles or educational needs of the students the program serves. In particular, the "non-native" label is a misnomer for many students in that track: A substantial number are heritage speakers who grew up in Spanish-speaking families and communities and have significant receptive knowledge of the language, but who may have had limited opportunities to develop productive Spanish proficiency or formal knowledge of Spanish through schooling. Moreover, over the years, the program has observed a decline in the Spanish proficiency of incoming heritage learners, with increasing numbers placing into the track conceived for non-native speakers. Courses in that sequence are based largely on a traditional second-language learning model and therefore do not build on the linguistic knowledge, cultural experiences, and community connections that heritage learners bring to the classroom. This mismatch is especially consequential at UTEP, where approximately 83% of students identify as Hispanic/Latino and where Spanish is an integral part of the linguistic and cultural landscape of the U.S.–Mexico border region. The proposed curriculum redesign responds to this reality by moving away from a model in which heritage learners constitute a special population within a curriculum organized around native versus non-native speakers and toward one in which heritage learners, in all their linguistic diversity, are understood as the program's primary and default student population.

A heritage language curriculum adopts an asset-based approach that values students' previous exposure to Spanish and leverages their cultural and linguistic knowledge as a foundation for academic development. Rather than treating students as novice language learners, heritage language instruction acknowledges the diverse repertoires they bring to the classroom and supports the expansion of their abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing across personal, academic, professional, and community contexts. This approach fosters greater engagement and confidence by validating students' lived experiences and linguistic identities.

The proposed sequence of Spanish 1-4 (SPAN 1301, 1302, 2301, and 2302) is intentionally structured to meet the needs of heritage language learners while remaining inclusive of second-language learners and individuals with varying levels of Spanish proficiency. Beginning courses focus on developing communicative competence and literacy while helping students critically examine their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As students advance through the sequence, instruction increasingly emphasizes critical language awareness, multilingual identities, media literacy, academic writing, and intercultural competence. Students engage with issues of social justice, language variation, community narratives, and cultural production, allowing them to connect classroom learning to their families, communities, and broader Spanish-speaking worlds.

A heritage language curriculum also aligns with contemporary research in language education, which demonstrates that students learn most effectively when instruction builds upon their existing linguistic resources. By incorporating students' home and community language practices into the curriculum, the program promotes bilingualism, biliteracy, and bicultural competence. Students develop the ability to navigate formal and informal contexts of language use, understand linguistic diversity within Spanish-speaking communities, and critically reflect on language ideologies that often marginalize heritage speakers. Such skills are increasingly valuable in professional, civic, and academic settings.

Furthermore, this curricular shift strengthens the institution's commitment to serving its regional context. In communities where Spanish is an essential part of everyday life and cultural identity, heritage language education supports student success by connecting academic learning to local experiences and knowledge systems. The curriculum positions students as cultural knowledge bearers, storytellers, and contributors to their communities while preparing them to participate effectively in multilingual and multicultural environments.

By the completion of the four-course sequence, students will have developed advanced linguistic proficiency, intercultural competence, critical language awareness, and academic literacy in Spanish. They will be equipped not only to communicate effectively in diverse settings but also to understand, document, and value the histories, narratives, and cultural contributions of Spanish-speaking communities. Transitioning to a heritage language curriculum therefore represents a pedagogically sound, culturally responsive, and institutionally relevant approach that better serves the needs of students and advances the goals of linguistic equity, educational access, and community engagement.

All fields below are required

Subject Prefix and number SPAN 1301

Course Title Spanish One

(Course descriptions are limited to 600 characters)

(Course titles are limited to 29 characters)

Change	From	To
Description	An introductory course for non-native speakers with emphasis on pronunciation and the basic elements of grammar; practice in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing	Introduction to Spanish language with an emphasis on pronunciation and the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Explores Spanish-speaking cultures and communities while promoting communication in personal, academic, and community contexts.

These changes will be reflected in Banner, Goldmine, and the catalog

All fields below are required

Subject Prefix and number SPAN 1302

Course Title Spanish Two

(Course descriptions are limited to 600 characters)

(Course titles are limited to 29 characters)

Change	From	To
Description	A continuation of Spanish 1301, with the introduction of more complex elements of grammar; additional practice in the four basic skills.	Continuation of SPAN 1301 emphasizing more complex grammar and the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Explores language variation, culture, and identity in Spanish-speaking communities through communication in academic, personal, and community contexts.

These changes will be reflected in Banner, Goldmine, and the catalog

All fields below are required

Subject Prefix and number SPAN 2301

Course Title Spanish Three

(Course descriptions are limited to 600 characters)

(Course titles are limited to 29 characters)

Change	From	To
Title	Intermediate Spanish One for Non-Native Speakers	Spanish Three
Description	A course emphasizing development of conversational and reading skills. Review and continuation of grammar study begun in Spanish 1301 and 1302. Readings from contemporary sources. Course fee required.	Intermediate development of Spanish communication and critical literacy skills through increasingly complex speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. Engages students with authentic and multimedia texts while exploring contemporary social and cultural issues, language variation, and diverse Spanish-speaking communities.

These changes will be reflected in Banner, Goldmine, and the catalog

All fields below are required

Subject Prefix and number SPAN 2302

Course Title Spanish Four

(Course descriptions are limited to 600 characters)

(Course titles are limited to 29 characters)

Change	From	To
Title	Intermediate Spanish Two for Non-Native Speakers	Spanish Four
Description	A continuation of Spanish 2301, with some grammar review and more extensive readings from the contemporary period. Course fee required.	Continuation of SPAN 2301 emphasizing intermediate Spanish communication, bilingual literacy, and intercultural competence. Through literary, historical, and multimedia texts, students explore the histories, cultural expressions, and experiences of diverse Spanish-speaking communities, with attention to storytelling, identity, and community engagement.

These changes will be reflected in Banner, Goldmine, and the catalog