

# Spanish 4901G – Turn Your Ideas into Academic Projects

## The Joy of Discovery, the Discipline of Inquiry

*Every meaningful project begins with a question; every great question begins with curiosity; and curiosity thrives in the joy of discovery.*

Through workshops, peer collaboration, independent research, and guided mentorship, students learn how to develop a research question, locate and evaluate sources, build arguments, revise their work, and communicate their ideas effectively to different audiences.

Students will design, develop, and complete a major project that may take the form of a research paper, conference presentation, digital project, teaching resource, community-engaged project, or other approved format. The course emphasizes project-based learning, critical thinking, writing, revision, and knowledge dissemination.



## Why take this course?

- Develop advanced research and writing skills.
- Learn how to turn ideas into well-designed projects.
- Build experience presenting your work to academic and public audiences.
- Prepare for graduate studies, professional programs, or careers that value research, communication, and project management.
- Create a substantial portfolio piece that showcases your interests and abilities.

No matter your future plans, this course will help you move from curiosity to a completed project.

## What You Will Learn

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Turn an idea or interest into a well-designed academic, creative, or public-facing project.
- Find, evaluate, and use sources effectively to support your work.
- Develop strong research, writing, and communication skills.
- Give and receive constructive feedback as part of a collaborative learning community.
- Revise and strengthen your work through reflection and practice.
- Present your ideas confidently to academic, professional, or public audiences.
- Complete a substantial project that showcases your interests, skills, and achievements.

## The Life Cycle of a Project

### Stage 1: Discovering an Idea

- Identifying interests, questions, and problems worth exploring
- Connecting personal interests with academic inquiry
- Exploring possible project formats and audiences

### Stage 2: Shaping the Project

- Refining topics into focused research questions or project goals
- Defining scope, objectives, and outcomes
- Developing a project proposal and work plan

### Stage 3: Research and Exploration

- Finding, evaluating, and organizing sources and materials
- Conducting research appropriate to the project
- Learning from existing scholarship, creative works, and community knowledge

### Stage 4: Creating and Developing

- Drafting, designing, building, or producing the project
- Applying research and analysis
- Experimenting with ideas, methods, and forms of communication

### Stage 5: Feedback and Revision

- Participating in workshops and peer review
- Reflecting on strengths and areas for improvement
- Revising and refining the project

### Stage 6: Sharing Knowledge

- Adapting work for academic, professional, or public audiences
- Developing presentation and communication skills
- Considering the broader impact of the project

### Stage 7: Final Project Showcase

- Presenting completed projects
- Reflecting on the learning process
- Building a portfolio piece for future academic or professional opportunities



## Experiential Learning

This course is built around experiential, project-based learning. Rather than simply studying how academic projects are created, students will experience the process firsthand. Beginning with a question driven by their own curiosity, students will develop a project plan, conduct research, refine their ideas through feedback and reflection, and produce a substantial final project. By engaging in the full life cycle of a project—from conception to completion—students will develop practical skills in research, critical thinking, communication, and knowledge mobilization that are valuable in graduate studies, professional careers, and lifelong learning.