

Faculty Information Literacy Stipend

Final Report

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Course: SPAN 2401 – Intermediate Spanish I

Semester: Fall 2025

Librarian Collaborator: Rebecca Graff

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Introduction

SPAN 2401 (Intermediate Spanish I) is a core language course designed to move students beyond basic communicative proficiency toward sustained, contextualized discourse in Spanish. The course emphasizes engagement with authentic cultural materials, expansion of vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and mastery of increasingly complex grammatical structures. Students are also expected to analyze cultural products, practices, and perspectives across the Spanish-speaking world while developing global awareness and interpretive skills aligned with SMU's **Global Perspectives (GPS)** and **Literary Analysis and Interpretation (LAI)** outcomes.

The learning goals of SPAN 2401 include engaging with authentic cultural materials, expanding vocabulary in context, and mastering increasingly complex grammatical structures. Integrating information literacy supported these goals by providing students with a scaffolded framework for conducting meaningful cultural research in Spanish using both traditional academic resources and emerging technologies. This approach aligns directly with SMU Libraries' information literacy initiative, particularly its emphasis on ethical and critical engagement with AI-generated information, and supports students' ability to navigate complex information environments responsibly.

In my initial proposal, I designed three AI-integrated assignments, including a literary analysis component. However, due to time constraints and last-minute changes to the coordinated syllabus for SPAN 2401.

I designed this assignment sequence in collaboration with librarian Rebecca Graff, in a series of two planning meetings held over Zoom. During these sessions, we reviewed the course learning outcomes, aligned them with SMU Libraries' AI and information literacy framework, and identified the best entry points for scaffolded, ethics-centered information literacy instruction. We discussed the challenges Spanish language students face when navigating digital content in a second language, particularly when working with AI tools, and outlined a structure that would incorporate guided library visits, source verification logs, and opportunities for reflection on credibility and context.

This assignment sequence was created to help students develop critical information literacy skills while deepening their cultural and linguistic understanding of the Spanish-speaking world. As language learners, students often rely heavily on surface-level web searches or AI-generated content for quick cultural facts, without the tools to assess reliability, context, or depth—challenges that are compounded when working in a second language. These assignments were created to guide students through the process of discerning credible information and to empower them to use AI tools ethically and critically alongside academic sources.

Both assignments required students to gather information using AI platforms and then verify and contextualize that content using SMU Library databases, curated guides, and instructor-approved sources. Students documented this process using a **Source Validation Sheet** and/or **Research Verification Log**, which prompted them to reflect on credibility, bias, limitations, and usefulness of AI-generated information.

Assignment 1, a cultural presentation on festivals in Spanish-speaking countries, introduced the AI literacy process early in the semester. Students visited the **Fondren Library on October 13**, where Rebecca Graff led an interactive session on cultural research tools and ethical source evaluation. This visit supported students in locating academic sources and refining their understanding of products, practices, and perspectives through a comparative framework.

Assignment 2, which took place later in the semester, was more advanced: students created a video reflecting on fictionalized professional experiences in a Latin American country. This included recommendations, cultural insights, and grammar-rich discourse using the subjunctive, conditional, and future tenses. On **November 21**, Rebecca Graff visited our classroom to introduce the **Working Abroad** guide and model research strategies for verifying AI-generated information about workplace culture, norms, and regional differences. Students reported that these sessions, paired with the **AI literacy framework**, made the research process more approachable and meaningful.

The overarching **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)** for these assignments were to:

- Evaluate the reliability of AI-generated cultural and literary content by comparing it with peer-reviewed or scholarly sources
- Identify cultural perspectives and practices in Spanish-speaking contexts using AI and library tools
- Practice iterative questioning and prompt refinement to improve the quality of AI-generated results

These projects not only strengthened language and cultural knowledge, but also taught students how to conduct ethical, informed, and critical research in the age of AI—a skill that will serve them well across disciplines.

2. Method of Assessment

Student learning was assessed through:

- Rubrics aligned with our **course's Learning Outcomes**
- Written and video deliverables in Spanish
- Completion and quality of the Source Validation Sheet and AI logs
- Participation in peer discussions and feedback

These measures allowed for evaluation of students':

- Language proficiency (vocabulary, grammar, fluency)
- Cultural understanding
- Research and information literacy skills
- Ability to verify sources and reflect on the role of AI in research

3. Impact on Student Learning

This project had a significant and positive impact on student learning. Students reported:

- A deeper awareness of how to evaluate source reliability
- Confidence in using library tools alongside AI
- A better understanding of ethical research practices, particularly regarding the limitations and biases of AI tools

A key component of the assessment was the “Cultural Research and Source Reliability” criterion in the assignment rubric, which asked students to demonstrate understanding beyond surface-level facts and to evaluate sources for reliability—especially when using AI. Based on this rubric: **93% of students scored “Good” (20 points) or “Excellent” (25 points)** on this criterion, showing strong or superior ability to verify sources and analyze cultural perspectives thoughtfully.

Students highlighted that the **Source Validation Sheet** gave them “a clear structure to follow,” helped them “understand the information more deeply,” and provided “a useful framework for analyzing what’s reliable and what’s not.” Their final presentations and reflections showed meaningful improvements in their research practices and critical thinking.

This initiative also supported interdisciplinary learning by blending language acquisition, digital literacy, and cultural analysis in a way that felt practical and relevant to students preparing to work or study in global contexts.

4. Optional: Suggestions for Improvement or Feedback

This experience was highly valuable and confirmed that intermediate language students are ready to engage meaningfully with information literacy and AI ethics when given thoughtful scaffolding and librarian collaboration.

Due to last-minute changes in the coordinated syllabus, the planned Literary Analysis and Interpretation (LAI) assignment was removed. However, this remains a high-priority area for future development, and I plan to reintroduce it in future semesters with the same AI-verification model. Going forward, I would like to:

- Extend collaboration with the library into future LAI assignments
- Explore librarian-led modules on multilingual source evaluation and Spanish-language search strategies
- Refine the Source Validation Sheet to support both cultural and literary research

I would absolutely repeat this assignment sequence. It aligns with course objectives, enhances students' information literacy, and supports SMU's goal of developing global citizens who can think critically about the sources and technologies that shape our understanding of the world.