

Department of Modern Languages Academic Policy

I. Grading System: Departmental grading policy for marking periods (all work done prior to the term examination in the fall and spring) is as follows:

Tests = 50% (some major projects can count as tests)
Quizzes = 35% (some minor projects can count as quizzes)
Homework and class participation = 15%

The Term Grade = Marking Period + Final Exam (25% of Fall Term Grade, 33.3% in Spring)

There will be a minimum of three full-period tests per term, in addition to frequent quizzes.

Students who miss a quiz or a test due to unexcused absence will receive a grade of zero. If the absence is excused, the student will have a week in which to make up the test or quiz. If he or she does not meet this deadline, the grade becomes zero.

II. Grading Rubric and Standards

H+, H, H- (Distinguished Work/Honors)

The student demonstrates exceptional understanding of the language studied. Performance on measured assessments is exemplary and demonstrates top-level application, synthesis, and original thought. The student consistently demonstrates genuine curiosity, insight, and enthusiasm, which elevates the level of class discussion. The student possesses work habits that exceed expectations, learns and engages actively, and submits all work.

V+, V, V- (Very Good Work)

The student demonstrates very good understanding of the language studied. Performance on measured assessments is strong and shows considerable synthesis and application of the material. The ideas the student expresses are coherent and exhibit grammatical accuracy. The student frequently demonstrates curiosity, insight, and enthusiasm, which tend to contribute to elevate the level of class discussion. The student completes all assignments and gives their best effort at all times.

G+, G, G- (Good Work)

The student demonstrates good understanding of the language studied. Performance on measured assessments is routinely acceptable. The student is making steady progress, and their ideas are presented in a generally comprehensible manner, but often with lack of full clarity and grammatical accuracy. The student demonstrates some creativity and curiosity when engaging the material. The student's work habits and effort meet the basic

requirements for good work in the course. The student completes work and does what is expected.

P+, P, P- (Passing Work)

The student demonstrates weak and minimally acceptable understanding of the language studied. Performance on measured assessments is either erratic or marginally acceptable. There are generally significant problems with grammar and vocabulary. The student rarely demonstrates creativity and curiosity when engaging the material. The student's work varies from sufficient to insufficient, reflecting uneven work habits and inconsistency in turning in assignments. While grades in the "P" range carry credit for the course, they are generally not sufficient to allow the student to advance to the next level without some remediation (see "Readiness Clause" statement below*).

U (Unsatisfactory)

The student does not demonstrate an acceptable level of understanding of the material presented in the class. Performance on measured assessments highlights significant gaps in learning and reveals inadequacies in comprehension and use of the oral and written language. These indicate unreadiness—with or without remediation—to advance to the next level of study. The student does not actively engage nor collaborate during class and makes little or inconsistent effort to communicate with proper grammar and syntax. Students with a grade of "U" for the year must repeat the course with a successful outcome to receive credit.

X (Seriously Failing)

The student's performance in the class falls significantly below expectations. The student fails to seek extra help, tutoring, and/or assistance in earnest. The student neglects assignments on a regular basis and demonstrates unsatisfactory engagement and collaboration in class. Effort is poor overall. Students with a grade of "X" for the year must repeat the course with a successful outcome to receive credit.

III. Homework Policy

The St. Stephen's Modern Language faculty understands that success in achieving proficiency in all areas of a second language is dependent on study and work done both in and outside of class. Homework is vital to this process. It requires the student to practice, review, and actively engage with material covered in class. It provides the opportunity for fundamental individual learning and memory work, as well as for preparing for in-class activities and assessments. Done well, homework leads to more effective language acquisition and higher grades.

Language Department homework can take many forms. An abbreviated list of the types of assignments currently in use includes: Google Voice recording assignments for speaking/listening; timed vocabulary practice using the Quizlet platform; "flipped"

classroom videos to introduce grammar topics; preparation for oral presentations (e.g. a commercial, using commands); textbook-based workbook exercises; practice sentences and/or writing characters; readings with comprehension questions; and writing assignments (sometimes as at-home quiz grades).

The time requirement for homework assigned by the Modern Languages Department ranges, on average, from 10 to 30 minutes in the lower levels (I, II, III) and from 25 to 45 minutes in the higher levels.

Homework and class participation together account for 15% of a student's marking period grade.

IV. Class Participation: Class participation is encouraged and required on a daily basis. All students should expect to be called upon to participate numerous times during each class period. Group or pair work is an essential part of class participation and the students' participation will be graded accordingly.

V. Academic Dishonesty: Unless it has been clearly specified by the teacher, all homework and all quizzes and exams must be done by the individual student without any help. The use of online translation sites is generally not permitted. In cases of dishonesty (on a quiz, exam, or paper), the student will receive a zero on the assignment and the incident will be brought to the attention of the Academic Dean.

VI. Conferences: According to school policy, any student who is failing a course must meet with the teacher for regular individual conferences. Additionally, because of the cumulative nature of foreign language acquisition, the teacher may require individual conferences if it becomes apparent that the student is having troubles with the material (i.e., when his or her grade falls into the "P" range). When a student fails to show up for a required conference, it counts the same as an absence from class.

VI. Class Attendance and Tardiness: Please see the **Student Handbook** for the school policy regarding this matter. In most classes a student is late once the teacher finishes checking the roster.

VII. St. Stephen's Readiness Clause: Any student who fails (U or X) the spring term, regardless of his or her work in the previous term, will be subject to individual evaluation by the teacher, in conjunction with the department head, with respect to the student's readiness for next year's work. The possible outcomes of this conference are:

- a U for the year, to be made up;
- an Incomplete for the term, with required make-up work;
- a grade average according to the usual method

VIII. Readiness clause for modern languages: Because language acquisition is a cumulative process and requires a solid foundation at each level for continued progress, passing a given level does not necessarily mean being ready to successfully manage the challenges of the next level. Therefore, in the Modern Language Department, all the

students who receive a grade of P-, P, or P+ at the end of the year will be evaluated individually to determine if they are ready to advance to the next level.

Students coming from other institutions must receive an acceptable score on the St. Stephen's diagnostic placement test. Accelerated sections in the Spanish Department cover course work in greater depth. Promotion into these accelerated language sections requires a grade of H in the previous course and/or departmental approval. Continued placement of the student in these sections from one level to the next is likewise determined by the department.

IX. Summer Remediation or Acceleration: During the summer, students affected by the readiness clause may pursue an individual program of study and review, or they may participate in an organized language study program. In all cases, these students must pass an examination administered by the St. Stephen's Modern Language Department before the first day of class before enrolling in the next level of study.

Likewise, students wanting to accelerate their progress in the language are free to study over the summer. These students must also take an examination to determine that they are ready to be placed at the level they desire.

In order to receive credit, students who participate in the St. Stephen's Summer Spanish Workshop in León, Spain, can demonstrate their language proficiency in coursework and examinations in Spain. These students will not need to pass a separate exam before the beginning of the school year.