Cultural Competence and Medical Spanish Education: Communicating with Latino Patients

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Jennifer Maxwell

- Clinical Instructor and Director of the Spanish for Health Professionals Certificate (CEU) and Spanish for Healthcare undergraduate program at Catholic University
- Instruct Medical Spanish, Cultural Competence, Interpreting and Translating courses
- Medical translator and interpreter for Metropolitan DC hospitals, clinics, NGOs, organizations and schools
- Master of Arts degree in Spanish from Middlebury College in Madrid;
- Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the State University of New York at Oswego.
- Lead International Clinical Practicum trips to Guatemala, Puerto Rico and Nicaragua for healthcare professionals and students to volunteer their professional and Spanish language skills in rural clinics
CULTURAL COMPETENCY IS ONE OF THE MAIN INGREDIENTS IN CLOSING THE GAPS RELATING TO DISPARITIES IN HEALTH CARE

Examine the relationship between culture, language and health.

Develop culturally appropriate communication skills.

Explain how cultural competence affects health care delivery and health outcomes.

Identify cultural disparities in health care.

Analyze cultural sensitivity (attitude) and multicultural awareness (knowledge) in health care.
Medical Spanish and Cultural Competence Certificate
15 credit

- Develop knowledge of critical and health care specific language, culture sensitivity and diversity training.
- Service learning, internship, and study abroad in DC, Puerto Rico, Spain, Central and South American.

“This training and international clinical experience has given me valuable tools to better serve the Hispanic community in the United States and provide culturally competent care as a bilingual ICU nurse.”

Kathy Ramirez, ICU RN, AMN Healthcare, Atlanta
# Spanish for Health Care Certificate
## Undergraduate Curriculum (15 credit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPAN 107 &amp; 108*</td>
<td>Spanish for Health Care I &amp; II</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 207 &amp; 208</td>
<td>Advanced Spanish for Health Care I &amp; II</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 277/577 (H)*</td>
<td>Competency Awareness in Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 307 &amp; 308</td>
<td>Communication and Culture in Medical Spanish I &amp; II</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 495B (H)</td>
<td>Bilingual Health Care Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 402</td>
<td>Translation for International Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSS 326/570</td>
<td>Diversity in a Multicultural Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 383</td>
<td>Health Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 387</td>
<td>Community Interventions in Mental Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTH 355</td>
<td>Latinos and Latinas in the U.S.</td>
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*(H) Honors,   *Online
Health Care Internship in DC
100 hours per semester

- Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Health Center
- Latin American Montessori Bilingual Charter School
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- Spanish Catholic Charities Medical Clinic
- Holy Cross Hospital
- HSC Pediatric Center (Hospital for Sick Children)
- The American Kidney Fund
- Hispanic Servicing Health Care Professionals
- A Wider Circle
STUDY ABROAD

SPRING BREAK

*40 hours of International/Intercultural Clinical Practicum

Nicaragua: Roberto Clemente Clinic & Centro de Salud
Puerto Rico: Universidad de Sagrado Corazón, Iniciativa Comunitaria
Guatemala: Casa Hogar Orphanage & Community Health Clinic
Costa Rica: La Universidad de las Ciencias y el Arte

SUMMER

Spain  University of Virginia School of Nursing and Public Health Science (7 cr)
Chile  IES Summer Health Care Program (6 cr)
## Certificate Recipients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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- **90%** Nursing
- **5%** PSY-Brain Science
- **3%** Biology (Pre-Med)
- **2%** Biomedical Engineering, Business

**1,357** Total enrolled (since 2010)

**15,136** Hours of Service Learning, Internship
WHY MEDICAL SPANISH AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY for PROFESSIONALS

• **Empower** health care professionals to better communicate in Spanish with patients and family members.

• **Expand** skill sets to better serve the health care needs of the traditionally underserved Hispanic community.

• **Identify** and understand personal beliefs of patients to provide the highest-quality care in a culturally competent manner.

• **Develop** stronger relationships with clients by reducing miscommunication and errors.
Spanish for Health Professionals Certificate

New Online Program

Language Matters in Quality Care

metro.catholic.edu/shp
Online Continuing Education

Medical Spanish Essential       MPD 121
Medical Spanish Informative    MPD 122
Medical Spanish Communicative  MPD 123
Cultural Competence in Health Care    MPD 124

5 weeks per course

3.5 Continuing Education Units (CEU) per course

35 Contact hours per course

140 Contact hours total for the four-course certificate

Online asynchronously (access material at any time with weekly deadlines)
Teaching Methods

- Video lectures, oral assessments, reading, listening, and vocabulary and dialogue activities, and role-playing (online)
- Weekly listening, oral, and written assessments
- Study at your own pace with weekly module deadlines
- Pass/Fail
- Pre- and Post-Assessments
- Certification test after 4 course

2019 Course offerings

- June 17 - July 22  Medical Spanish Essential MPD 121
- Aug 5 – Sept 8  Cultural Competence in Health Care MPD 124
GOALS

Cultural Competence:  
Being familiar with Spanish language varieties, speakers and expectations, cultural beliefs and practices.

Pragmatic competence:  
Establishing successful doctor-patient and health professional-client communication and rapport building.

*Linguistic competence:  
Identifying, learning and practicing the language system: grammar, vocabulary and semantics within profession-specific context.
Advance Your Healthcare Profession

Spanish for Health Professionals Certificate is an accredited continuing education online program designed to improve working knowledge of medical Spanish and cultural competence. Geared toward current and future health professionals with minimal to no Spanish background. Program consists of 4 online courses with certificates and CUEs awarded upon completion.

Contact the Metropolitan School of Professional Studies
202-319-5256
metropolitan@cua.edu
Embracing Hispanic Culture at CUA

Spanish for Health Care

"Patient interaction is a cornerstone of the nursing profession. Nurses have the ability to make a person's day," says Rebecca Kelly, who received her B.S.N. in 2011 with an advanced certificate in Spanish for Health Care.

Kelly remembers one such time while she was on a clinical rotation at George Washington University Hospital. "I was working with an RN at the hospital who did not know any Spanish and that's what our patient spoke. Normally we would get a translator on the phone, but I was able to communicate with the patient in Spanish, ask where it hurt, and get some history. Face-to-face communication is so much more effective. I could see in her eyes how much she was hurting. She had to help me with a few words, but she didn't mind. She was so appreciative of my effort."

Kelly is one of the first recipients of the certificate in Spanish for Health Care since its inception in January 2010. She says it was a leap of faith when she joined the program. "I had a hard time with high school Spanish. But other nursing students kept telling me how different this program is and how great a teacher Professor Maxwell is. So I gave it a try."

Jennifer Maxwell is the director of the Spanish for Health Care program, a collaborative effort between the School of Nursing and the modern languages and literatures department. She is also a Spanish language lecturer for the department.

"The growth of this program speaks volumes about the future direction of health care. We had an average of six students per semester before the program was approved to offer a certificate in 2010 and now we have more than 60 students each semester. Students know they need the language skills and they know it gives them a competitive advantage when they graduate. Nearly every health care provider will encounter Spanish-speaking patients in his or her day, especially if they work in a multicultural community," says Maxwell.

The program features language classes specific to health care followed by internship and service-learning opportunities. Students who speak Spanish say they need the program too. "Even though I am a native Spanish speaker, this program has enhanced my use of language in the health care setting and provided me with many useful skills that I continually apply in my nursing career," says Farahnaj Hassanshahi, who graduated in 2010 with a B.S.N. "We learned medical vocabulary, anatomy, writing, nurse patient dialogue, and how culture affects medical practices."

A highlight of the program for Hassanshahi was the medical mission trip to Naranjito, Dominican Republic, in 2010. Ten nursing students from the Spanish for Health Care program went with Maxwell and Mary Dooley, a clinical nursing professor at CUA. The students worked at a medical clinic in the small village and provided health classes to schoolchildren.