SPAN 125EPA - Spanish for the Health Professions

Program: Health Practices in English
Total scheduled hours: 16
Instructional contact hours: 15
Final examination: 1 hour
Target level: Beginner to elementary Spanish (A1-A2 entry profile)
Institution: ¡EPA! Español en Panamá
Program location: Panama City, Panama
Language of instruction: Spanish

COURSE OVERVIEW

SPAN 125EPA is a 16-hour introductory Spanish course comprising 15 hours of classroom instruction and a 1-hour final examination. It is designed for university students in pre-medicine, nursing and other health science fields. The course develops the essential language needed for respectful, clear and practical communication in guided and simulated interactions with Spanish-speaking patients, families and healthcare personnel. It integrates beginner-level grammar, high-frequency medical vocabulary, listening and speaking practice, short functional texts and intercultural communication in the healthcare context of Panama.

TARGET POPULATION AND PREREQUISITES

The course is designed primarily for university students aged approximately 19 to 21 who are preparing for health-related studies. No prior coursework in healthcare content or medical Spanish is required. It is intended for learners with an A1–A2 entry profile; scaffolding and task complexity will be adjusted to placement results and demonstrated proficiency.

SCOPE OF THE COURSE

This is a short Spanish-for-specific-purposes course comprising 15 hours of classroom instruction and a 1-hour final examination. The instructional hours include guided practice and applied communication tasks, while the final

examination assesses the students' ability to integrate the language and communication strategies developed throughout the course. The program introduces essential healthcare communication but does not constitute completion or certification of a full CEFR level. At jEPA!, the complete A1 program comprises 60 instructional contact hours.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To develop beginning learners' ability to participate in predictable, high-frequency healthcare interactions in Spanish by using basic vocabulary, functional language, communication strategies, and culturally appropriate behaviors.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Introduce themselves and identify common healthcare roles, services and facilities.
- Request, understand and record essential patient information using simple forms and questions.
- Ask about common symptoms, pain, allergies, medication and basic medical history.
- Give and understand brief instructions related to a basic examination, medication and healthy habits.
- Use clarification, repetition and confirmation strategies to reduce misunderstandings.
- Participate in short, guided and simulated healthcare interactions with understandable pronunciation and appropriate register.
- Recognize selected cultural and communicative practices relevant to patient care in Panama and broader Spanish-speaking contexts.

COMPETENCES DEVELOPED

The course integrates listening and reading comprehension, spoken interaction, short spoken production, functional writing and mediation within an A1–A2 entry profile. It also develops healthcare vocabulary, pragmatic competence for simulated patient-facing communication, intercultural awareness and strategies for managing limited language resources safely and respectfully.

METHODOLOGY

The course follows a communicative, action-oriented and task-based approach. Language is introduced through realistic but simulated healthcare situations and practiced through structured interaction, information-gap activities, role-plays, listening and reading tasks, visual supports, short forms, pronunciation work and progressive simulations. Grammar is taught in context as a resource for accomplishing practical communicative goals.

Students move from highly supported exchanges to progressively more integrated healthcare communication tasks and a final practical examination. Feedback prioritizes intelligibility, successful communication, appropriate interaction and functional use of high-frequency language.

Activities do not train students to diagnose, prescribe or practice medicine; they develop language and intercultural communication skills for supervised educational contexts.

COURSE MATERIALS AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Primary instructional reference:

Chase, Robert O., and Clarisa B. Medina de Chase. *An Introduction to Medical Spanish: Communication and Culture*. 5th ed., Yale University Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-300-22602-7.

The instructor will select and adapt content from the reference book according to the 15-hour instructional scope and the students' entry profile. Publisher-provided audio, video, electronic exercises, and flashcards may be used when authorized access is available. Additional authentic or teacher-created materials may be used to contextualize healthcare communication in Panama.

COURSE CONTENT AND HOUR DISTRIBUTION

The course comprises 15 instructional contact hours distributed across five modules of three hours each, followed by a separate 1-hour final examination. The sequence draws on selected chapters from the primary instructional reference and may be adapted to placement results and the program's academic priorities. Applied communication tasks are embedded in the instructional module hours.

- **Module I: Healthcare setting and first contact (3 hours)**

    - ***Content and selected chapters*:** Basic organization in Panama; professional roles, greetings, spelling, numbers and patient registration. Selected chapters: 1 and 4.
    - ***Communication and language focus*:** Introduce oneself and one's role; identify people and places; request and provide essential personal information. Language focus: pronunciation, gender and number, ser, llamarse, hay, basic present-tense forms and question words.
    - ***Applied task*:** Front-desk role-play: welcome a patient and complete a basic registration form.
- **Module II - Symptoms, pain and the body (3 hours)**
    - ***Content and selected chapters*:** Main body parts, common symptoms, pain, location, intensity and duration. Selected chapters: 2 and 3.
    - ***Communication and language focus*:** Ask how a patient feels; identify and describe symptoms; ask where and how much it hurts. Language focus: estar, tener, doler, descriptive adjectives, question formation, and basic time expressions.
    - ***Applied task*:** Guided symptom interview using a visual pain scale and a short patient profile.
- **Module III - Medical history and basic examination (3 hours)**
    - ***Content and selected chapters*:** Vital signs, allergies, prior conditions, current complaints and basic examination instructions. Selected chapters: 2 and 10.
    - ***Communication and language focus*:** Obtain a concise medical history; understand and give simple examination instructions; sequence steps. Language focus: polite instructions, tener que, hay que, simple connectors and high-frequency examination verbs.
    - ***Applied task*:** Information-gap task: conduct a brief history and guide a patient through a basic examination.
- **Module IV - Medication, pharmacy and healthy habits (3 hours)**
    - ***Content and selected chapters*:** Common medications, dosage, frequency, food, hydration and routines. Selected chapters: 6 and 7.
    - ***Communication and language focus*:** Explain when and how to take medication; ask about allergies; give basic recommendations about

food, hydration and routines. Language focus: quantities, time, frequency, deber, poder and affirmative instructions.
    - ***Applied task*:** Pharmacy role-play and preparation of a simple medication and wellness plan.
- **Module V - Urgent situations and integrated patient communication (3 hours)**
    - ***Content and selected chapters*:** Accidents, immediate needs, family or support contacts, culturally appropriate communication and healthcare interaction in Panama. Selected chapters: 9, with content from 5 and 10.
    - ***Communication and language focus*:** Report what happened in simple terms; request urgent assistance; confirm understanding; communicate respectfully with patients and families. Language focus: high-frequency expressions for past events, simple sequencing and clarification strategies.
    - ***Applied task*:** Integrated practice simulation in a scripted educational scenario: reception, symptom interview, examination instructions and a routine care recommendation.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is continuous and performance-based. Students are evaluated on their ability to communicate successfully in guided and simulated healthcare situations, not on clinical knowledge. The course concludes with a separate 1-hour practical examination in which students integrate the language, interaction strategies and cultural awareness developed during the 15 instructional hours.

The final grade is calculated as follows:

Assessment Component	Weight	Evidence
Attendance and active participation	20%	Preparedness, engagement, use of Spanish and constructive participation in pair and group work during the 15 instructional hours.
Applied module tasks	50%	Five brief, embedded module tasks focused on simulated patient-facing communication and the practical use of

		course language.
Final integrated examination	30%	A 1-hour structured healthcare interaction in a scripted educational scenario combining reception, symptom inquiry, clarification strategies, examination instructions and a routine care recommendation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Achievement of the communicative purpose and completion of the assigned task.
- Comprehension of essential information and appropriate response to the interlocutor.
- Functional use of the vocabulary and grammatical resources studied in the course.
- Intelligible pronunciation, appropriate pace and effective clarification strategies.
- Respectful and culturally appropriate interaction with patients, families and healthcare personnel.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Because the course is intensive and interaction based, attendance and punctuality during the 15 instructional hours are essential. Students are expected to participate actively in classroom tasks and simulations and must complete the 1-hour final examination. Any make-up work or attendance consequence will follow the policies established by the academic program and the student's home institution.

ACADEMIC CREDIT AND SYLLABUS REVIEW

Students seeking academic recognition through a home institution or School of Record must complete all course requirements. The course code, instructional contact hours, learning outcomes, content, assessment procedures and final documentation may be reviewed by the corresponding academic institution. Credit equivalency, transferability and final approval, if applicable, are determined exclusively by that institution.

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

¡EPA! Español en Panamá is an accredited center of the Instituto Cervantes. The course is delivered in Panama City and coordinated by the Academic Department of ¡EPA! Español en Panamá.