



VENUSA

International Studies & Modern Languages
Mérida, Venezuela

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS / EXPECTATIONS

Participants should be prepared to experience variations of academic workloads and grading standards that may or may not be similar to those in their on-campus courses. Teaching styles, structure and methodology may differ, as the classroom and academic experience abroad may not be the same as in the U.S.

Participants are urged to seek academic advising on the applicability of overseas courses to specific degree requirements. While it is encouraged for participants to take full advantage of the overseas setting for travel and other experiences outside the classroom, such activities should not interfere with academic commitments. Attendance at all class sessions is expected, assigned work is to be turned in on time, and tests must be taken on the date they are administered by the professors.

IMPORTANT: Courses at VEN-USA are opened based on the requests made and information given by the student in the U.S. well in advance of arrival. Due to the small class sizes, courses are usually confirmed after the on-site academic orientation. Most non-language courses require a minimum of 5 students in order to open. Classes that are opened are not usually offered in block scheduling. There will only be one set schedule for the course that is open. If it is necessary for a student to change, switch or add a course selection, the new selection must be made from the courses that have already been previously opened and that are on the official program roster. New or additional courses will not be opened during the on-site ADD/DROP period. It is the students' responsibility to check course approval with their academic advisor in the U.S. Course changes must be pre-approved by VEN-USA's Associate Dean.

1. Our numerical grading system is based on a scale from 0 to 100, 60 being the minimum passing grade. The following is the equivalence between our numerical system and the American alphabetical code. A 'Pass' or 'Fail' grade will not be offered to students. Exceptions are made to those students who receive prior written approval from their home university/institution.

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
60-66	D
0-59	F
Incomplete	I
Withdrawal	W
Audit	V

- A Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
- D Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
- F Represents failure and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the professor and the student that the student would be awarded an 'I'.

2. INCOMPLETE 'I', a temporary grade that indicates coursework has not been completed. The professor, along with the approval of the associate dean, grants an 'I' when, due to extraordinary circumstances (usually family or personal emergency), the student was not able to complete required coursework or tests on time. An 'I' requires written approval and agreement between the professor, the academic dean, PROGRAM DIRECTORS, and student, specifying the manner in which the student is to complete the course requirements during the allotted time given. PROGRAM DIRECTORS MAKE THE FINAL DECISION AS TO WHETHER AN 'I' MAY OR MAY NOT BE GRANTED. REQUESTS MUST BE MADE IN WRITING AND PRESENTED TO THE PROFESSOR, ACADEMIC DEAN AND MOST IMPORTANTLY EMAILED TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTORS AT: VENUSA@EARTHLINK.NET. If the request for an 'I' is made due to a medical emergency, a physician's letter may be requested. Assignments/projects to make up an 'I' must be submitted within 30 days from the last day of the term/program in which the 'I' was given (holidays not included). If assignment(s) is/are not submitted by the time allotted, the assignment(s) will automatically receive a grade of F and factored into the final course grade. The instructor is expected to turn in the new symbol or grade within four weeks of the date work is submitted (holidays not included). Completed work is to be submitted via electronic mail to the instructor, the academic dean and the U.S. administrative office (venusa@earthlink.net). Unjustified INCOMPLETE grades will not be given. Any assignment(s) that is/are not turned in on time, and/or not turned in prior to the end of the program, will receive a letter grade of F or a numerical grade of '0'. For summer term students, please check with the Associate Dean as to the 'Incomplete status' policy. Summer students may not have the 'Incomplete' option.

3. **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: "Plagiarism VS. Your Own Work.** As with all writing assignments in class, the work you turn in must be your own. Any work that is not entirely your own is considered plagiarism. If you take a quote from another source, you must cite the reference in the bibliography. If you paraphrase the ideas of someone else, you must cite the person whose ideas you refer to. VENUSA offers tutors during the semester and summer terms. A tutor may indicate parts of the paper YOU need to work on, but the tutor may NOT rewrite a section of the paper for you, nor may she or he simply give you the answer. You may also ask your professor for assistance on writing assignments. You may also use the on-line verb conjugator with help on tenses and spelling of verbs. Writing your paper in English and using a translating program to translate the paper does NOT constitute handing in your own work. It is against VENUSA policy to ask staff members for help or corrections on homework, assignments, papers, or projects. If the work you turn in is not your own, or if there is any suspected copying, or relying on others to correct your errors, you may not be given credit for the assignment, or may be given a grade of '0' for the assignment. **DO NOT JEOPARDIZE YOUR GRADES, DO YOUR OWN WORK.** (University of Minnesota SPAN Syllabus format, page 1-2)
4. All semester students are required to attend the cultural adjustment sessions and/or level assessments, usually held the first week of the semester. Semester students are required to maintain a minimum of 13 credits and a maximum of 17 credits during a semester term. Summer students are required to maintain a minimum of 6 credits and a maximum of 10 credits during a 6-week summer term. If you decide to withdraw from a class, you must make sure that you maintain the minimum credit requirements.
5. **ADD/DROP:** The student will be given a period of time to reconsider and revise his/her selection of courses for the term. The Add/Drop deadline will be posted on the Study Abroad bulletin board in the main hallway, and will be announced during the on-site orientation. The ADD/DROP period is no later than 2 weeks after classes begin for the semester terms. For any class that is added, the student will be required to make up the class hours missed with the instructor, and are responsible for making up the missed assignment(s). After the Add/Drop period, students must maintain the minimum number of required credits (13 per semester, 6 per summer term). For summer term students, please check with the Associate Dean as to the Add/Drop policy. Summer students only have 1 week for the add/drop option (this may be that you only have 1 class session to decide).
6. **WITHDRAWALS 'W',** indicates a student has officially withdrawn from a course after prescribed deadlines. Students will be permitted to withdraw from a course and receive a W on their transcript before 40% of the class hours have been held. For the semester program, the deadline usually falls at the end of the sixth (6th) week. The student must officially request a withdrawal via a letter and presented to the Associate Dean before 40% of the class has been held. A 'W' will not be given to students that drop a class after the withdrawal period and a verbal withdrawal is not considered an official withdrawal. For summer term students, please check with the Associate Dean as to the Withdrawal policy and deadlines. Summer students may not have the WITHDRAWAL option. **ONE-TIME WITHDRAWAL:** The one-time withdrawal policy may apply to all University of Minnesota students, all other students should verify with their home university/institution if this is permitted. The one-time withdrawal will be reflected as a "W" on the transcript and may be requested at any time up to and including the last day of class for that course.
7. **AUDIT 'V',** indicates course registration as an auditor or visitor; does not allow for credit or grade points. Students will be permitted to audit a course and receive a V on their transcript. In order for a V to be granted, the student must regularly attend class.
8. Every student is entitled to receive an updated syllabus for each course he/she has registered for and discuss it with the professor. Furthermore, the student is responsible for reading it as thoroughly and carefully as might be necessary to fully understand it. By the end of the ADD/DROP period, the student is to direct to the professor or, in case of the professors absence, to the Study Abroad Director or Academic Dean, any question or observation about the contents of the syllabus, which the student might consider relevant to his/her satisfactory performance in the course.
9. Professors may provide a mid-term report for students.
10. Homework assignments, papers, projects, exams, and any other requirements indicated on the syllabus or explicitly agreed upon by the class must be available to the professor on the due date. If the student cannot meet this date, he/she must provide ample justification to the professor or, in case of the professor's absence, to the Program Director or Academic Dean before the specified date.
11. The student should expect to receive exams by the professors and each student is expected to complete the exams on the date they are administered. If the student fails to take the exam on the date it is administered and the absence is unjustified, the student will lose five (5) points off the original grade they receive per class day that the test is not completed. Additional homework or projects will not be given in lieu of a missed test.
12. The student has the right to receive the original copies of his/her exams, corrected and graded, and may discuss with the professor the grade obtained. If the student does not agree with an exam grade or final grade, he/she may ask for a revision by the Academic Council. The Academic Council may only be able to meet and discuss your case after your return to the U.S.

The student should not expect the Academic Council to meet on his/her schedule or accommodation. ALL ORIGINAL GRADED ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, PAPERS AND PROJECTS ARE TO REMAIN IN STUDENTS FILE. Students may request copies.

13. If a student emails homework or any project to a professor or staff member, the student must save those email messages electronically (we suggest that you open a file under your account for VENUSA homework and projects). This is to ensure that the student receives proper credit if there are questions with regards to an assignment or possible computer glitches. If possible, students should also request a confirmation of receipt when emailing projects or homework.

14. LANGUAGE PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY

Success in a language course is directly related to classroom performance. Our policy requires every student to attend class on a regular basis. The policy has been designed to accommodate reasonable student needs while maintaining the academic integrity of our courses and program.

STUDENTS SHOULD REMEMBER THAT ANY ABSENCES FROM CLASS MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CLASS PARTICIPATION / ORAL COMPONENT USED IN DETERMINING FINAL GRADES.

Semester students are permitted two (2) unjustified absences, and summer students are permitted one (1) unjustified absence. **Each** subsequent absence will lower the student's final grade by one grade level. PLEASE NOTE that unjustified absences will be reflected in the final grade at the end of the program.

Example: A semester student that has earned a grade of "A" and has:

- 3 unexcused absences, will earn a final grade of "A-"
- 4 unexcused absences, will earn a final grade of "B+"
- 5 unexcused absences, will earn a final grade of "B"
- Etc.

If a student has a number of absences (justified and unjustified combined) equivalent to 25% of the total number of hours, he/she will automatically fail the course. An absence due to leisure travel or personal reasons, are considered unjustified. An **excused** absence is one that is normally arranged in advance and consists of documented proof of illness from a medical doctor (no exceptions). This documentation is to be presented to the Spanish Department Coordinator. A telephone call to VENUSA staff or professor or an email message stating that you will not be present in class, although appreciated as a courtesy, does not constitute an excused absence. Attendance and participation form an integral part of understanding the material and concepts presented in class. If an absence is absolutely unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility (not the instructor's) to find out what was covered and to get any hand-outs, worksheets, and/or details regarding the assignment for the next class session. To reiterate, as a student, you are an integral part of the class structure, and if you are absent, your voice and input will undoubtedly be missed. Official make-up or recovery classes may be scheduled by the professor any day of the week (Mon-Fri), including Fridays. If a make-up or recovery class is missed, regardless of when it is scheduled, the student will be considered absent. Absences are to be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean or Spanish Department Coordinator. **Please note:** Students' absences may be processed and calculated into the final grade by VENUSA's U.S. office. If a student is verbally given their grade at the end of the term, the student should understand that the absences may not have yet been factored into the grade given verbally. Students are expected to be present in class from the first day up until the end of the semester.

STUDENTS SHOULD REMEMBER THAT IT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THESE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS. Professors ARE NOT REQUIRED to give constant reminders of attendance status to each student.

15. A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives after the start of the scheduled class time. After 15 minutes, the student is considered absent. If tardy, it is the professor's right to decide whether or not a student may enter the classroom. Three (3) tardies are considered 1 unexcused absence.
16. The student must wait for the professor for a period not greater than 15 minutes after the scheduled class. At that time, the student must inform the Director of Study Abroad of the situation. If the student chooses to leave before this 15-minute period he/she assumes full responsibility of his/her absence in class. This type of absence will be considered unjustified. If the student decides to leave the program before all academic activities have been completed, the institution will not grant the student credit for the courses he/she might have received.
17. Class breaks are typically given towards the middle of the class session (usually 5-10 minutes).
18. It is very important to keep in mind that internet services and connections in general are slower in Venezuela & power outages are fairly common. It is not uncommon for the internet to be down for hours at a time, and sometimes even days. Since it is

still a relatively uncommon practice to utilize the Internet as a sole source for research in Venezuela, part of your study abroad experience should include the use of library books, journals and periodicals throughout the semester. It is important for student not to rely fully on the internet as your only source of information and research medium for homework and final projects. Start your final projects well in advance by using the internet, books, periodicals, etc.

19. Final grade(s) will ONLY be issued once the professor has made his/her evaluation, and graded all assignments and tests. Students are not to expect professor(s) to orally announce grade(s) at anytime, including the end of the term/program. Orally indicated grades should not be presumed to be the final grade.
20. Should the student face any problematic or conflictive situation regarding his/her academic activities or a professor's performance, the student must inform the Academic Dean as soon as possible who will, in turn, start actions leading to the best feasible solution. The fulfillment of the student's rights and obligations is paramount to VEN-USA, and both the institution and the student must work together to ensure it.
21. A student's relationship with VEN-USA staff, professors, and all related personnel must remain strictly professional at all times. It is mandatory for the students to show respect and courtesy for the institution, its faculty, personnel, visitors and guests, as well as for their fellow students.
22. The student is asked to dress appropriately for class and shoes must be worn at all times. Feet should remain under the desk. Food or beverage consumption is not permitted in the classroom. Only students registered for the specific class are permitted to be in the classroom.
23. While the personal use of laptop computers in the classroom is uncommon in Venezuela, their use is based on the individual professor's policy. If the computer is permitted in class it must be used for that class's academic needs (texting, emailing and instant messaging is not permitted). Cell phone usage is not permitted in class. Cell phones must be turned off while in class and during exams. Student may be asked to leave the classroom if he/she does not adhere to this policy.
24. In accordance with the published schedule and upon presentation of the school ID, the student has the right to make use of the library as well as the material therein for the purpose of studying, reading, or writing. In order to use the library equipment, the student must register in advance for a 2-hour session. The student's behavior in the library must be formal, quiet, and thoughtful towards others who also pursue academic endeavors. The student must return borrowed bibliographical or audiovisual material to the library on the given due date. Failure to do so will result in the temporary or permanent suspension of the student's access to the library services or even from the program. The student may ask for one single extension on the use of such material, which under no circumstances may exceed half the time for which it was originally checked out.
25. Students are to complete the on-line evaluations as mandated by your home university. Specific times will be assigned or available to complete these evaluations. Students are required to complete a VENUSA academic evaluation for each class they are enrolled in. This evaluation is usually given to student mid-term and again at the end of the term. Evaluations may be returned electronically, put into the evaluation box in the library or at the Spanish Department.
26. Questions or suggestions regarding these regulations or their implementation must be addressed with the Academic Dean during his/her published office hours. Or you may contact the program directors at: venusa@earthlink.net.

HINTS FOR STUDYING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. DON'T CRAM. A foreign language must be assimilated little by little. Work in 30-45 minute study sessions, frequently (twice a day or more if possible).
2. Learning new vocabulary. Group words into categories like nouns (must be learned with their gender marker, i.e. *la casa*), verbs (check if their conjugation is regular or irregular), adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns. Make special note of any idiomatic expressions. Make flash cards of words and structures that you have difficulty remembering. Carry them in your pocket and go over them whenever you have a few minutes.
3. Review the new grammatical structures introduced.
4. When practicing new vocabulary, write and say the word out loud. This will help you remember them.
5. Speak Spanish in and outside of the classroom. Avoid speaking English with your friends.
6. Study with someone else whenever possible.
7. Learning a language is a long process. Perseverance and hard work everyday are the keys to improvement.

Return this page only to VENUSA (entire document not required).

Email to (with scanned signature): venusa@earthlink.net

OR

Mail to (keep copy for your records): 6586 Hypoluxo Rd. #324 Lake Worth FL 33467

I have read and fully understand the academic regulations / expectations for the VENUSA study abroad program.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Study Abroad Term(s): _____

Signature: _____