

COIL Reflection Spring 2022

WLC 190H Honors Seminar on World Cultures: The Spanish Speaking World

Universidad de Oviedo, Spain

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During the Unit titled *Postcolonial Identities/LatinX* students from Salem and Oviedo worked together as a group and in small groups with the same participants for five weeks. During their collaboration students read different texts pertaining to the Latinx community, discussed cultural conflicts, class, race relations and Latinx identity.

The main goal of this collaboration was to further students' international perspective and enhance their experience and understanding of the topics discussed. Other objectives of the project included:

- Use your understanding of life and studying in Asturias, Spain to reflect on your understanding of Spanish speaking cultures in the US, Spain and elsewhere.
- Contemplate the possibility of studying abroad and learning another language.
- Produce a creative group project that would reflect your deeper knowledge of identity, race relations in the US and Spain, and being Latinx in the US.

What worked well:

- Frequent communication with the partner and involvement of both professors in the choice of materials and format
- Making the COIL experience and project a relevant part of the course content and assessment
- Having students reflect prior to the COIL Unit and after its completion on their expectations and experience
- The format and mode of assessment worked well to reflect on the content, foster engagement and acquaintance of the partners.

Format

- Pre-encounter: research the other region's culture and reflect on COIL expectations
- Students read the texts independently, as well as some pages in small groups together
- Four whole-group Zoom sessions in four consecutive weeks. Small groups interaction on their own time.
- Technology: Zoom, Whatsapp, Google docs and Google slides.

Activity/Assessment:

- Small group creative project: their takeaway on being Latinx in the US, and identity and race relations in the Us and Spain.
- Creative project formats: posters, poem recitals, digital collage.

Positive Impact on students:

- The level of enthusiasm and engagement for the course went up a notch during and after the COIL Unit.
- The level of discourse went up after the COIL project
- Now students have more appreciation for the value of collaboration and communication.
- They learned a lot about themselves and others
- They did close reading and discussion of the texts to feel prepared with their partners
- Participants expressed the desire to travel more and get to know the culture of Oviedo and others

Improvement:

Next time I implement this COIL project, Salem students will start the research on Oviedo and Spain from the start of the semester so that they will be more prepared to absorb the concrete cultural expressions and behaviors of Oviedo students.

Our Main COIL text is written by a Dominican American. We will devote some of the Unit to explore the Dominican community in Spain.

All Salem students completed the reflections during and after the project. I will have to discuss with the Oviedo partner how to incorporate the reflections into their syllabus so that the majority of Oviedo students complete their reflection.

Update visuals, graphics. Pay more attention to the recording/writing of group discussions to reflect on the learning outcomes in more detail.

Each small group evaluated another group's work. I will make each student write a brief commentary/reflection on the rest of the groups' projects.