

FAU in Spain 2010

"Ghosts of Spain" Course Description:

Since the end of the Franco dictatorship, Spain has been selling an image of a very modern country, a European symbol of easy life, intensive party, affordable vacation, daring popular arts, perfect climate and liberal lifestyles. This new Spain has built this brand-new culture over the ruins of an obscure past. Behind the flashing lights of the fiestas one can still see the ghost of centuries of repression, starting with the Inquisition and ending with the totalitarian regime of Francisco Franco. Can a country erase such deep historical wounds and get rid of its demons? Where do we see the remains of this dark past? How are contemporary cultural manifestations (corridos, ferias, orgullo gay, etc.) affected by the weight of history? In this course given in English, students will be introduced to the history of Spain and learn how to recognize its current ghosts. Courses will take place in three different locations across the Spanish peninsula: Salamanca, Madrid and Alicante. In the three cities (plus other places that students will visit while traveling from one location to the next), the class will visit the darkest places of Spanish history, such as the Inquisitorial jail, the Valley of the Fallen, the Escorial, or the Prison of Santa Barbara. They will also have the opportunity to be in these cities at significant times (Fiestas de San Isidro in Madrid, Fiestas de San Nicolas in Alicante). The purpose of this course is to build discussion around the contrasts and contradictions that students will observe during their cultural experience of Spain.