

Can I combine nursing with a Spanish major or minor?

The number of persons in the United States who speak Spanish as a first language has doubled in the past 20 years, reaching to nearly 12% of the current population. Nurses will find that an ability to communicate in Spanish will greatly increase their effectiveness and rapport with Spanish-speaking patients.

Communicating effectively in Spanish involves more than a single elementary course in medical terminology; it requires significant study and practice. An intermediate-high level of oral proficiency or higher (according to the scale of ACTFL, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) is usually obtained by Spanish minors at Calvin, with competency in using a large vocabulary and forming varied types of statements and questions--as well as understanding the responses. A Spanish major at Calvin usually results in a professional competency at the advanced level, including the ability to resolve unexpected complications and to speak and write accurately in all major time frames.

The study abroad requirement for Spanish minors and majors at Calvin helps to ensure adequate experience with both the Spanish language and Hispanic culture. Semester language immersion programs are offered in Peru, Honduras, and Spain, and a January interim program in Mexico is also available, as well as various other interim options depending on the year. Although minors are required to do only an interim abroad, many minors choose to study a full semester abroad in order to finish up their minor requirements and to increase their fluency. Spanish majors are required to do a full semester abroad. The department offers a "Spanish for Healthcare Professionals" course during interim of alternate years. This course counts as an elective in the Spanish minor or major.

Important considerations for NURSING students

- Begin planning how you will complete the requirements BEFORE you start your freshman year.
- SPAN 308 and 309 must be taken by the end of your sophomore year to fit them in your schedule.
- Spring semester of the sophomore year is the BEST time to schedule a Spanish semester abroad, after completing the nursing prerequisites and before officially beginning the nursing program. However, if you are planning to graduate in 5 years, you could also consider a fall Spanish semester abroad.
- Be sure to meet with a Spanish advisor, even if you want only a minor, to map out your plan as early as possible. If you don't have a Spanish advisor, call Nora at x-66354 (526-6354) to find an advisor or email mpyper@calvin.edu.
- Check out the Spanish Department website for sample 4-year plans combining a Spanish major or minor with the nursing program: <http://www.calvin.edu/academics/departments-programs/spanish/academics/how-to-double-major/>. These plans assume you are starting at SPAN 301; however, if you are starting at 203 or 201, you would need to take 1 or 2 other courses during the summer. We can help you figure out your plan.