



Language and Leadership for Intercultural Ministry

English and Culture Studies Hispanic Studies Program

Kelly Kornacki

Fr. Jim Walters, SCJ

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

Frequently Asked Questions

- What is the name of the overall program that encompasses English and Culture Studies (ECS) and Hispanic Studies? Language and Leadership for Intercultural Ministry
- What happened to ESL? English as a Second Language or ESL didn't accurately describe SHSST's program for English learning. Quite often, English for those studying at SHSST is the third, fourth, or fifth language. Furthermore, learning about the U.S. Catholic Church and American culture is an equally important part of the program. This can't be done with an average language-only course.
- Can I still call it ESL? No! We will no longer use ESL, with the exception of needing to clarify to audiences who are more familiar with that language. Please use ECS from now on.
- What about Accent Modification? Accent Mod is still a part of the ECS program, housed under the Language and Leadership for Intercultural Ministry department.
- Has Hispanic Studies changed? Yes! Our Hispanic Studies program has broadened its design to now focus on the development of pastoral competencies for ministry to Hispanic communities in the United States.

Language and Leadership for Intercultural Ministry

Preparing seminarians, priests, and the laity for ministry to the global Church often necessitates new language skills. Sacred Heart has a rigorous Hispanic Studies Program for those planning to serve the growing Hispanic populations, as well as an internationally recognized English and Culture Studies Program (formerly English as a Second Language) for international students preparing for ministry in English-speaking environments for further studies that require facility in English.

English and Culture Studies (ECS)

As more and more priests and religious in the United States are foreign-born, and as English functions as a common language for international communication, there is a growing need for English instruction. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology is meeting this growing need through its unique English and Culture Studies Program (formerly English as a Second Language or ESL) Program.

Sacred Heart's program not only helps students become proficient in English, it also familiarizes them with the U.S. Catholic Church, as well as American customs and culture. This program attracts people from many different backgrounds and includes seminarians, priests, brothers, sisters, and lay ministers. They seek to achieve English proficiency for advanced studies at universities, priestly formation in the seminary, pastoral work, professional advancement, or personal improvement.

SHSST is the only Catholic Seminary that is a member of the American Association of Intensive English Programs, commonly known as EnglishUSA.

Sacred Heart also offers an Accent Modification Program, as well as a Bridge Program for those entering priestly formation or pursuing further education in the U.S.

No prior knowledge of English is necessary for enrollment. Applicants must:

- Complete the application form. There may be additional requirements if seeking housing and/or sponsorship.
- Secure the necessary forms for non-residency status in the United States. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology can issue I-20s upon request.
- Take a preliminary assessment for placement into appropriate levels (beginning, intermediate, advanced) of reading, writing, grammar, and communication classes. Placements are not always at the same level for each area (e.g., a student may be intermediate for reading, but a beginner for writing).

Program Sessions

The ECS program offers several time frame options for enrollment. These sessions can be combined for longer stays. In certain cases, enrollment dates can be adjusted to allow for individualized study programs that fit the needs of the student and/or the sponsoring group.

Option 1: *Summer Sessions*

Every summer there are two, seven-week ECS sessions. There are two programs available during the first summer session.

- A. For students learning the English language, courses in reading, writing, grammar, and oral communication on three levels (beginning, intermediate, advanced) are offered. Classes are held four days per week (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays), with inculturation field trips on Wednesdays. This is typically the program's busiest time of year, with the largest enrollment and the widest variety of countries represented. Most students in these sessions attend for one or both summer sessions, and then return to their previous commitments. However, it is possible to extend the stay and continue studies during the fall semester.
- B. For students who are at an advanced level of English or who have completed ECS instruction, a three-course program (Accent Modification, USA Cultural Competence, and

Communication in a USA Ministerial Context) is offered. Classes are held four days per week (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays), with inculturation field trips on Wednesdays.

Option 2: *Fall and Spring Sessions*

These sessions coincide with the seminary's semester schedule and provide students the needed time to fully master the English language. During these sessions, classes are four days per week. Wednesdays are dedicated to the all-school Mass, other spiritual activities, and formational activities. Inculturation field trips typically occur once a month.

Option 3: *May session*

This session is three weeks long. Students may continue on from the spring session or use it as a stand-alone session. During this period the classes meet five days per week.

Program Components

Accent Modification

Accent Modification (often called accent reduction) is available to high intermediate and advanced ECS students, seminarians, and priests. This 15-week course in pronunciation results in at least a 50% accent improvement, with many achieving 80-90% elimination of accent issues. Taught by an instructor certified in the Compton P-ESL method, this highly individualized training focuses on the student's most frequently mispronounced phonemes. The dramatic improvement by the end of the course enables participants to become effective communicators in ministerial, social, and educational settings. There is also an intensive seven-week summer option.

Bridge Program

For students in the ECS program with the ultimate goal of enrolling into university or seminary studies, special curriculum components are built into their final semester in the ECS program to ensure a successful transition to further academic studies.

- Transitional students are simultaneously enrolled in ECS and M.Div. or M.A. courses.
- Transitional students are placed in an "instructional support" course in which ECS instructors assist students with their M.Div./M.A. class assignments by editing papers, previewing presentations, discussing course material, etc.
- ECS instructors maintain regular meetings with the professors of the M.Div./M.A. courses to communicate about student progress and coordinate instructional efforts.
- Transitional students take the Introduction to Graduate Religious Studies course to learn English theological terms and academic skills (research processes, reading strategies, note-taking techniques, source citation, etc.).

Spiritual Life and Formational Opportunities

ECS students participate in Sacred Heart's spiritual life and formational opportunities.

- Daily Mass and Adoration, with ECSP students fulfilling many roles during Mass, depending on the level of English proficiency and clerical status.

- Confessions in English and Spanish.
- Monthly meetings with the residential coordinator to discuss progress and concerns.
- Days of Recollection during the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Yearly retreat for long-term students.

Seminarians enrolled in the ECS program are incorporated into the human and spiritual formation program of the seminary. In addition to participating fully in the sacramental and prayer life of the seminary, ECS seminarians meet with bilingual formation advisors and spiritual directors, as well as participate in daily Mass, liturgy of the hours, days of reflection, and retreats.

Cultural Orientation

In addition to becoming familiar with the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, ECS students develop an awareness of American social customs. Learning the culture as well as the language helps students understand American society and prepares them to move into parish settings so that they are able to minister effectively. Some of the opportunities are:

- Field trips (weekly during the summer sessions and regularly during the academic year) that enable students to experience typical aspects of American life (e.g., State Fair, church festivals, historic sites, manufacturing facilities).
- Opportunities to volunteer with non-profit organizations (e.g., Hunger Task Force, food pantries).
- Ministerial celebration of the sacraments in English (if the ECS student is an ordained priest) with the Priests of the Sacred Heart community.
- Integration into the daily seminary activities alongside native English-speakers, such as daily Mass, prayer, dining room conversation, social interactions, sports, and extra-curricular activities).

Hispanic Studies

In many of our sponsoring dioceses, half or more of the Catholics are Hispanic. Throughout the United States the number of Latino Catholics continues to grow, resulting in changing needs of the Church. Therefore, Sacred Heart offers a program in Hispanic studies which has been designed to prepare seminarians and other students for effective ministry in the diverse Hispanic cultures present in the U.S. Church today.

The Hispanic Studies Program for seminarians reaches across the pillars of spiritual formation, human formation, intellectual formation, and pastoral formation.

Seminarians in the Hispanic Studies Program will receive a course plan based on the expectations of the sponsor. Course plans may be modified as needed during the student's time at Sacred Heart.

Seminarians may also initiate enrollment into the program with the sponsor's consent.

The Hispanic Studies Program is also open to non-seminarians.

Options

Each seminarian enrolling in the Hispanic Studies Program will be enrolled in one of three options depending upon the wishes of his sponsor, previous applicable course work, and the length of time the student will be at Sacred Heart. The vice president for intellectual formation and the director of the Hispanic Studies Program must approve the selected option.

Option 1: Introduction to Hispanic Ministry

This option is designed to help seminarians and other students become aware of the Hispanic reality in the U.S. Catholic Church. It will prepare both non-Hispanics and native Spanish speakers for ministry among U.S. Hispanics in environments where facility in the Spanish language is not required. Courses in this option include: “The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment” (PS 571), “Hispanic Devotional Practices” (PS 572).

Option 2: Fundamentals for Hispanic Ministry

This option is a transitional program focused on language acquisition. It builds on the foundational courses of Option 1, to give students a basis for further preparation to serve in Spanish-speaking ministry. Coursework will be appropriate to the seminarian’s existing language skills to instill basic Spanish conversational skills in pastoral contexts. A language and pastoral-cultural immersion experience in a Spanish-speaking country is strongly encouraged. Seminarians may also do pastoral field placements in Hispanic communities in the United States. Courses in this option include field education in a Hispanic context; Pastoral Spanish; and Hispanic Studies electives. Seminarians also participate regularly in Laudes and Vísperas (Liturgy of Hours in Spanish), Almuerzo (lunch in Spanish), and language partner programs.

Option 3: Hispanic Ministry Preparation

This option aims to prepare seminarians to be fully engaged in Hispanic ministry. It is designed for those who have completed Option 2. It includes two intermediate-level Spanish language courses and the course, “Presiding and Preaching in the Hispanic Community” (LS 571), which focuses on preaching; presiding at Eucharist and the other sacraments in Spanish; as well as celebrations of Quince Años, Presentaciones, Velorios, etc. Seminarians serve as leaders at Lauds and Vespers and as lectors and deacons at Mass in Spanish, and are encouraged to serve in pastoral field placements in Hispanic communities. This option is designed to benefit both Latino and non-Latino seminarians.

Program Components

Pastoral Spanish Language Component

Enrollment in options two and three presumes that the seminarian will use Spanish in future ministry as a presider, homilist, and/or pastoral agent. Sacred Heart offers four semesters of pastoral Spanish language designed to instill functional proficiency for ministry. Seminarians enroll in the appropriate level depending on prior Spanish language experience. In addition, seminarians are encouraged to enroll in an intensive summer language program. The specific program is chosen in consultation with the sponsor.

Hispanic Summer Program

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology participates in the Hispanic Summer Program, an ecumenical program which takes place for two weeks every summer at a different denominational seminary site in the United States. Hispanic students, as well as those who are bilingual and are interested in Hispanic ministries, may attend this academic program and will be credited by SHSST for one elective course. Courses in the Hispanic Summer Program cover a wide range of theological curricula and are always taught with the Latino church in mind.

Pastoral Formation Component (Field Education)

The seminary requires eight credits of field education experience plus one basic unit of clinical pastoral education (six credits). Arrangements can be made to have all or part of the experience in Hispanic settings both in the Milwaukee area or the home dioceses.

For seminarians unable to participate in an international language/pastoral-cultural immersion, there is an option for a domestic immersion experience. The student is assigned as summer pastoral placement to a Spanish-speaking ministry within his diocese or province, to include 20 hours of ministry per week in Spanish with a local language tutor, under the supervision of an approved pastoral supervisor. This option could also receive credit as a pastoral placement.