UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

UNIVERSIDADES NORTEAMERICANAS REUNIDAS

SUBJECT
SUBJECT TITLE: Contemporary Spanish Film
QUARTER AND ACADEMIC YEAR: 2nd semester / 2024-2025
SCHEDULE: Wednesday/Thursday 11:30-13:00
PREREQUISITES:
COMPETENCES- OBJECTIVES (BRIEF DESCRIPTION): This course aims to help students develop a cross-cultural approach to Spanish society and history through an overview of Spanish cinema from the early 1960s to the present. Films offer an exceptional aesthetic experience but also a unique opportunity to reflect on relevant social themes covering the last six decades of the country. These include, among others, the notions of nationality, history and memory, gender, class struggle, political change, unemployment, cultural stereotypes and multiculturalism, youth and generational conflict or tensions between urban and rural environments. The course provides a theoretical framework to facilitate a deep understanding of the cultural relevance of cinema in Spain's society, and to comprehend how the political, social and economic evolution of the country is portrayed through films.

TEACHER
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TUTORING HOURS: Wednesday/Thursday 13:00-14:30

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, LECTURES AND TASKS ASSIGNED
COURSE SUMMARY (organized in fourteen weeks)[1]: **Week 1. Introduction** Introduction to the course: goals, methodology and forms of evaluation. On cinema,

[1] 14 weeks is the usual length of academic each term. Each year, this general structure of the course will be adapted according to the academic calendar of UCM. Each week's subjects will be distributed in two 90 minutes sessions.

history and nation. An introduction to Spanish cinema before 1973: commercial cinema and the New Spanish Cinema of the 1960s.

Week 2. Modernity and modernism in Spanish cinema around 1960

Cinema, history, memory. A new kind of cinema for a country in transformation. New Spanish cinema and popular productions. A Spanish auteur, Luis G. Berlanga.

Reference film: El Verdugo, L. G. Berlanga, 1963.

Week 3. Cinema of Paradoxes

An introduction to Spanish cinema before 1973: cinema in a dictatorship; commercial cinema and the New Spanish Cinema of the 1960s. The national production of the time was marked by a balancing act between censorship, political challenges, and artistic expression, laying the groundwork for more freedom and innovation in the following decades.

Reference film: Viridiana, L. Buñuel, 1960.

Week 4. Looking back and moving forward: **a cinema in Transition during the 1970s**

Spain's art cinema at a time of intense change, as the country was emerging from the dictatorship of Francisco Franco and transitioning into democracy. The rise of Nuevo Cine Español movement, which sought to challenge the previous, more conventional and censored filmmaking styles. Examining the present and refocusing the past. Main auteurs, subjects and stylistic devices. Metaphorical cinema for a new kind of audiences.

Reference film: El espíritu de la colmena [The Spirit of the Beehive], V. Erice, 1973.

Week 5. Pop sensibilities and underground

Readdressing the present from the underground. The new liberties of the *Transición*, *La movida madrileña* and the new pop-sensibility in the early films of P. Almodóvar and Iván Zulueta around 1980. 'The best way of dealing with the history of the dictatorship is ignoring it'. From cult classics to museum's pieces.

Reference film: Arrebato, I. Zulueta, 1980.

Week 6. Prestige and heritage during the 1980s

What is cinema of quality? And how can the state promote it in years of shrinking audiences? Changing paradigms in the Spanish cinema of the 1980s. Midcult and Middlebrow in the literary adaptations and historical cinema.

Reference film: Los santos inocentes [The Holy Innocents], M. Camus, 1984.

Week 7. Auteur, history and memory

This section focuses on the most famous Spanish living filmmaker: Pedro Almodóvar. It analyzes his rise in the late 1970s and 1980s, it focuses on the construction of his public persona and illustrates how his late work (from late 1990s onwards) deals

increasingly with questions on subjectivity, memory and changing (social, cultural, gender) identities.

Reference film: La mala educación / Bad education, P. Almodóvar, 2004.

Week 8. New family models

How can motherhood help channel social tensions? Transformation of the Spanish society, changing roles and changing spaces of women. A matriarchal society?

Recomended film: Carta de mi madre para mi hijo (short film) C. Simón, 2022

[Mid-course exam]

Week 9. History and memory

Around the turn of the century, national cinema's growing interest in the past reflected a broader societal concern with questions of history and memory. The course will discuss the different cinematographic alternatives that channel this interest, while it will focus its attention on the new stylistic forms chosen to address these subjects, such as fantasy, horror and other kinds of genre films.

Reference film: El espinazo del diablo, Guillermo del Toro, 2001.

Week 11. Thrilling present

The transformation already referred to in the previous week will be further illustrated in these two sessions: Spanish cinema regained at the beginning of the 2000s popularity with a set of films which were clearly more market oriented. They usually adapted genres, styles and subjects of international circulation, they successfully connected with younger audiences while at the same time critical debates arose that questioned their 'Spanishness'. They reflected a country in continuous transformation, but also a medium entering its post cinematographic phase.

Reference film: REC (J. Balagueró, P. Plaza, 2007)

Week 12. Something is changing: Spain's new wave of female filmmakers

Over the last few years, films directed by young women such as Las niñas, by Pilar Palomero; Cinco lobitos by Alauda Ruiz de Azua; El agua, by Elena Lopez Riera; 20000 especies de Abejas by Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren and Libertad, by Clara Roquet, have achieved general critical and public recognition. While different in their themes and style, they all share some similarities that the course will address while questioning the idea of a female perspective on subjects that are central in the Spanish contemporary public debate (family relations, social inequality, identity and gender, etc.).

Reference film: Teresa, P. Ortiz, 2023

Week 13. Rethinking the country beyond its urban centres. *Empty Spain*

Based on some questions pointedly summed up in the essay *La España vacía* (Sergio del Molino, 2016), some recent Spanish films have turned their attention to the country's problematic relation to its rural areas. In a way, focusing on this aspect closes the circle of the course, as it connects with questions originally posed at the beginning of the course; at the same time, it opens the eyes to a debate that today

still feels very alive in the public arena.

Reference film: Suro, M. Gurrea, 2022

Week 14. The diversity of the present.

Critical evaluation of the course and conclusion.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

In each session the teacher outlines the **general characteristics** of each historical period and points out the most representative authors, genres, cycles and themes.

Each week's **reference film** will be commented in depth, focusing on its most paradigmatic aspects, with the help of texts provided by the teacher. At most class meetings, students will participate in informed discussion activities related to the day's topic and assigned reading, which are also related to class assignments.

Students are also expected to prepare a **presentation** on a specific topic related to the film. These presentations may be individual or in small groups (2-3 people) and are related to the subjects discussed each week. The presentation will be followed by a class discussion. The teacher will provide topics, literature and references in advance.

The structure of the class is always open to the suggestions of the students.

Required Readings: Assigned readings for each class will be provided during the first week. This syllabus also offers a list of general references for the whole course.

Reference films for every week: Students are asked to watch a film in preparation for each week's classes. The titles have been selected according to their relevance for the contents of the course but also their accessibility for English-speaking students. As this may change, some of the titles may also change; the final selection may be communicated to all students by the beginning of the course.

SUBJECT OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course students should be able to comparatively analyse a range of films representative of different contexts and national traditions and critically access their relevance for both the recent history of the country and in the field of film studies. Students should also be able to appreciate, analyse, and discuss the various ways that the Spanish cinema can serve as a vehicle for examining both international and national concerns.

The learning outcomes of this course are:

a) Apply theoretical frameworks to the analysis of cinema; comprehend the basic skills of film analysis.
b) Write fluently and persuasively.
c) Independently research relevant materials to broaden and deepen the knowledge of the topic.

Other, more specific, learning outcomes include:

a) Analyse key films and scholarly readings both in discussion and in written form.
b) Demonstrate and apply knowledge of the historical, industrial and cultural contexts of Spanish film production.
c) Critically examine the role of 'nation' and national identity in cinema

production.

d) Know the main references (titles, authors, stylistic movements, etc.) in the recent history of Spanish cinema, society and culture.
e) Reflect on the most relevant debates in Spain's contemporary culture and society.

EVALUATION AND QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

PARTIAL EXAM: 20 %

FINAL EXAM: 30 %

WRITTEN WORK AND PRESENTATIONS: 30 %

CLASS PARTICIPATION: 20 %

ATTENDANCE:
It is mandatory.
From the second absence without justification, a point will be lowered in the Spanish grading system (for example, an 8 will drop to a 7).
Likewise, lateness will also be penalized, more than 15 minutes late will be equivalent to an absence. Excused absences are considered those documented by the appropriate physician or program director.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Plagiarism, the use of materials not permitted in exams and tests, copying answers from another classmate, falsification or misappropriation of information for assignments, submission of the same assignment or sections of it in more than one course, helping a student who is cheating, etc. will be penalized.
The penalty will be left to the discretion of the subject professor and the student's Program Director, in accordance with their campus policies and procedures.

GUIDE AND INDICATIONS FOR WRITTEN WORK

Students are expected to complete a short essay (2.000 words) on one of the course's topics (usually on the same one as the one of the presentations). Specific indications and references will be provided in the classes, that will also help to define correctly the subject of this text.

MANDATORY BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OTHER RESOURCES

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (in English)

Bentley, Bernard, A Companion to Spanish Cinema, Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2008

Camporesi, Valeria, Fernández Meneses, Jara, Making sense of genre: the 'quality thriller' as a vehicle to revise a controversial past in recent Spanish cinema. Studies in European Cinema, Vol. 15, Numbers 2-3, 198-214, 2018

Canet, Fernando (ed), Special Issue Contemporary Spanish Cinema. Hispanic Research Journal, Volume 15, Issue 1, 2014

Delgado, Maria and Robin Fiddian (eds), Spanish Cinema 1973 - 2010: Auteurism, Politics, Landscape and Memory, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013

Dennison, Stephanie (ed), Contemporary Hispanic Cinema: Interrogating the Transnational in Spanish and Latin American Film, Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013

D'Lugo, Marvin and Kathleen M. Vernon (ed.), A companion to Pedro Almodóvar. Chichester: Wiley, 2013

de Egea Juan F., *Dark Laughter: Spanish film, Comedy and the* Nation, Madison: Wisconsin UP, 2013

Ehrlich, Linda C. (ed), An Open Window: The Cinema of Víctor Erice. New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 2000

Evans, Peter W. (ed), Spanish Cinema. The Auteurist Tradition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

Faulkner, Sally, A Cinema of Contradiction: Spanish Film in the 1960s, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006

Faulkner, Sally, A History of Spanish Film: Cinema and Society 1910-2010, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013

Fouz-Hernández, Santiago & Martínez-Expósito, Alfredo, Live Flesh: The Male Body in Contemporary Spanish Cinema. New York: I. B. Tauri, 2007

González, Luis, *Modes of the Tragic in Spanish Cinema*, Palgrave McMillan, 2023

Hopewell, John, Out of the Past. Spanish Cinema after Franco, London: BFI Publishing, 1987

Jordan, Barry, and Mark Allinson, Spanish Cinema: A Student's Guide, London: Hodder Arnold, 2005

Kinder, Marsha, Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993

Labanyi, Jo and Tatjana Pavlovic (eds), A Companion to Spanish Cinema, Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013

Lázaro Reboll, Antonio, Spanish Horror Film, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012

Marsh, Steven & Nair, Parvati (eds), Gender and Spanish Cinema. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004

Oliete-Aldea, E., Oria, B., Tarancón, J.A., Global genres, Local films: The Transnational Dimension of Spanish Cinema. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017

Pavlovic, Tatjana and others, 100 Years of Spanish Cinema, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009

Perriam, Chris, Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema: From Banderas to Bardem. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

Perriam, Chris, Spanish Queer Cinema, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013

Thomas, Sarah, Inhabiting the In-Between: Childhood and Cinema in Spain's Long Transition, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019

Triana-Toribio, Núria, Spanish National Cinema, London: Routledge, 2003

Wright, Sarah, The Child in Spanish Cinema, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013

Yarza, Alejandro, The Making and Unmaking of Spanish Cinema. From Raza to Pan's Labyrinth, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018