THE HISTORY OF SPANISH CINEMA

FIST 301 / SPAN 301 / FILM 301 / COL 334
Tu Th 2:40 - 4:00
414 Fisk

PROF. B.A. GONZÁLEZ
Dept. of Romance Languages & Literatures
300 High St.

OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday 1:15 - 2:00
Thursday 9:00 - 10:00

ENROLLMENT FORM
Please complete this online student information form if you plan to enroll in this course.

agonzalez.web.wesleyan.edu/fist301/fist301.html
FIST301 / SPAN301 / FILM301 / COL334: THE HISTORY OF SPANISH CINEMA

This course explores the development of Spanish cinema from the early 20th century to the present. We will evaluate how social, political, and economic circumstances condition Spanish cinematography at key junctures of Spanish cultural history in terms of the production and distribution of films, cinematographic style, and thematics. The course will highlight as well key facets of the Spanish star system as well as the auteurism of those directors who have achieved international acclaim by reworking a national film idiom within international frames of reference.

OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to help students develop critical skills of film analysis and a deeper appreciation for the notion of a national cinema. We will emphasize the analysis of film in its cultural context throughout the semester, in the assigned readings, in our lectures and discussions and through the written and oral exercises. Students will be assessed according to their ability to interpret film as an art form in relation to Spanish culture. Assessment will be based as well on their development of a keen aesthetic judgment and their ability to convey that judgment in clear, concise and cogent prose, in English or in Spanish.

No prior knowledge of Spain, Spanish or film is required. Some students may initially be more familiar than others with film as an art form, others may have more familiarity with the history and social context of modern Spain. Regardless of their background, all students will have greater understanding of each of these areas by the end of the semester.
ASSESSMENT

The final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

- **Two (2) personal movie reviews (20%)**

  The analysis of press reviews of Spanish cinema will allow us to focus on the genre of the film review. This is designed to help students develop their own critical language and aesthetic vision. Students will be expected to demonstrate what they learn through these exercises in two short in-class writing assignments.

- **Three (3) short comparative analyses (30%)**

  In these 3-4 page papers students are expected to develop a comparative and culturally contextualized analysis of 2-3 films focusing on a single formal element of film analysis (for instance, certain audio or visual elements of film editing, acting, or mis-en-scène). Students will submit the first two analyses via Moodle and they will write the third in class, as scheduled on the syllabus.

- **A final term paper analysis (ca. 8-10 pages; 25%)**

  This essay will be comparative and comprehensive in nature. It will allow the students to reflect on the relationship between reality and representation in Spanish cinema from the origens to the present.

- **Discussion questions (15%)**

  Students will post 2-3 discussion questions on Moodle on a weekly basis.

- **Participation (10%)**

  Assessment of a student's participation is based on preparation, attendance, and punctuality. Preparation presupposes that students will view all movies, read the assigned material and formulate personal views with regard to both prior to class.
Punctuality applies to arrival to class and to the submission of written assignments. Participation is also assessed in relation to the student’s willingness to contribute to the collective learning experience through interventions in informal discussions and in the more structured oral exercises.

- For a detailed explanation of Wesleyan's grading system, please consult Teaching Matters (page 32).

FILMS

- Luis Buñuel:
  - *Chien andalou* (1928; 16 min)
  - *Tierra sin pan* (1933; Land Without Bread; 30 min)
  - *Los olvidados* (1950; The Young and the Damned; 77 min)
  - *Viridiana* (1961; 90 min)
  - *El ángel exterminador* (1962; Exterminating Angel; 95 min)
- Luis García Berlanga, ¡Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall! (1953; Welcome Mr. Marshall!; 78 min)
- Juan Antonio Bardem, *Muerte de un ciclista* (1955; Death of a Cyclist; 88 min)
- Carlos Saura, *Cría cuervos* (1975; Cría; 110 min)
- Víctor Erice, *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973; The Spirit of the Beehive; 95 min)
- Vicente Aranda, *Amantes* (1990; Lovers; 103 min)
- Icíar Bollain, Te doy mis ojos (2003; Take my eyes; 109 min)
- Mario Camus, *Los santos inocentes* (1984; The Holy Innocents; 107 min)
- Pedro Almodóvar:
  - ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? (1984; What Have I Done to Deserve This?; 101 min)
  - *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (1988; Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown; 90 min)
  - *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999; All about my mother; 101 min)
  - *Volver* (2004; 121 min)
- Julio Medem, *Los amantes del círculo polar* (1998; Lovers of the Arctic Circle; 112 min)
- Isabel Coixet, *Mi vida sin mí* (2003; My Life Without Me; 106 min)
- Alejandro Amenábar, *Abre los ojos* (1997; Open Your Eyes; 117 min)
- Alex de la Iglesia, *El crimen perfeito* (2004; The Perfect Crime; 105 min)
SCREENINGS and DISCLAIMER

All screenings are scheduled for 414 Fisk at 8:00pm.

Feature films analyzed in Tuesday classes will be screened on Monday evenings. Full length feature movies assigned for Thursday will be available for viewing Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

Students forced to miss a given screening due to circumstances beyond their control should contact Sergei Bunaev in the Language Resource Center to see about the possibility of scheduling a make-up.

The films included in this course have all been distributed for wide release in the United States, with different ratings. They do not contain material that Wesleyan students might not have encountered previously in their own film-viewing experience. That said, anyone concerned about violence, sexuality or harsh language on film is strongly urged to contact the professor before taking this course.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Olin reserve readings
  - Nuria Triana-Toribio, *Spanish National Cinema*
  - Peter Besas, *Behind the Spanish Lens*
  - Peter Evans, *Spanish Cinema: The Auteurist Tradition*

In accordance with copyright laws, Olin will make fair use portions of the required readings available in pdf format through the electronic reserve system. Print copies of these books will also be available through the Olin Library's Reserve Desk in order to facilitate access to the assignments not available for electronic delivery.

To access the readings made available electronically, from Olin's homepage -
-www.wesleyan.edu/libr-- click on the ERes link under Reserves. Search for the course by typing fist301 (you may use any search field in the drop down list). The password is the same as the course ID: fist301. The cross-reference course also must use fist301 for the password. The password is intended ONLY for students enrolled in this class. For legal reasons students are asked not to share it with students not enrolled in FIST301.

Please consult with the Reserve Desk for any further information regarding the reserve readings.

Students may choose to purchase their own copies of the books through Amazon.

- Press reviews

Press reviews of the films featured in this course are available via the online syllabus

WESLEYAN HONOR CODE

The pledge is an affirmation of each student's agreement to adhere to the standards of academic integrity set by Wesleyan's Honor Code. In order to promote constant awareness of the Honor Code, professors are encouraged to ask students to sign the pledge when submitting any academic exercise for evaluation. Your signature and pledge will appear on all work, quizzes, and exams submitted for evaluation as your guarantee that:

- you have received no help of any kind from anyone (this refers especially to compositions);
- you have only used a bilingual dictionary or one of the Spanish dictionaries mentioned above;
- you have not used any type of translator such as those available on the Internet.

The pledges read as follows:

- For papers and similar written work. In accordance with the Honor Code, I affirm that this work is my own and all content taken from other sources has been properly acknowledged.
- For tests and other academic exercises: In accordance with the Honor Code, I
affirm that this work has been completed without improper assistance.

Regarding computers and as mentioned above, the productive use of a laptop in the classroom is treated in this class as falling within the jurisdiction of the Wesleyan Honor Code.

A note regarding electronic devices: The use of the electronic devices in the classroom, as elsewhere, can be productive as well as distractive. Studies have determined that such distractive use as instant messaging and browsing the web is detrimental to students’ learning experience. Those studies have also shown that students tend to underestimate the negative effect of such distractions on their learning. It shall be understood that students may bring computers into the classroom for the sole productive purpose of consulting material related to the lesson or for taking notes. As mentioned below (see “Wesleyan Honor Code”), any distractive use will be treated as an violation of the Honor Code and subject to Student Judicial Board consideration. Distractive usage includes all forms of instant messaging (e.g., email, Facebook, Twitter, text messaging) or browsing Internet sites that are not related to the lesson. For the benefit of a rewarding learning experience, the distractive use of laptops in class is strictly forbidden.

All students are strongly advised to read carefully the section concerning the Wesleyan honor system that appears in the Student Handbook:
http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/honorboard/honorcode.html

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible (in any case, within the first two weeks of the semester), so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at:
http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html
THE HISTORY OF SPANISH CINEMA

4 Sep (Tue) Intro

Luis Buñuel: Auteurism, Exile and the Foundations of a National Cinematography

Films

- Luis Buñuel: *Chien andalou* (1928; 16 min)
- Buñuel, *Tierra sin pan* (1933; Land Without Bread; 30 min)

Readings

- Reviews

Feature film

11 Sep (Tue) Luis Buñuel, *Los olvidados* (1950; The Young and the Damned; 77 min)

Readings

- Reviews

Film excerpts

13 Sep (Thu) Excerpts José Luis Saenz de Heredia, *Raza* (1942); Carlos Arévalo: ¡Harka! (1941); Juan de Orduña, *A mi legión* (1942)

Readings

Feature film

18 Sep
(Tue)

- Luis Buñuel, *Viridiana* (1961; 90 min)

Readings

- Peter Besas, *Behind the Spanish Lens*: “Bardem, Berlanga and Buñuel into the Breach” (Chap. 3; 48-51): e-Reserve.
- Reviews

Feature film

20 Sep
(Thu)

- Luis Buñuel, *El ángel exterminador* (1962; *Exterminating Angel*; 95 min)

Assignment

- Review 1

The Spanish Postwar: The Emerging Culture of Dissidence

Films

25 Sep
(Tue)

- Luis García Berlanga, *¡Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall!* (1953; *Welcome Mr. Marshall!*; 78 min)

Readings

- Peter Besas, *Behind the Spanish Lens*: “Bardem, Berlanga and Buñuel into the Breach” (Chap. 3; 31-44): e-Reserve.
- Reviews

Film excerpts

27 Sep
(Thu)

- Berlanga: *Plácido* (1961); *El verdugo* (1963); Juan de Orduña, *Alba de América* (1951) and *Locura de amor* (1950)

Readings


Feature film

2 Oct

- Juan Antonio Bardem, *Muerte de un ciclista* (1955; *Death of a Cyclist*; 88 min)
(Tue)
Readings

Film excerpts

4 Oct
(Thu)
Readings

Assignment

From the Postwar to Democracy (1970-1990): Ghosting the Past

Feature film

9 Oct
(Tue)
Readings

Feature film

11 Oct
(Thu)
Readings

16 Oct
(Tue) **Fall break**

Film excerpts  
- Saura, *La caza* (1965; *The Hunt*); José Luis Borau, *Furtivos* (1975; *Poachers*)

18 Oct (Thu)  
**Readings**  
- Peter Besas, *Behind the Spanish Lens*: “Poaching on Franco” (Chap. 10; 133-142): *Reserve.*

Feature film  
- Vicente Aranda, *Amantes* (1990; *Lovers*; 103 min)

23 Oct (Tue)  
**Readings**  
- *Reviews*

**Assignment**  
- *Review 2*

**Constructing a Democratic Spain**

Feature film  
- Icíar Bollain, *Te doy mis ojos* (2003; *Take my eyes*; 109 min)

25 Oct (Thu)  
**Readings**  
- *Reviews*

Feature film  
- Mario Camus, *Los santos inocentes* (1984; *The Holy Innocents*; 107 min)

30 Oct (Tue)  
**Readings**  
- *Reviews*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Nov (Thu)</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Reviews: <em>Solas</em> / <em>El bota</em></td>
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<td>Assignment</td>
<td><strong>Analysis 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Persisting Auteurism: The Almodovar effect</strong></td>
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<td>6 Nov (Tue)</td>
<td>Feature film</td>
<td>Pedro Almodóvar, <em>¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?</em> (1984; <em>What Have I Done to Deserve This?</em>; 101 min)</td>
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<td>8 Nov (Thu)</td>
<td>Feature film</td>
<td>Pedro Almodovar, <em>Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios</em> (1988; <em>Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown</em>; 90 min)</td>
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<td>13 Nov (Tue)</td>
<td>Feature film</td>
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<td>15 Nov</td>
<td>Feature film</td>
<td>Pedro Almodóvar, <em>Volver</em> (2004; 121 min)</td>
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*Film excerpts*:
Readings

20 Nov (Tue)  Assignment  • Analysis 3 (in class)

22 Nov (Thu)  Thanksgiving

Transcending the National: New Visions for a New Spain

27 Nov (Tue)  Feature film  • Julio Medem, Los amantes del círculo polar (1998; Lovers of the Arctic Circle; 112 min)

29 Nov (Thu)  Feature film  • Isabel Coixet, Mi vida sin mí (2003; My Life Without Me; 106 min)

4 Dec (Tue)  Feature film  • Alejandro Amenábar, Abre los ojos (1997; Open Your Eyes; 117 min)

6 Dec (Thu)  Feature film  • Alex de la Iglesia, El crimen ferpecto (2004; The Perfect Crime; 105 min)

Term paper: Reality and Representation in Spanish Cinema