LATIN AMERICA: A MIRROR OF REALITY THROUGH FILM

Course Description

Film not only entertains, it contributes to the creation and circulation of culture as well as national and regional images and identities, and it portrays and analyzes social problems. Its images and sounds provide an immediacy that written media cannot, making it one of the most accessible forms of cultural diffusion. Thus, film literacy is an important skill in our visual and information-saturated world.

This interdisciplinary course seeks to review and analyze the complexity and richness of Latin American culture and history using films as a vehicle to facilitate students’ understanding. The films selected will provide social, historical and ideological frameworks to study the changes which have taken place in contemporary Latin America.

Course Objectives

- Convey elements of criteria and interpretation of film as art and social portrait
- Understanding of specific social cultural issues
- Political and historical awareness of major events in Latin America
- Cultural impact of globalization

Assessment

- Attendance and participation 50%
- Weekly readings and research 25%
- Two argumentative essays 800 words each 12.5% each
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Course Contents

Week 1 Introduction

THE POWER OF IMAGES
Image analysis.
Elements of criteria.
Photographic language.

Week 2 Indians and conquistadores

Religion and Church.
The Conquest and Colonization
Research: The Jesuits in America

Film(s):
THE MISSION
Dir. Roland Joffe, 1986, U.K / USA

AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS OF THE LORD
Dir. Hector Babenco, 1991, USA/ Brazil

Weeks 3 Migration

With 20 years in between, two different films on the subject of migration... forceful or voluntary?
Research: Guatemala and genocide.
Recent trial of Guatemala’s ex president Rios Montt.

Film(s):
EL NORTE
Dir. Gregory Nava, 1984, U.K, USA,

EL VIOLIN
Dir. Francisco Vargas Quevedo, 2005, Mexico
Week 4  Silent Victims of Internal Struggles

The innocent victims of war: women and children. Different political situations which illustrate the impact of war on the well-being of vulnerable groups (“The reluctant invited people”)
Violent conflicts in Central America
Research: Schools and Armies: How much do governments invest

Film(s):

**VOCES INOCENTES**
*Dir.* Luis Mandoki, 2005, Mexico

**ROMERO**
*Dir.* John Duigan, 1989, USA

Week 5  Brazil: focus on Walter Salles

Global and local
Spatial lines of conflict: urban and rural
Social visibility / invisibility
Literacy

Film(s):

**CENTRAL STATION**
*Dir.* Walter Salles, 1998, Brazil

**BEHIND THE SUN / ABRIL DESPEDACAO**
*Dir.* Walter Salles, 2002, Brazil

**THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES**
*Dir.* Walter Salles, 2004, Brazil
Week 6  
Inside and outside Cuba: focus on Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

- Cinema and political protest
- Third Cinema: concept, strategies and techniques
- Neo colonialism, economic underdevelopment
- Role of the spectator

Film(s):
- **MEMORIAS DEL SUBDESARROLLO**  
  *Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968, Cuba*

- **FRESA Y CHOCOLATE**  
  *Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1993, Cuba*

Reading: Contemporary Cinema of Latin America, Changing Images from the Revolution, Deborah Shaw

Week 7  
Mexico

- Social disintegration
- The culture of violence

Film(s):
- **AMORES PERROS**  
  *Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2000, Mexico*

Reading: Contemporary Cinema of Latin America, Seducing the Public, chapter 3 Deborah Shaw

Week 8  
Living History: Bolivia

Wars for Water, Wars for Drugs

Film(s):
- **COCALERO**  
  *Dir. Alejandro Landes, 2007, Bolivia / Argentina*

- **EVEN THE RAIN**  
  *Dir. Iciar Bollain, 2010, Spain / Mexico*
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Week 9

Chile:
Salvador Allende and the military coup.
Dictatorships in Latin America
Class conflict
Censorship and the state

Film(s):
NO
Dir. Pablo Larrain, 2012, Chile

Machuca
Dir. Andrés Wood, 2004, Chile

Missing
Dir. Costa Gavras, 1982, USA

La Historia Oficial,
Dir. Luis Puenzo, 1985, Argentina

Week 10

Literature on the Screen: Two major Latin American writers

Film(s):
ARRANCAME LA VIDA
Dir. Roberto Sneider, 2008, Mexico

IL POSTINO
Dir. Michael Radford, 1994, Italy

Week 11

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS:

APOCALYPTO
Dir. Mel Gibson, 2006, USA

Film(s):
CRUDE
Dir. John Berlinger, 2009, USA
Week 12

COSTA RICA AND PANAMA:

Film(s):

CARIBE
Dir. Esteban Ramírez, 2004, Costa Rica

CHANCE
Dir. Abner Benahim, 2009, Panamá

Course readings:

