

SPN F 103 A

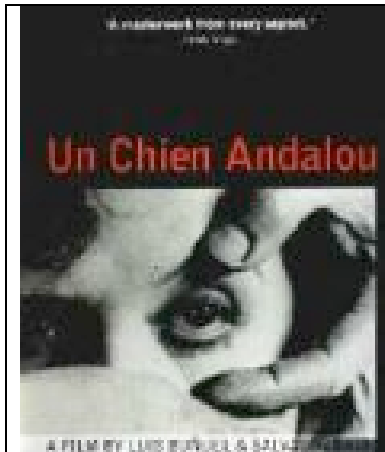
SPANISH CINEMA & NATIONAL IDENTITY

MIAMI UNIVERSITY

DEPT. OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

FALL 2005

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Course description. This course will provide an introduction to Spanish cinema through the study of its film production and film theory. The fact that Spain was the country with the larger number of movie goers in the first half of the 20th century is the starting point of a socio-historical review of Spanish film production. The course will be divided into five sections: Silent times; for Franco and against Franco; Almodóvar; Filming in Feminine; the Last Cinema.

All of them share the premises of what in cinema studies is known as *cinema d'auteur*. We will focus on this controversial notion, frequently seen (but not necessarily been) in confrontation with the commercial revenues of Holliwoodian cinema, as well as on other theoretical approaches, providing at the same time the specific vocabulary and basic technical knowledge akin to this discipline. The ultimate goal is to begin to be acquainted with different theoretical approaches accordingly to the best possible explanations demanded by the films:

- a) Aesthetic. Particular attention is paid to the *mise en scene* (light, color, music, sound, photography, assembling, etc.), as well as to the cinema languages (prose versus poetry, surrealism versus realism, (dark) humor versus intellectual seriousness)
- b) Historical. We will both make history (and sociology) with cinema and we will follow the history of cinema, analyzing the almost-always-controversial instauration (and fluctuation) of a cannon to be considered (or not).
- c) Psychoanalytical and archetypical. We will examine Marsha Kinder's Blood Cinema, a depiction of sacrificial, ritual massacre, and Oedipal narratives, which is already a classic for the study of Spanish cinema.
- d) Gender Studies. Selected readings from Judith Butler's *Gender Troubles* will be used to deepen into feminist theory. Also, Paul Julian Smith's *Desire Unlimited* and Katherine Vernon's *PostFranco, Postmodern* will help us to understand the close ties of

Almodóvar's cinema with Trueba's, Bollain's, Miró's and other film directors, whose main goal is to debunk and reformulate traditionally fixed gender representations.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

-- demonstrate an appreciation of Spanish films in relation to the social and political context in which they were produced and consumed.

-- be aware of the potential of film as a medium for political discourse in terms of regionalism and sexual politics.

-- understand the importance of film technique and theory for having a critical consideration of the films in this course.

-- go beyond the specific contents on Spanish Cinema and theory, that is, have a better comprehension of Spanish culture.

-- engage in debates and consider conflicting positions in the interpretation and appreciation of films as narratives, historical products

Seminar components and evaluation:

Exams. The seminar will be evaluated through two partial exams (50 minutes each, covering the material prior to the exam) and one final exam. The final exam will have two parts: one will be based on the movies seen during the last part of classes; the second one will be comprehensive (based on pre-assigned questions). In addition, we will often have quizzes to assess class preparation.

Class preparation and participation. Students ought to prepare for each class a two-paragraph report summarizing the plot or subject matter of the weekly movie (1 paragraph) and providing a brief analytical commentary based on the critical readings attached to the movies (1 paragraph). The instructor will ask them to read or present their reports for the class, and might collect them at random. All students will be expected to be thoroughly prepared for class meetings, i.e., to have completed the assigned readings. Since students are expected to participate actively in class, more than **two unexcused absences** will result in a lowered grade.

Short Papers. Students will have to write three papers (circa 400 words each, double space, typed). Papers will consist of an in-depth analysis of a specific topic and must cover three of the five sections in which the course is divided. For the writing of the final, five-page research paper, it will be necessary to work with at least five bibliographical references.

Oral presentations and creative project. Students will be responsible for two oral presentations: the first one will be based on theoretical approaches; the second one, on a movie.

A short movie (5-10 minutes) will be done in groups (4 students each). The movie ought to be related somehow to one or more of the films screened in class. There will be an ‘Oscar’ ceremony at the end of the semester. Prizes will correspond to the following sections: best movie, best actor, best actress, best script.

ATTENTION: for papers, oral presentations, and the movie making, consult with me in advance.

Other policies:

The Seminar will use Spanish movies with English subtitles
 Screenings will be on Thursdays in Culler 46 at 7PM
 There will be no make-ups for exams and quizzes
 No late assignments (daily homework, papers, oral presentations) will be accepted
 Please do not be late or leave early
 Please feel free to discuss with me any particular situation you might have

Grading criteria:

Quizzes	5%
Short Papers	15% (5% each)
Research paper	20%
Oral presentations and Creative Project	15%
Exams	30% (7,5% partial exams, 15% final)
Class participation	15%

Required texts:

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art, and Introduction*.
 Course package. (The Copy Center).

Syllabus

August	23	Welcome and Presentation. In class screening of ‘Un perro andaluz’, by Luis Buñuel. Surrealism (Modernity) and cinema
	25	Fiction and Silent Movies: literary adaptations, ‘españoladas’ SCREENING: EL SEXTO SENTIDO. (The Sixth Sense) Nemesio Sobrevila (1926). The first example of avant-garde cinema in Spain, this film is a vindication of the freedom of cinema as language, yet calls into question the infallibility of cinema as an unquestionable invention to achieve truth.
	30	Non Fictional Silent Cinema. The Documentary. In class screening of <i>Las Hurdes</i> , by Luis Buñuel. Toward the Neorrealistic Tremendism of the 50’s. Carlos Velo and the Spanish Documentary: <i>Romancero marroquí</i> The Civil War: Cinema and Propaganda
September	01	Cinema and Civil War: Newsreels and <i>Raza</i> (1942). From a <i>Franquista</i> Cinema to the <i>Conversaciones de Salamanca</i> . Berlanga’s <i>Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall</i> (1951). The influence of Italian Neorrealism and <i>Muerte de un ciclista</i> , by Juan Antonio Bardem (1955) SCREENING: VIRIDIANA. Luis Buñuel (1961) A novice is forced to visit her old uncle and patron before taking her final vows. He

		is quite attracted to her, but she firmly resists her uncle's advances.
	06	NO CLASS
	08	The García Escudero's affair. Buñuel comes back to Spain and responds to Franco's adaptation to capitalism. To the movies in <i>seiscientos</i> and with tourists. More about Cinema as political opposition to the Franco regime in Berlanga's <i>El verdugo</i> Sacrifice and massacre. Violence in Spanish cinema. (Kinder) SCREENING: <i>LA CAZA (The Hunt)</i> . Carlos Saura (1965) José, Paco and Luis are three friends who one day decide to go hunting in the company of Enrique, a 20-year-old on his first outing. They will practice their favorite sport on Paco's land, where not long before an important Civil War battle took place.
	13	Sacrifice and massacre. (Ritual) violence in Spanish cinema. (Kinder)
	15	Memory and oblivion. Getting violently into the <i>transición</i> . SCREENING: <i>CRÍA CUERVOS (Cria)</i> . Carlos Saura (1975) Saura's eerie but marvelous psychodramatic highlights the superb performance by the young Ana Torrent. By recalling her childhood memories, Ana relives the strange summer of her father's death.
	20	Oedipal narratives in a violent tradition. (Kinder) José Luis Borau's <i>Furtivos</i> (1975) FIRST PAPER DUE
	22	Cinema and poetry. Metaphorical lines for still a time of silence. The unique cinema of Víctor Erice. SCREENING: <i>EL ESPÍRITU DE LA COLMENA (Spirit of the Beehive)</i> . Víctor Erice (1973) In a Castilian village in post-civil war Spain, the movie <i>Frankenstein</i> is played at the local cinema. After viewing Boris Karloff's film, a girl becomes fixated on the monster, whom she will try to find and talk to. An imaginative child and a conservative adult community clash in this metaphorical movie about a hushed period in Spanish history.
	27	Memory and oblivion. Getting violently into the <i>transición</i> . <i>El crimen de Cuenca</i> , by Pilar Miró. <i>El destape</i>
	29	Cinema and Literature. <i>Noir</i> Cinema: a tool to catch a 'lost' past SCREENING: <i>BELTENEBROS (The prince of Shadows)</i> . Pilar Miró (1992) A moody, exciting film noir, <i>Prince of Shadows</i> stars Terence Stamp as a Communist party exile out to execute a suspected police informer, a mission similar to one he had 20 years earlier.
October	04	FIRST PARTIAL EXAM
	06	ALMODÓVAR and the Movida: another response to that 'lost' past. <i>Pepi, Luci y Bom... and ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?</i> SCREENING: <i>MUJERES AL BORDE DE UN ATAQUE DE NERVIOS (Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown)</i> . Pedro Almodóvar (1988) A woman's lover leaves her, and she tries to contact him to find out why. She confronts his wife and son, who are as clueless as she. Meanwhile her girlfriend is afraid the police are looking for her because of her boyfriend's criminal activities. They talk to a female lawyer, who turns out to be the ex-lover's new lover.
	11	Pilar Miró, directora general de cinematografía. 1982. ALMODÓVAR, a women director. Gender representations by <i>un canibal en Madrid</i>
	13	Almodóvar gets more serious. From <i>La flor de mi secreto</i> to <i>Todo sobre mi madre</i> . SCREENING: <i>HABLE CON ELLA (Talk to her)</i> , 2002. After a chance encounter at a theater, two men, Benigno and Marco, meet at a private clinic where Benigno works. Lydia, Marco's girlfriend and a bullfighter by profession, has been gored and is in a coma. It so happens that Benigno is looking after another woman in a coma, Alicia, a young ballet student. The lives of

	the four characters will flow in all directions. Oscar Best Foreign Film, 2003
18	Trajectory of Almodóvar's career
20	A difficult (final) script. Almodóvar's international recognition SCREENING: LA MALA EDUCACIÓN (Bad Education), by Pedro Almodóvar (2004) In the early 60s, two boys - Ignacio and Enrique - discover love, movies and fear in a Christian school. Father Manolo, the school principal and Literature teacher, both witnesses and takes part in these discoveries. The three characters come against one another twice again, in the late 70s and in 1980. These meetings are set to change the life and death of some of them.
25	Comedy and gender issues. The cinema of Gómez Pereira. SECOND PAPER DUE
27	Filming in feminine? Fernando Trueba, mastery in comedy SCREENING: BELLE EPOQUE. Fernando Trueba (1992) Framed by the months leading to Spain's Second Republic (1931-36), this joyful story tells of a young army deserter and former seminarian who, wandering around Spain, ends up living with an eccentric painter in his mansion. When his four daughters arrive for a vacation, adventures will occur. (Oscar Winner, Best Foreign Language Film, 1994)
November 01	SECOND PARTIAL EXAM Gender troubles: Benito Zambrano (<i>Solas</i>) and Itziar Bolláin (<i>Flores de otro mundo</i>). Introduction to a new problematic: Immigration. Molinero's <i>Salvajes</i> and Gutierrez's <i>Poniente</i>
03	The problematic of immigration in cinema. The Moors that Franco did not invite or <i>La bestia anda suelta</i> . SCREENING: EL DÍA DE LA BESTIA. (<i>The Day of the Beast</i>). Alex de la Iglesia (1995) A Basque priest finds by means of cabalistic study of the Bible that the anti-Christ is going to be born on Christmas Day in Madrid. Helped by a heavy-metal fan and by the host of an esoteric television program, he will try to invoke the devil to learn the place of the monster's birth and kill the baby. English subtitles
08	The auteurist cinema of Julio Médem.
10	Médem and the Vasque nationalism. SCREENING: VACAS (<i>Cows</i>). Julio Médem (1991) A film set in the Basque region, beginning in the 1875 civil war and ending during the war of 1936. The film portrays how one single act of cowardice shapes the life of the next three generations of two families and fuels the intense rivalry which will span the next sixty-one years.
15	The auteurist cinema of Julio Médem. Symbolic nature of a difficult cinema. <i>Tierra</i> .
27	Again a feminine angle? SCREENING: LA ARDILLA ROJA (<i>The Red Squirrel</i>). Julio Médem (1993) he first word out of Jay's (Novo) mouth is shit as he stands on the boardwalk at San Sebastian ready to commit suicide. Suddenly a motorcycle crashes over the boardwalk railing onto the night's deserted beach, and Jay foregoes his immediate suicide plans to rush to the aid of the helmeted victim, a beautiful girl suffering from amnesia and with no ID.
22	Recapitulation on Médem's cinema. A new perspective in <i>Lucía y el sexo</i> Review of 'CORTOS' THIRD PAPER DUE
23-27	Thanksgiving
29	The promising career of Alejandro Amenábar. The cinema of José Luis Cuerda and Fernando León de Aranoa
December 01	A moral approach to immoral times. <i>His opera prima</i> . SCREENING: TESIS (<i>Thesis</i>). Alejandro Amenábar (1996) Angela, a journalist student, is researching snuff film for her thesis. When her professor dies

	while watching one of these films, Angela suspects that there is a web production of gore movies in her own university. Her suspicion turns into a surprising nightmare.
02	OSCARS CEREMONY (TBA)
06	<i>Abre los ojos</i> (Vanilla Sky) and <i>The Others</i> .
08	<p>RESEARCH PAPER DUE</p> <p>Summary.</p> <p>SCREENING: <i>MAR ADRENTO (The Sea Inside)</i>. Alejandro Amenábar (2004)</p> <p>Based the life of Ramón Sampedro, a man paralyzed from the neck down, the film deepens into the legal action that will allow him to end his own life. Cared for lovingly by friends and family, Ramón has nevertheless reached a decision, after twenty-six years confined to his bed, that he does not want his life to continue. Oscar Best Foreign Film, 2005.</p>
	Final Exam: Tuesday, 12:30 PM