

Latin America Through Film (HI372)

This course provides an introduction to cinematic depictions about Latin America. We will move chronologically and thematically, in turn viewing eleven films (four U.S. and seven Latin American) that extend across a wide timeframe (c. 1940-present) and cover each of the area's principle regions (Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, Andes, Southern Cone). The goals of the course are twofold. First, to address the historical context out of which each film emerged and to which each film speaks. Second, to learn how to read films critically as visual texts. Hence, the readings for the course will combine historical narrative and documents alongside theoretical texts that examine the question of film as a site of critical discourse.

Course Requirements

Attendance at film screenings as well as for class lectures/discussions is an essential component of this class; you may not watch scheduled films at another time, except under special circumstances pre-approved by the professor. On Mondays, there will be a short lecture to set up the historical context of the film, which will be screened that evening. Wednesday classes will be based around discussion of the film and readings. Students must bring the relevant reading assignments to every class to facilitate discussion. I expect a high degree of professionalism for oral presentations and all written work (see Guidelines below).

NOTE: All films will be available on reserve through Academic Technology Services (ATS), located in the basement of Stager for follow-up viewing for papers and presentations.

Grading

Participation (15%): Grade for participation includes attendance record and interaction during in-class discussions. All students are required to attend every film during the public viewing sessions (Monday nights). Exceptions will be made only for specific circumstances, approved in advance by the professor.

Film Presentation (10%): Every student is required lead a class discussion of one film, drawing on three or more scenes that highlight central thematic/cinematographic issues. Scheduled presenters must meet with the professor prior to the presentation to discuss which scenes the student is considering. It is expected that presenters will re-watch the film a second time on reserve prior to the classroom-led discussion (at which point the selected scenes will be either recorded onto a blank VHS cassette or properly noted, if the film is on DVD). A 2-page written analysis based on one of the scenes discussed will be due by the class following the actual presentation.

Film Analyses [3] (75%; 25% each): At the end of each Unit there will be a 5-7 page analytical essay based on questions distributed. These essays will address the films and readings viewed during that Unit, as well as cumulatively.

Guidelines for Written Work

All written work done outside of class must conform to the following standards: typed using 12 pt. font (Times), 1 1/2-line spacing with 1-inch margins. Where direct quotations and references to other works are cited, you must properly footnote (not endnotes, please). All written work must include your name, a title, and page numbers (upper right-hand corner). Be sure to check for grammar and spelling. Carelessness and evident lack of professionalism will negatively affect your grade. It is recommended that you consult with the Writing Center (KEI-316; ext. 3866) when preparing your essays. Be sure to schedule a meeting with a Writing Center tutor in advance, especially during midterms and finals when they are busiest. Through the Writing Center you will also find a number of books and useful handouts on such topics as punctuation, grammar, and writing essays including *Model Student Essays*, which you may find useful for this and other courses.

All essays are due at the start of class on the date indicated on the syllabus.

Assigning Grades

The following is the letter grade system established by Franklin & Marshall College and found in the *College Catalog*:

A range=Excellent. Work of consistently high standard, showing distinction.

B range=Good. Work showing superiority in such qualities as organization, accuracy, originality, understanding, and insight.

C range=Satisfactory. Work which fulfills essential requirements in quality and quantity and meets the acceptable standard for graduation.

D range=Passing. Work which falls below the acceptable grade point average standard yet is deserving of credit in the course.

Absences, Tardiness, Late Papers, Make-Ups

The courtesy of alerting the professor to a scheduled absence or lateness is expected. In the event of an emergency absence and/or request for extension on papers (due to personal or family illness or appropriate extenuating circumstances only) documentation may be requested; make-up work may be assigned at the discretion of the professor. Unexcused lateness and/or absences will severely affect your grade.

To avoid penalization, all extensions must be approved ahead of time. Late work (non-approved extension) is penalized 5 pts. (1/2 grade) per day. All overdue work must be turned in *directly* to the History Department secretary or to the professor; it is your responsibility to make sure that the date and time are marked on late work indicating when it was turned in. Please note exam and assignment dates beforehand in order to make travel and other plans accordingly.

Pass/Fail Grading

Students taking the class for "P/NP" option are required to do *all* assigned work. A passing grade on the final exam is required, as is an overall passing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty

The College holds its students to the highest standards of intellectual honesty and prescribes harsh penalties for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. If you have questions about how to reference others' works you should speak with the professor. You are especially encouraged to visit the Writing Center and consult the booklet, *Using Outside Sources* that the Center provides. Students suspected of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to the appropriate school authorities.

Books Required for Purchase

John King, *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1990; 2000).

John King, Ana M. López and Manuel Alvarado, eds., *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas* (London: British Film Institute, 1993)

(Note: There is also a required Readings Packet for purchase at Copy Print; assignments found in Reader are indicated by an * on the syllabus)

Internet Movie Database (useful source for fact-checking actors, directors, dates, etc.):
www.imdb.com

Unit I: Introduction

Week I: Introduction

1/21

Week II: Narration and Representation

1/26

Reading Assignment:

King, *Magical Reels*, "Introduction."

King, et. al., eds., *Mediating Two Worlds*, "General Introduction."

*Donald Stevens, ed., *Based on a True Story* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998), Chapter 1: "Never Read History Again?"

1/28

Reading Assignment:

King, *Magical Reels*, chapter 1: "Rugged Features: The Silent Era" pp. 7-29.

NOTE: Map Quiz [Latin American countries & capitals]

Unit II: Latin America in the US Imaginary

Week III: From "Greasers" to "Good Neighbors"

2/2

Film Screening: *The Gang's All Here* (Dir. Busby Berkeley, 1943)

Reading Assignment:

*Gerald K. Haines, "Under the Eagle's Wing: The Franklin Roosevelt Administration Forges an American Hemisphere," *Diplomatic History*, 1:3 (1977), pp. 373-88.

*Docs. #53 ("Good Neighbor Policy") & #60 ("Marketing Pan Americanism") in Holden & Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

*Arthur Whitaker, "An Overview of the Period" in Mark Falcoff and Ronald Dolkart, eds., *Prologue to Perón: Argentina in Depression and War, 1930-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 1-30.

2/4

Reading Assignment:

Ana M. López, "Are All Latins from Manhattan?: Hollywood, Ethnography and Cultural Colonialism," in *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 67-80.

*Walter Aaron Clark, "Doing the Samba on Sunset Boulevard: Carmen Miranda and the Hollywoodization of Latin American Music" in W. Clark, ed., *From Tango to Tejano* (NY: Routledge, 2002), pp. 252-76.

Week IV: Mexico as Cold War Backdrop

2/9

Film Screening: *Viva Zapata!* (Dir. Elia Kazans, 1952)

Reading Assignment:

*Eric Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico" in Gilbert Joseph, et. al., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Popular Culture in Mexico Since 1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 234-72.

2/11

Reading Assignment:

*Paul Vanderwood, "An American Cold Warrior: *Viva Zapata!* (1952)" in John O'Connor and Martin Jackson, eds., *American History/American Film: Interpreting the Hollywood Image* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1979), pp. 183-201.

Margarita de Orellana, "The Circular Look: The Incursion of North American Cinema 1911-1917 into the Mexican Revolution," in King, et. al., eds., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 3-14.

Week V: Debunking the Heroic Guerrilla

2/16

Film Screening: *Che!* (Dir. Richard Fleischer, 1969)

Reading Assignment:

*Philip Brenner, et. al., eds., *Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society* (Grove Press, 1989), "Man and Socialism in Cuba," pp. 83-8.

*Che Guevara, "Guerrilla Warfare: A Method" (1963), in Brian Loveman and Thomas Davies, eds., *Che Guevara: Guerrilla Warfare* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1997), pp. 147-62.

Listening Assignment: Carlos Puebla, "Hasta Siempre"

2/18

Reading Assignment:

*“Talks by Che Guevara to the Guerrilla Unit,” in *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, pp. 409-14.

*Che Guevara, “Message to the Tricontinental” (1967), in Brian Loveman and Thomas Davies, eds., *Che Guevara: Guerrilla Warfare* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1997), pp. 163-76.

Find one document from the collection, “The Death of Che Guevara: Declassified” located through the National Security Archive at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB5/index.html>. Bring copy of document to class and be prepared to discuss with group.

Week VI: *Sandinistas* and Central America

2/23

Film Screening: *Under Fire* (Dir. Roger Spottiswoode, 1983).

Reading Assignment:

*Docs. #108 (“Fear of Communism in Central America”), #109 (“Teaching Sabotage”), #112 (“Solidarity”) in Holden & Zolov, *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

*“Nicaragua” in Brian Loveman and Thomas Davies, eds., *Che Guevara: Guerrilla Warfare* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1997), pp. 335-84.

2/25:

Reading Assignment:

James Dunkerley, “All That Trouble Down There” in King, et. al., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 95-103.

King, *Magical Reels*, chap. 11, “Central America and the Caribbean,” pp. 225-44.

Writing Assignment: 1st Essay Due (Next Monday)

Unit II: Search for National Form in Latin American Cinema

Week VII: Mexico's "Epoca de Oro"

3/1

Film Screening: *Vámanos con Pancho Villa* [Let's Go with Pancho Villa] (Dir. Fernando de Fuentes, 1936)

Reading Assignment:

King, *Magical Reels*, chapter 2 ("From Sound to 'New Cinema'") and chapter 6, "Mexico."

Carlos Monsiváis, "Mexican Cinema" in King, et. al., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 139-46

3/3

Reading Assignment:

*Joanne Hershfield, "Race and Ethnicity in the Classical Cinema" in Joanne Hershfield and David Maciel, eds., *Mexico's Cinema: A Century of Film and Filmmakers* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), pp. 81-100.

Ana M. López, "Tears and Desire" in King, et. al., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 147-63.

Week VIII: Cuba's Revolutionary Cinema

3/8

Film Screening: *Memorias de subdesarrollo* [Memories of Underdevelopment] (Dir. Gutiérrez Alea, 1968)

Reading Assignment:

King, *Magical Reels*, chap. 3 ("The 1960s and After").

*Philip Brenner, et. al., eds., *Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society* (Grove Press, 1989), "Talking About Cuban Culture," pp. 487-97.

*Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, "Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World" (1969) in Michael T. Martin, ed., *New Latin American Cinema*, vol. 1 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), pp. 33-58.

3/10

Reading Assignment:

John Hess, "Neo-Realism and New Latin American Cinema" in King, et. al., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 104-18.

King, *Magical Reels*, chap. 7 "Cuba: Revolutionary Projections," pp. 145-67.

Week IX: SPRING BREAK

Week X: Brazil's "Cinema Novo"

3/22

Film Screening: *Como era gostoso o meu francês* [How Tasty Was my Little Frenchman] (Dr. Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1971).

Reading Assignment:

*Leslie Bary, "Oswaldo de Andrade's Cannibalist Manifesto," *Latin American Literary Review* 19, no. 38 (1991): 35-47.

*Pero Vaz de Caminha, "Letter to King Manuel I, May 1, 1500" (excerpt).

3/24

Reading Assignment:

Ismail Xavier, "El Dorado As Hell" in King, et. al. *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 192-203.

King, *Magical Reels*, chap. 5 "Brazil: Cinema Novo to TV Globo," pp. 105-28.

PUBLIC LECTURE: Alan McPherson, "Anti-Americanism as an Historical Problem." Stager 112, 5pm. Attendance Required.

Week XI: Argentina & Dictatorship

3/29

Film Screening: *La historia oficial* [The Official Story] (Dir. Luis Carlos Puenzo, 1986).

Reading Assignment:

*Marysa Navarro, "The Personal is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo" in Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989; 2001), pp. 241-58.

*"Final Document of the Military Junta Regarding the War Against Subversion and Terrorism," in Brian Loveman & Thomas Davies, eds., *The Politics of Antipolitics*, pp. 163-70.

3/31

*Mark Szuchman, "Depicting the Past in Argentine Films: Family Drama and Historical Debate in *Miss Mary* and *The Official Story*," in Donald Stevens, ed. *Based on a True Story: Latin American History at the Movies* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1997), pp. 173-200.

Writing Assignment: 2nd Essay Due (Next Wednesday)

Unit III: Recent Representations of Social Reality in Latin America

Week XII: Contemporary Issues in Latin American Cinema

4/5: NO CLASS

4/7

Reading Assignment:

King, *Magical Reels*, "Conclusion" and "Afterword to the New Edition."

Randall Johnson, "In the Belly of the Ogre" in King, et. al., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 204-13.

Week XIII: Looking Back on the 1960s in Brazil

4/12

Film Screening: *Four Days in September* (Dir. Bruno Barreto, 1997).

Reading Assignment:

*Brian Loveman & Thomas Davies, eds., *The Politics of Antipolitics*, "Brazil," pp. 171-74;

*Thomas Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (Westport: Praeger, 1991) chapter 6, "Urban Guerrilla Warfare," pp. 99-116.

4/14

Reading Assignment:

*"Text of Manifesto from Kidnappers of U.S. Ambassador to Brazil," *New York Times*, 6 September 1969

*Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Torture in Brazil: A Shocking Report on the Pervasive Use of Torture by Brazilian Military Governments, 1964-1979*, edited by Joan Dassin (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), "Preface," chapter 9 ("Profile of Repression"), & chapter 15 ("Houses of Horror").

Week XIV: Confronting Violence in Colombia

4/19

Film Screening: *La Virgen de los sicarios* [Our Lady of Assassins] (Dir. Barbet Schroeder, 2000).

Reading Assignment:

*Alma Guillermoprieto, "Medellín, 1991" in *The Heart that Bleeds* (New York: Vintage, 1994), pp. 92-118.

*JoAnn Kawell, "Drug Economies of the Americas," *NACLA* (September/October 2002), pp. 8-13 [read all articles in these pages].

4/21

Reading Assignment:

Paul Lenti, "Colombia" in King, et. al., eds. *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 214-21.

King, *Magical Reels*, chap. 10, "Colombia and Venezuela," pp. 207-24.

Week XV: Mexico City's Urban Histories

4/26

Film Screening: *Amores Perros* [Love's a Bitch] (Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2000)

Reading Assignment:

*Renato Ortiz, "Popular Culture, Modernity and Nation" in Vivian Schelling, ed., *Through the Kaleidoscope: The Experience of Modernity in Latin America* (London: Verso, 2000).

*Carlos Monsiváis, "Identity Hour, or, What Photos Would You Take of the Endless City?," in Gilbert Joseph & Timothy Henderson, *The Mexico Reader: History, Politics, Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 613-18.

4/28

Reading Assignment:

King, *Magical Reels*, Chapter 6: "Mexico: Inside the Labyrinth."

Nissa Torrents, "Mexican Cinema Comes Alive" in King, et. al., *Mediating Two Worlds*, pp. 222-29.

Writing Assignment: 3rd Essay Due (TBA).