FALL 2010
COLT 585, 22084 Gender and Sexuality in Spanish and Latin American Cinema
Wednesdays, 4:00-6:50 pm, THH 203

Dr. Julian Daniel Gutiérrez-Albilla
Spanish and Portuguese and Comparative Literature
THH 156K
juliangu@usc.edu

Description

This course examines the representation of gender and sexual discourses (mostly feminist and queer discourses), and their intersection with wider social, political, and theoretical issues, in Spanish and Latin American films in light of current theoretical debates as a way of exploring how these films articulate the poetics and politics of gender and sexual difference, subvert/perpetuate conventional cinematographic processes and/or challenge/perpetuate social stereotypes of the dominant patriarchal and heterosexist discourses. The course also asks: to what extent have these cinematic practices problematically and symptomatically represented, shaped, and contested the cultural imaginaries of the Spanish and Latin American societies in which these films are inserted? How may these filmmakers participate in social change? How does feminist and queer film theory sharpen and/or limit our understanding of film practices produced in different geopolitical contexts? What are the psychic and ideological conditions that shape and structure our spectatorial position? How do gender and sexual discourses intersect with national, class, ethnic or racial discourses in Spanish and Latin American cinema for the constitution of identity and subjectivity? Could we theorize, as Catherine de Zeguer proposes, feminist and queer film practices in Spain and Latin America beyond a modality based on rejection/assimilation, self/other, love/hatred, or aggression/identification? Through the study of gender and sexual discourses in Spanish and Latin American cinema, we look at issues that affect our globalized society, in general, and Spanish and Latin American societies, in particular, such as marginality and exclusion, memory and trauma, exile and migration, or the nation and globalization. We explore feminist and queer film theory in order to address these issues, as well as relying on interdisciplinary approaches from the Humanities and Social Sciences to the study of film. Films studied include: Before Night Falls (Julian Schnabel, 2001), Carmen Miranda: Bananas is My Business (Helen Solberg, 1995), Jamón jamón (Bigas Luna, 1992) Los olvidados (Luis Buñuel, 1950), A hora da estrela (Suzana Amaral, 1985), Volver (Pedro Almodóvar, 2006), De eso no se habla (Maria Luisa Bemberg, 1993), Fresa y chocolate (Tomás Gutiérrez-Alea, 1994), Viridiana (Luis Buñuel, 1961), Todo sobre mi madre (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999), Pixote (Héctor Babenco, 1981), and Plata quemada (Marcelo Piñeyro, 2000). Authors studied will include (but not be limited to): Georges Bataille, Leo Bersani, Susan Bordo, Elisabeth Bronfen, Judith Butler, Barbara Creed, Teresa de Lauretis, Jonathan Dollimore, Richard Dyer, Bracha Ettinger, Michel Foucault, Sigmund Freud, Ellis Hanson, Stephen Heath, Linda Hutcheon, E.Ann Kaplan, Julia Kristeva, Herbert Marcuse, Laura Mulvey, Robert Stam, or Susan Suleiman.

Topics will include:
1. Exoticism, Gender and National Stereotypes, Ethnicity, Exile.
2. Urban Invisibility, Traces of the Rural, Migration.
3. Allegories of Sexual and Political Dissidence, Historical and National Reconciliations.

These divisions are by no means over-prescriptive and you will find issues that resonate across the films throughout the course.

Course requirements and assignments

Seminar Participation: All sessions will be seminar based. The first session will offer an introduction to key theoretical issues relating to the representation of gender and sexual discourses in film, to issues of visual culture and to issues relating to the study of World Cinema. Each week there will be set reading to prepare you for the seminar and you will be expected to participate fully in class discussions. Films will be seen outside of class time and discussed in relation to course readings. One student will present the reading to the class in order to discuss the issues at stake and/or to formulate further questions. The final sessions will be based on students’ presentations (20 minutes plus 10 minutes for Q&A) of their final essays. Your presentation should have a visual component.

Final Research paper: Students will write a final research paper of approximately 25 to 30 pages maximum in length on a topic of relevance to the course. You will be required to submit an initial draft showing evidence of extended bibliographical research and a clear engagement with the conceptual issues of the course.

Grading:

Students will be graded on their participation in discussions (10%) and role as discussion leaders in the semester (15%), their final presentation (25%) and their final research paper (50%).

Semester Schedule

Week 1: Gender and Sexuality in Spanish and Latin American Cinema

Required Reading:

1. Dennison, Stephanie and Shaw, Lisa (eds), Latin American Cinema: Essays on Modernity, Gender and National Identity (2005), 1-8
2. Foster, David, Gender and Society in Contemporary Brazilian Cinema (1999), 1-12
3. Foster, David, Queer Issues in Contemporary Latin American Cinema (2003), vii-xix
4. Hanson, Ellis (ed.), Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film (1999), 1-19
Week 2: Exoticism, Gender and National Stereotypes, Ethnicity, Exile:

Before Night Falls

Required Reading:


Week 3: Carmen Miranda: Bananas is My Business

Required Reading:

2. de Lauretis, Teresa, ‘Rethinking Women’s Cinema’, Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction (1987), 126-149

Week 4: Jamón jamón

Required Reading:


Week 5: Urban Invisibility, Traces of the Rural, Migration:

Los olvidados

Required Reading:

2. Franco, Jean, ‘Oedipus Modernized’, Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico (1989), 146-159

Week 6: A hora da estrela

Required Reading:


Week 7: Volver

Required Reading:
4. Kinder, Marsha, ‘Volver’, *Film Quarterly*, 60.3 (2007), 1-7

**Week 8: Allegories of Sexual and Political Dissidence, Historical and National Reconciliations:**

*De eso no se habla*

**Required Reading:**

2. Escudero, Monica, ‘Tragedy in Maria Luisa Bemberg’s *De eso no se habla*’, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, XXVII.1 (2002), 193-206
5. Stout, Janis, *Strategies of Reticence* (1990), 1-23

**Week 9: Fresa y chocolate**

**Required Reading:**

Week 10: Viridiana

Required Reading:

2. Bronfen, Elisabeth, ‘Necromancy, or Closing the Crack on the Gravestone’, Over her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic (1992), 290-323
3. Evans, Peter and Fiddian, Robin, ‘Viridiana and the Death Instinct’, Challenges to Authority: Fiction and Film in Contemporary Spain (1988), 61-70

Week 11: Todo sobre mi madre

Required Reading:


Week 12: Homoeroticism, Urban Violence, Sexual Stereotypes:

Pixote

Required Reading:

2. Hecht, Tobias, At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil (1998), 1-25

**Week 13: Plata quemada**

**Required Reading:**


**Week 14: Presentations**

**Week 15: Presentations**

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: [http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/](http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/). Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/).