GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM  
(ONE COURSE PER FORM)

1.) DATE: 01/01/2012  
2.) COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Maricopa Co. Comm. College District

3.) COURSE PROPOSED:  
Prefix: HUM  Number: 213  Title: Hispanic Film  Credits: 3

CROSS LISTED WITH:  
Prefix:  Prefix:  Prefix:  
Number:  ; Number:  ; Number:  ;

Prefix:  Prefix:  Prefix:  Prefix:  
Number:  ; Number:  ; Number:  ;

4.) COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATOR: FABIO E. CORREA  
PHONE: 480-857-5525

FAX:

ELIGIBILITY: Courses must have a current Course Equivalency Guide (CEG) evaluation. Courses evaluated as NT (non-transferable are not eligible for the General Studies Program.

MANDATORY REVIEW:

☒ The above specified course is undergoing Mandatory Review for the following Core or Awareness Area (only one area is permitted; if a course meets more than one Core or Awareness Area, please submit a separate Mandatory Review Cover Form for each Area).

POLICY: The General Studies Council (GSC-T) Policies and Procedures requires the review of previously approved community college courses every five years, to verify that they continue to meet the requirements of Core or Awareness Areas already assigned to these courses. This review is also necessary as the General Studies program evolves.

AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE: A course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. Although a course may satisfy a core area requirement and an awareness area requirement concurrently, a course may not be used to satisfy requirements in two core or awareness areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirements and the major program of study.

5.) PLEASE SELECT EITHER A CORE AREA OR AN AWARENESS AREA:

Core Areas:  Select core area...  
Awareness Areas:  Global Awareness (G)

6.) On a separate sheet, please provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

7.) DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

☒ Course Description
☒ Course Syllabus
☒ Criteria Checklist for the area
☒ Table of Contents from the textbook required and/or list of required readings/books
☒ Description of how course meets criteria as stated in Item 6.

8.) THIS COURSE CURRENTLY TRANSFERS TO ASU AS:

☐ DEC  prefix
☒ Elective

Current General Studies designation(s):  G

Effective date: 2012 Spring  Course Equivalency Guide

Is this a multi-section course?  ☒ yes  ☐ no

Is it governed by a common syllabus?  ☒ yes  ☐ no

Chair/Director: JANINE ADKINS  
Chair/Director Signature: Approval emailed to J. Ricker

AGSC Action:  Date action taken:  
☐ Approved  ☐ Disapproved

Effective Date:
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

### ASU--[G] CRITERIA

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>GLOBAL AWARENESS [G]</strong></td>
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<td>1. Studies <strong>must</strong> be composed of subject matter that addresses or leads to an understanding of the contemporary world outside the U.S.</td>
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<td>2. The course must match at least one of the following descriptions: (check all which may apply):</td>
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<td>a. In-depth area studies concerned with an examination of culture-specific elements of a region, country or culture group. <strong>The area or culture studied must be non-U.S. and the study must contribute to an understanding of the contemporary world.</strong></td>
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<td>b. The course is a language course for a contemporary non-English language, and has a significant cultural component.</td>
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<td>c. The course is a comparative cultural study in which most, i.e., more than half, of the material is devoted to non-U.S. areas.</td>
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<td>d. The course is a study of the cultural significance of a non-U.S.-centered global issue. The course examines the role of its target issue within each culture and the interrelatedness of various global cultures on that issue. It looks at the cultural significance of its issue in various cultures outside the U.S., both examining the issue's place within each culture and the effects of that issue on world cultures.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
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</table>
| 1. Studies must be composed of subject matter that addresses or leads to an understanding of the contemporary world outside the U.S. | This course takes a historical approach to analyzing Hispanic film. A major goal of this approach, however, is to understand not only contemporary Hispanic film but also contemporary Hispanic societies and cultures throughout the regions studied, including Spain. In general, contemporary issues cannot be adequately addressed without a good understanding of their history—a claim supported by a statement on the first page of the Historical Awareness criteria checklist: "historical awareness is a valuable aid in the analysis of present-day problems because historical forces and traditions have created modern life and lie just beneath its surface." | SYLLABUS: The history of Hispanic films is covered in all 15 weeks of the course, which serves as the basis for understanding contemporary Hispanic films. The syllabus topics that best illustrate the focus on contemporary issues are:

Week 3: Topic is "Spanish filmmaking after 1975."
Week 4: Topic is "The new Spanish film"; Students write a review of "Todo Sobre Mi Madre" (1999)—a film that explores a number of complex existential issues in the modern world.
Week 5: Students write a review of "La historia oficial" (released in 1985, Argentina)—a film about the "Dirty War in 1970s Argentina.
Week 6: Students write a review of "Padoma de Papel" (2003)—a film about civil war in 1980s Peru.
Week 7: Students write a review of "La Primera Noche" (2003)—a film about the ordeals faced by a group of contemporary Columbian teenagers.
Week 9: Students write a review of "Voces inocentes" (2004)—a Salvadoran film about children forced to fight in the 1980 civil war.
Week 11: Students write a review of "Danzón" (1991)—a Mexican film about a single mother who experiences life-changing events when trying to solve the mystery of her dance...
partner’s disappearance, living a mundane existence.

COURSE COMPETENCIES:
Competencies 1-9 require students to learn about the historical development of Hispanic films and film-making. This history then is used as a foundation that students use for interpreting and critiquing contemporary Hispanic films.

COURSE OUTLINE:
I.A.3; I.B.; II.A.2.4; II.B.2-3;
III.B.; III.D.; IV.A.3-4; IV.B.; IV.C.

READINGS:
All the required readings address directly how Hispanic films lead to an understanding of the contemporary world outside of the United States.

DIRECTORS:
Students study the work of directors from the past and present. Many of these directors have released films during the past 20-25 years, and most of these films deal primarily with understanding the contemporary world:

Pedro Almodóvar (Spain) has directed and written films beginning in 1980 (Pepi, Luci, Bom) to the present (La piel que habito, 2011)

Alfonso Cuarón (Mexico) has written, directed, and/or produced films beginning in 1991 (Sólo con tu pareja) to one that will be released in 2012 (Gravity).

Francisco José Lombardi (Peru) has written, directed, and/or produced films beginning in 1985 (La ciudad y los perros) to 2006 (Mariposa negra).

Luis Alberto Restrepo (Colombia) has written, directed, and/or produced films beginning in 1990 (Champagne) to 2008 (La pasión de Gabriel), as well...
2.c. The course is a comparative cultural study in which most (i.e., more than half) of the material is devoted to non-U.S. areas.

The majority of the course content focuses on Hispanic films made outside of the United States. The non-U.S. films and directors examined in this course are from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

as many television programs up to the present. Humberto Solás (Cuba) directed films beginning in 1958 (La Huida) until 2005 (Adela). Perhaps his most important film was Lucia (1968), which looked at three time periods in the history of Cuba through the eyes of three women, each named Lucia. Jorge Ali Triana (Colombia) has written and directed films beginning in 1996 (Edipo alcalde) to 2007 (Esto huele mal). He also has directed a number of television programs and acted in movies and TV. Guillermo del Toro (Mexico) has written, directed, and/or produced in 1986 to recent films 2006 (Pan's Labyrinth). Fernando Trueba (Spain) has written and directed films beginning in 1980 (Ópera prima) to the present (Chico and Rita, 2010). He also has been the music producer in a number of films.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Analysis of Hispanic film as art form and as social commentary.

SYLLABUS:
Weeks 2-4: Spanish films
Weeks 5-7: South American films
Weeks 8-9: Central American & Caribbean films
Weeks 10-12: Mexican films

COURSE COMPETENCIES:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

COURSE OUTLINE:
I, II, III, IV, V

READINGS:
The required readings focus on non-U.S. Hispanic films:
1. Spain: "Performing Identities in Pedro Almodovar" by I. Baseluzzeros (20009)
2. Caribbean: "Film and
"Will There be Latin American Cinema in the Year 2000?" by N. Garcia Canclini (1997)
4. Central and South America: "Contemporary Argentine Cinema" by D. W. Foster (1997);
"The 1960s and After: New Cinemas for a New World" by J. King (1990);
"Will There be Latin American Cinema in the Year 2000?" by N. Garcia Canclini (1997)

**FILMS:**
In Weeks 2-12, students view and critique only non-U.S. films:
"Viridiana" (1961);
"Belle Époque" (1992);
"Todo Sobre Mi Madre" (1999);
"La Historia Oficial" (1985);
"Padoma de Papel" (2003);
"La Primera Noche" (2003);
"Memorias del Subdesarrollo" (1968);
"Voces Inocentes" (2004);
"Los Olvidados" (1950);
"Danzón" (1991);
"Como Agua Para Chocolate" (1992).
Official Course Description: MCCCDD Approval: 12-13-1994

HUM213 1995 Fall - 9999

LEc 3.0 Credit(s) 3.0 Period(s) 3.0 Load Acad

Hispanic Film

Analysis of Hispanic film as art form and as social commentary.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Attribute(s):

General Education Designation: Global Awareness - [G]
General Education Designation: Humanities and Fine Arts - [HU]

Go to Competencies  Go to Outline

MCCCDD Official Course Competencies:

HUM213 1995 Fall - Hispanic Film
9999

1. Trace the history of Hispanic filmmaking. (I-V)
2. Describe the impact of the Franco years on free expression in art. (I)
3. Describe the impact of the post-Franco period on Hispanic film. (I)
4. Identify important Spanish directors, and list their major contributions. (I)
5. Identify important South American directors, and list their major contributions. (II)
6. Identify important Central American directors, and list their major contributions. (III)
7. Identify important Mexican directors, and list their major contributions. (IV)
8. Identify important Chicano directors, and list their major contributions. (V)
9. Write analysis and critiques of Hispanic films by applying conventional aesthetic criteria. (I-V)

Go to Description  Go to top of Competencies

MCCCDD Official Course Outline:

HUM213 1995 Fall - Hispanic Film
9999

I. Spanish Cinema
   A. History of Filmmaking
      1. The Early Years
      2. The Franco Years: Censorship and Control
      3. Since 1975: Liberation and License
   B. Directors
II. South American Cinema
   A. Argentine Cinema
      1. History of Filmmaking
      2. Culture
3. Political Upheaval
4. Directors

B. Brazilian Cinema
1. History of Filmmaking
2. Culture
3. Directors

III. Central American Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking
B. Culture
C. Revolution
D. Directors

IV. Mexican Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking
1. The Folklore Period
2. The Golden Age
3. Presidential Support of the Film Industry
4. Frontier Films
B. Culture
C. Directors

V. Chicano Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking
B. Culture
1. Images of Mexican Americans in Hollywood Films
2. Images of Mexican Americans in Mexican Films
C. Directors

Go to Description  Go to top of Competencies  Go to top of Outline
Course Description
This course is an analysis of Hispanic film as art form and as social commentary. The course is designed to introduce students to the cinematic work of a number of Latin American and Spanish film artists and to develop a more detailed and creative reception of each film.

Textbooks/Materials:
- There will not be a formal textbook for this class. However, multiple articles will be available electronically in Blackboard or in reserve at the CGCC library.
- Web content for this course is available in Blackboard.

Objectives
- Trace the history of Spanish and Latin American filmmaking.
- Identify the most important film directors of Latin America and Spain.
- Demonstrate and appreciation of Hispanic films in relation to the social and political context in which they were produced.

Instructional Information
- Class meets once a week. During classes there will be movie screenings and discussions.
- In Blackboard you will be participating in the discussion board and complete some required readings.
- Participate actively in class and in the discussion board since your comments and input will be part of your grade.
- You will write a one-page review on EACH film screened in class due the following class (please see guidelines on how to write these reviews).
- At the end of the semester, you are required to write a 5-10 final paper on a selected film director, a specific period of Latin American Cinema or a Country/region.
Information Regarding Grading, Attendance, and Late Work

- Attendance is very important, as participation is a crucial component of this course. Excessive absences will be reflected both in your grade and in your understanding of the material studied in class.
- After four (4) unexcused absences you will be withdrawn from the class at the discretion of your instructor.
- Late film reviews or overdue assignments will not be accepted. In case you are absent when a review is due, it is the student’s responsibility to send the paper to the instructor via e-mail or drop by the instructor’s office before the next class meets.
- If you are absent the day of a film screening, you are responsible to watch the film at home.
- Always check the course home page (available in Blackboard) to look for handouts and other announcements. It is important to consult the weekly calendar.
- Before you withdraw from this course, please meet with the instructor to consider other alternative courses or announce to your teacher if you will not return to class.

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<tr>
<th>Your Grading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance, participation</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Reviews</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>50 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100 %</td>
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A (100%-90%), B (89%-80%), C (79%-70%), D (69%-60%), F (59%-1%)

Expectations for Student Behavior and Civility in the Classroom

- Text messaging is not allowed in class. In consideration, all cell phones must be off or on a silent mode during class, particularly during film screenings.
- All opinions are respected and valued during film discussions. A safe and inclusive environment is expected in class.
- Academic dishonesty will not be permitted and will be sanctioned accordingly. Please read carefully the following information regarding plagiarism.

Statement Concerning Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of another as one’s own. More than four consecutive words from a source other than the writer constitute plagiarism when the source is not clearly identified in appropriate documentation format.

From the CGCC Student Handbook:
“Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by
another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.”

Statement Regarding Outcomes and Assessment

The faculty and programs at CGCC are dedicated to effective teaching and successful learning with emphasis in the following areas: communication, critical thinking, literacy, and personal development.

Periodically, students will participate in formal and informal assessment activities that will help faculty improve programs and teaching strategies. These activities are designed to facilitate student growth in whatever combination of the above outcomes applies to a course.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are required to register for services in the Disability Resources and Services (DRS) office in the Student Center at the beginning of the semester. Do not wait to visit the DRS office if you want support with any CGCC classes. The DRS office will meet with you to determine accommodations based on appropriate documentation. Therefore, faculty members are not authorized to provide or approve any accommodations for students in this class without written instructions from the DRS office. This must be on file before any accommodation will be provided. You can contact the DRS office at (480) 857-5188.

Information on Learning Center

The CGCC Learning Center's mission is to support students' academic learning by providing free tutoring and resources to reinforce and supplement classroom instruction and to assist CGCC students to achieve academic success. All Learning Center services are free to students currently enrolled at Chandler-Gilbert Community College. At the Pecos Campus, the Learning Center is located on the second floor of the Library, rooms L227, L228, and L229. For a schedule of tutoring hours, additional information, or assistance, students should contact the Learning Center at (480) 732-7231, or visit our website at http://www.gcc.edu/le.

Activate and Access Your Maricopa Student Email

The Maricopa District provides every student with Google-powered Maricopa Student Email upon enrollment. CGCC uses this official student email to send information concerning class enrollment, financial aid, tuition, and other important student information. Students must activate this email account in order to receive these messages. Activate your Maricopa Student Email now at maricopa.edu/google.
CGCC Emergency Alert

The CGCC Alert system utilizes text messaging and email to notify students of emergency situations on or around campus. Students should update their contact information in the Maricopa Online Student Center at my.maricopa.edu https://student.sis.maricopa.edu/psp/STUDENT/STUDENT/PSFT_LS/c/SA_LEARNER_SERVICES.SSS_STUDENT_CENTER.GBL?& in order to receive a CGCC Alert notification in the event of an emergency.

WARNING ON GRAPHIC CONTENT OF COURSE MATERIALS

Some films presented in this course may include profanity, extreme violence, nudity, sexual situations, and other graphic scenes that some might find disturbing.

All students enrolled in this course are hereby informed of the graphic and mature content of some films selected. Consequently, all students are expected to respect and understand the cultural differences portrayed in such films.
UNIT I. Spanish Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking in Spain
   1. The Early Years
   2. The Franco Years: Censorship and Control
   3. From 1975: The liberation years
B. Directors: Luis Buñuel, Carlos Saura, Fernando Trueba, Pedro Almodóvar.

UNIT II. South American Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking in Latin America
   1. Argentine cinema
   2. Peruvian and Colombian cinema
C. Films: “La historia oficial”, “Palomas de papel” and “La primera noche”.

UNIT III. Central American and Caribbean Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking
   1. Cuban cinema
   2. Central American cinema
B. Directors: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Humberto Solás
C. Films: Memorias del Subdesarrollo, Voces Inocentes

UNIT IV. Mexican Cinema
A. History of Filmmaking
   1. The Folklore Period
   2. The Golden Age
   3. The new industry
B. Culture
C. Directors: Alejandro González-Iñárritu, Guillermo Del Toro, Alfonso Cuarón, María Novaro.
D. Films: Los olvidados, Danzón, Como agua para chocolate

UNIT V. Latino Cinema in the USA
A. History of Filmmaking
   1. Chicano cinema
   2. Latino cinema
B. Culture
C. Directors: Luis Valdés, Robert Rodríguez, Gregory Nava
D. Films: La misma luna, El norte

¹ The list of films may be subject to change through the semester at the discretion of the instructor
**SPRING 2011**  
**HUM 213: HISPANIC CINEMA**  
**Dr. Fabio Correa**  
**SEMESTER CALENDAR**

**Week 1**

January 18

- Introduction to the course
- Understanding films – vocabulary – exercise
- Guide to writing about films
- History of the Hispanic Film

**ASSIGNMENT**
1. Complete Assignment # 1 (available in Blackboard)

**Week 2**

January 25

- Discussion of homework
- **UNIT I. Spanish Cinema**
  - The Early Years
  - The Franco Years: Censorship and Control
  - Director: Buñuel
  - Film: *Viridiana*

**ASSIGNMENT**
1. Write a film review on “Viridiana”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**Week 3**

February 1

- 1975: The liberating years
- Directors: Saura, Trueba
- Film: *Belle Epoque*

**ASSIGNMENT**
1. Write a film review on “Belle Epoque”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**Week 4**

February 8

- The new Spanish film
- Director: Pedro Almodóvar
- Film: *Todo sobre mi madre* (All About My Mother)
ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review on “All About My Mother”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**February 15**

**UNIT II. South American Cinema**
- History of Filmmaking
- Argentine cinema
- Directors: Bemberg, Puenzo.
- Film: *La historia oficial* (The Official Story)

ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review for “La historia oficial”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**February 22**

- Peruvian and Andean cinema
- Directors: Lombardi, Fabrizio Aguilar
- Film: *Paloma de papel* (Paper Dove)

ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review for “Paloma de papel”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**March 1**

- Colombian Cinema
- The Guerillas, the Narcos and the New Colombian Cinema
- Directors: Triana, Luis Alberto Restrepo
- Film: *La primera noche* (The First Night)

ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review of “La primera noche”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**March 8**

**UNIT III. Caribbean and Central American Cinema**
- History of Filmmaking
- Cuban cinema
- Directors: Tomás Gutiérrez-Alea, Humberto Solás.
- Film: *Memorias del Subdesarrollo* (Memories Of The Underdevelopment)
ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review for “Memorias del Subdesarrollo”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**March 15**

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

**March 22**

- Cinema of Central America
- The war, the dictatorships and the violence
- Director: Luis Mandoki
- Film: *Voces Inocentes* (Innocent Voices)

ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review for “Voces inocentes”
2. Participate in the discussion board in Blackboard

**Week 9**

**March 29**

- UNIT IV. Mexican Cinema
- History of Filmmaking
- The Folklore Period
- The Golden Age
- Director: Ismael Rodríguez
- Film: *Los Olvidados* (The Young and The Damned)

ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review of “Los Olvidados”
2. Participate in the discussion in Blackboard

**Week 10**

**April 5**

- The new Mexican film industry
- The female perspective
- Director: Maria Novaro
- Film: *Danzón*

ASSIGNMENT
1. Write a film review for “Danzón”
2. Participate in the discussion in Blackboard
April 12

- The internationalization of the Mexican cinema
- Directors: González-Iñárritu, Del Toro, Cuarón and Alfonso Arau
- Film: *Como agua para chocolate* (Like Water For Chocolate)

**ASSIGNMENT**
1. Select a film from any of the directors: Del Toro, Cuarón or Gonzalez-Iñarritu and write a film review

April 19

- UNIT V. Latino Cinema in the USA
- History of Filmmaking
- Directors: Valdés, Robert Rodríguez and Gregory Nava.
- Film: *El Norte* (The North)

**ASSIGNMENT**
1. Write a film review of “El Norte”
2. Participate in the discussion in Blackboard

April 26

Final paper research – Class in library

May 3

- The Latino independent film industry
- Immigration and the border
- Director: Patricia Riggen
- Film: *Bajo la misma Luna* (Under The Same Moon)

May 11

Final paper due

¹Some films in this calendar may be subject to change
Due date: May 10th, 2011
Length = 3 pages min. – 5 pages max.
Sources = Min. 2 academic references cited and follow MLA Style Manual

**Topic:** Select ONE topic from the following lists of directors, film periods or genre and analyze its relevance to the study of the Hispanic Cinema.

**Evidence:** You have to analyze minimum 1 film that provides enough support to your ideas. HOWEVER, for a better understanding and support of your topic it is recommended to watch 2 different films.

For each director some key films are suggested (most films are **in Spanish** but the **titles** have been translated into English so that you can easily locate them.

**Directors**

- Luis Buñuel (Spain-Mexico) (*Un Chien Andalou*, *Tristana*)
- María Luisa Bemberg (Argentina) (*I The Worst Of All, Camila, I Don’t Want To Talk About It*)
- Pedro Almodóvar (Spain) (*Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown, Volver, Talk To Her*)
- Carlos Saura (Spain) (*Carmen, The Garden Of Delights, Ay Carmela!*)
- Humberto Solás (Cuba) (*Lucia, A very Successful Man*)
- Alejandro González Iñárritu (Mexico) (*Amores Perros, 21 Grams*)
- Guillermo del Toro (Mexico) (*Pan’s Labyrinth, The Devil’s Backbone*)
- Alejandro Amenábar (Spain) (*Open Your Eyes, The Sea Inside*)
- Francisco Lombardi (Peru) (*Captain Pantoya And The Special Services, The Lion’s Den, The City And The Dogs*)
- Eliseo Subiela (Argentina) (*Man Facing Southeast, The Dark Side Of The Heart*)
- Jorge Ali Triana (Colombia) (*Bolivar Is Me, Oedipus Mayor*)
- Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Cuba) (*Strawberry And Chocolate, Guantanamera*)

**Film Periods / Regions**

- Argentine Cinema After the Restoration of Democracy (1983-present)
- Post-Revolutionary Cuban Cinema (1959-early 1990s)
- The Golden era of Mexican Cinema
- Post-Franco Spanish Cinema
- The cinema of Central America
- Humor and parody
- Chicano Cinema
- Puerto Rican Cinema
- US-Mexico Border Cinema
Chandler-Gilbert Community College
HUM 213
Dr. Fabio Correa

Guide to Writing about Film

Film has been called "the most hybrid of art forms" at least in part because it is simultaneously a medium of time and space. Many of the terms and ways of thinking that you use in writing about literature, however, can apply as well to writing about film. If it is possible, try to see the film you will be analyzing more than once, preferably on a VCR that will allow you to freeze individual frames. If you can only view the film in our classroom, prepare for the experience by thinking about some of the points listed below. As in writing about literature, generate a manageable topic (one that is not too broad), considering perhaps what is most striking, unusual or effective about the film. Analyze key sequences as they apply to your thesis, developing and supporting an argument.

Guidelines to help a dialogue with a movie:

1. Note which elements of the movie strike you as unfamiliar or perplexing.
2. Note which elements are repeated to emphasize a point or perception.
3. Take notes with key words to recognize key sequences, shots, or narrative facts.
4. Be as specific as possible taking notes during the screening: record not only the figures and objects in the frame, but also how the frame itself and its photographic qualities are used to define content through camera angles, lighting, the use of depth and surface, editing technique.
5. Immediately after watching the movie, take notes on as many details as you can remember.

Some Questions to Consider When Writing About Film:

1. What is the relationship between the film and its title? Is the title ironic? Does it

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1 From: The Elements of Writing about Literature and Film by McMahan, Funk, and Day. Available at http://www.gmu.edu/departments/writingcenter/handouts/film.html
provide a clue to the "meaning" of the film?

2. How is the plot constructed? Is it based on causality, or is it episodic? Can you detect a pattern of repetition or contrast? Is there a vividly marked turning point or climax?

3. What is the relation between story-time and discourse (film)-time? Are the events presented chronologically? What functions do any flashbacks or foreshadowings fulfill? How does the time sequence contribute to mood (suspenseful, satiric, etc.)?

4. Do the main characters develop during the course of the film? What are their traits and how are they conveyed? (You might look at names, speech, actions, costumes, makeup and narration.) Is behavior motivated, consistent? Are the characters "realistic" or caricatured?

5. What is represented on the film? Who represents and who is not represented?

6. What values do the characters seem to represent? What do they say about such matters as their country, authority, sexuality, and political ideology?

7. Does the film make use of symbols to convey its message? What symbols are particularly noticeable or recurring in the film? How do they affect the response of the spectator towards the film?

8. What is the function of the setting and decor (location, sets, props, costumes)? How do they contribute to the mood of the film?

9. How is the construction of National/collective and individual identities represented?

10. How do popular culture and high culture interface in this film?

11. Does the film question or reinforce the marginalization or exotization of "difference"?

12. How do the factors of race, class, and gender play a role in this film? Can you distinguish its historical context clearly?

13. How do cultural institutions and social systems affect the actions and lives of the characters?

14. How do the point of view (omniscient, limited, reliable, consistent) and the cinematic/visual style complement each other?

15. What particular cinematic techniques and strategies are striking about this film? Why?

16. Could you make connections between the movie and other artistic traditions such as literature, dancing, and painting?

17. How is this movie similar to or different from Hollywood movies?


Cinematic Elements to "Read" in a Film
1. Camera movement (tracking, panning), camera angle, camera distance (far shot, medium shot, closeup).
2. "Photography" (lenses, deep focus, filters, film speed, intentional under- or over-exposure).
3. Lighting (artificial or natural, intensity, direction).
4. Framing/composition (shape of objects in the shot and their relation to each other and to the frame). Is emotional distance between characters expressed through composition?
5. Sound track (voice-over, noise, music). What use is made for the sounds?
6. Editing/montage (length of shots, rhythm, relationship of one shot to the next). What kind of effect you get from the composition?
7. Transitions (dissolve, fade in/out, iris in/out, wipe). Any particular that you can recall? And what for?

Useful Sources on Film and Writing


Internet resources:

- Film Glossary: includes vocabulary related to film (http://www.imdb.com/Glossary/)
- Ciberia. Guide about Hispanic Film (http://w3.fiu.edu/ciberia/)
- The Internet Movie Data Base: The best source of information about any film (http://www.us.imdb.com/)
HUM 213 – HISPANIC CINEMA
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REQUIRED READINGS


REQUIRED FILMS


SUGGESTED BOOKS


CLASS HANDOUTS

Film Summaries and Issues to Consider
Film: La Historia Oficial (The Official Story), 1985
Director: Luis Puenzo
Country: Argentina
Plot: The story is about a couple (a high school History teacher and a wealthy businessman and lawyer). They have adopted a girl who is now 5 years old. The mother wonders if the adopted girl is a daughter from a “desaparecida” who may have been tortured and murdered after giving birth. Alicia begins her search for the true about her daughter’s mother

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL ASPECTS TO CONSIDER

- Desaparecidos is the Spanish word for “disappeared” or “vanished”.
- In a coup on March 24, 1976, a Junta Militar seized power in Argentina and went on a campaign to wipe out left-wing terrorism.
- Between 1976 and 1983 - under military rule, thousands of people, most of them dissidents and innocent civilians unconnected with terrorism, were arrested and then vanished without a trace.
- In 1983, after democracy was restored, a National Commission was appointed to investigate the fate of the disappeared. Its report revealed the systematic abductions of men women and children, the existence of about 340 well-organized secret detention centers and the methodic use of torture and murder.
- According to former president, Carlos Menem, records of the atrocities were destroyed by the military.
- Madres de Plaza de Mayo is a human rights group of mothers in Argentina that demand information about their disappeared children.
Cinema Of The Andes

Film: Paloma de Papel ("Paper Dove"), 2003
Dir.: Fabrizio Aguilar
Country: Perú
Plot: Set in the Peruvian Andes in the 1980s, amidst a bloody civil war, it recounts the traumatic coming of age of 11-year old Juan, as he struggles to survive poverty, corruption and violence. After "The Shining Path" guerrilla fighters murdered his best friend’s father and town mayor, Juan discovers that his stepfather Fermin is a "terrudo" (terrorist) involved in the crimes. Fermin then arranges for Juan to be kidnapped and indoctrinated by Shining Path rebels. Juan's life undergoes a drastic turn, from innocently chasing sheep with girlfriend Rosita and playing war with best friend Pacho, to learning how to make dirty bombs and shooting.

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

1. Aguilar compellingly illustrates the limbo in which many rural communities lived, caught between corrupt/unreliable government troops and fanatic Maoist Shining Path terrorists.
2. The film shows in part the devastation of a civil war that claimed over 30,000 lives in two decades.
3. Aguilar takes the violence and political turmoil, seen through the eyes of a child, as an opportunity to show a different side of the conflict.
4. Mixing wide shots of the dramatic Andes with careful close-ups of the characters, it offers a complex combination of beauty and suffering, of open vastness and claustrophobic terror.
5. The film was received as an effective invocation for human rights, in particular for those Peruvians caught up in the conflict whose story had yet to be told.
6. Paloma de Papel draws cinematic attention to some of the complexities of a conflict that killed many of the most marginalized and impoverished people.
7. The film’s main concern is with the sudden coming-of-age and abrupt loss of innocence of a child caught not ready to deal with the conflict of adults.
Film: Maria Llena de Gracia (Maria Full Of Grace)
Year: 2004
Director: Joshua Marston
Country: USA, Colombia
Plot: The story of Marfa, a young Colombian girl with limited options. She helps support the family by working in a pesticide-saturated rose plantation, where workers, largely unprotected against the chemical toxicity, labor in a sweatshop environment. As a desperate escape to her situation, Marfa embarks on a journey smuggling cocaine into the United States as a mule swallowing 62 drug-filled pellets.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1. What does cause a person who is desperate straits to become a drug mule?
2. Maria’s body is a vessel (for drugs only?)
3. In what ways does Maria’s body empower her? In what ways does it des empower her?
4. Camera close-ups on Maria as a participant.
5. The symbolisms (including poster analysis) throughout the film.
6. Are socio-economic conditions and globalization of the economy represented in the film? How?
7. How is her experience similar to/different from the experience of other immigrants entering the U.S.?
8. At the end of the movie as the camera fades an advertisement in the background reads, “It’s what’s on the inside that counts.” What is the significance of this sign within the larger context of the movie?
9. Was Maria’s decision to be a drug mule a good decision? Why or why not? Did she have any other options?
10. Old traditions/new traditions: How can Maria respect her Colombian heritage while adapting to life in New York?
Film: ¡Viva Cuba!
Directors: Juan Carlos Cremata and Iraida Malberti
Year: 2005
Country: Cuba
Plot: The friendship between two children is threatened by their parents' political and social differences in contemporary Cuba. Malú is from an upper-class family and her single mother does not want her to play with Jorgito, as she thinks his background is unrefined and ordinary. Jorgito's mother a poor socialist proud of her family's social standing, places similar restrictions on her son. What neither woman recognizes is the immense strength of the bond between Malú and Jorgito. When the children learn that Malú's mother is planning to leave Cuba, they decide to travel to the other side of the island to find Malú's father and persuade him against signing the forms that would allow Malú to leave Cuba.

Discussion Questions for Viva Cuba

1. There are obvious similarities in the relationship between Jorgito and Malú and the classic story of Romeo and Juliet. Using examples from the movie compare and contrast the two stories of friendship and love.
2. Many critics have seen this story as a political allegory for the current state of affairs in Cuba. Analyze the two different families in the film and what they represent to the national and political climate of modern day Cuba.
3. There are many beautiful shots of the countryside, what do you think the director is trying to convey about the country of Cuba? Coupled with the political and social ideals we gather throughout the film how does this help develop the third main character as the country of Cuba itself? Is it a foe or ally to the greater story?
4. Most views on Cuba come from adults. In respect to cinematography, what does the director do to help us see this film from the point of view of the protagonists, the children?
5. Besides themes of opposition, friendship amongst odds and adversity, what does this film say about the larger issue of emigration? And specifically about emigration from Cuba to the USA?
6. Many parts of the movie can be related to a fairy tale. From the acting to the main characters and the people they encounter along the way, draw comparisons between this story and the stereotypical fairytale.

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1 References from: www.filmmovement.com
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Central American Cinema

**Film:** Voces inocentes (Innocent Voices), 2004  
**Director:** Luis Mandoki  
**Countries:** Mexico – Puerto Rico – El Salvador  
**Plot:** The brutal civil war in El Salvador is seen through the terrified eyes of 11-year-old Chava who knows that when he turns 12 he’ll be conscripted into the government’s Army and forced to kill in the war. El Salvador symbolizes the turbulence and controversy of the United States’ involvement in 80’s-era Latin America. The El Salvador in which Chava grew up is one of absent fathers and dearly held childhoods.

**TO CONSIDER:**

1. For twelve years, the Salvadoran government was supported politically and military by the USA, as it fought a devastating war against a leftist guerilla group, the FMLN.

2. El Salvador, like Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru and too many other nations in the region, were allowed to commit brutal human rights abuses against their civilian populations without significant criticism.

3. It is estimated that between 300,000-500,000 children under the age of 18 are serving in armies around the world.

4. This civil war claimed more than 75,000 lives and sent more than a million of their countrymen into exile.

5. The strategy of exploring war from a child’s perspective might not be very original but its Central American setting during the Reagan era remains largely unexplored in Latin American film.

6. The movie was a resounding success in El Salvador. Everybody went to see the movie – they even had a special screening at 7am the day of release for the soldiers and officials of the country. As they were questioned on their way out their only response was “no comment”. The government’s official stance on the movie is that it is fictional – that those things never happened.
HUM 213 – Dr. Correa
Film “El Norte” – Dir. Gregory Nava

A young Guatemalan brother and sister, Enrique and Rosa, fearing for their lives, flee their native Guatemala following the brutal murder of their father by government soldiers. The film follows their traumatic journey through Mexico and across the border to the promised land of "El Norte." Sustained during the hazardous trip by visions of the American "good life" gleaned from magazines, they finally arrive in Los Angeles only to confront a far harsher reality.

This epic film is told in three parts: the first and third rich in color and imagery, the second filled with squalor as the protagonists attempt to find a "coyote" who will lead them from Tijuana to Los Angeles, California and what they think will be freedom and wealth. There are two major strands in the first part of the film. We see the political realities of life in contemporary Guatemala, a country which, in 1983, brutally killed some 5,000 of its citizens, mostly Indians like Enrique's father with connections to the country's poorly organized guerilla forces. The indigenous Mayan culture has been systematically beaten back by an oligarchy that treats Indians as no better than slaves. Many of those threatened have escaped to "the North," most enter the US illegally. The other strand involves the Mayan culture, its traditional rites and rituals existing and persisting in defiance of the fascist regime. Director Gregory Nava uses dream images, many of them derived from the magical realism of contemporary Latin American literature. In the end, El Norte makes its statement of social criticism on a humanistic level rather than a political one, employing myth and visual poetry to articulate the allegorical qualities of this journey into exile.

Discussion questions

1. Discuss the use of different styles in the film—magical realism and social realism—to depict the harrowing journey and experiences of Maya-Quiché exiles in the United States. In what ways does the filmmaker integrate his social criticism and political vision?

2. Analyze the structure of the film: how are images in the second and third parts of El Norte contrasted with those in the first segment? Are there also certain scenes and images at the end of the film that echo or repeat those in Part I, "Arturo Xuncax." In what ways does the structure suggest El Norte's ironic and tragic vision of "the promised land"?

3. Discuss Enrique's and Rosa's experiences of being illegal immigrant workers in southern California and their different responses to their new environment, discrimination, and the challenges of building a new life in an alien place. What does Rosa represent in the film, and how does her illness from the rat bites during their escape through the sewer pipes pose a tragic dilemma for her brother caught between two cultures and value systems at the end of the film?

4. Why do you think the director chose to include references to ancient Mayan creation myths in a modern film about immigration and undocumented workers from Guatemala?

5. Comment on Rosa's final words, "We're not free. In our country we have no home. We can make no home in Mexico. In the North we are not accepted. When will we find a home?"
Film: *Todo sobre mi madre* (All About My Mother), 1999
Dir.: Pedro Almodóvar
Country: Spain
Plot:
After a tragic loss, a single mother in Madrid goes to Barcelona to find her son's father, whom does not know he has a child. First she finds her friend, Agrado, a wild yet caring transvestite; through him she meets Rosa, a young nun who is pregnant. Manuela becomes the personal assistant of Huma Rojo, the actress her son admired. With echoes of "All About Eve," and "Streetcar Named Desire," the mothers (and fathers and actors) live out grief, love, and friendship.

1. Consider the following citations from *All About Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema*, by Epps and Kakoudaki (Editors), 2009:

"In All about My Mother, the traffic between onstage and offstage worlds is two-way: characters extend their stage dramas into their offstage lives, and turn their personal dramas into performance." (144)

"All about My Mother is melodramatic in theme and in construction. An intense exploration of motherhood, grief, and personal fulfilment, its drama involves moral conflicts and themes of sacrifice, renunciation, and tolerance typical of melodrama, and its structure depends on the omniscient narration that characterizes the genre, though in this case with few flashbacks." (p. 145)

"The tales and trajectories of Almodóvar's characters as subjects in the world raise questions about authenticity and inauthenticity— What is a real father, a real mother, a real child? What is a real woman, a real man? What is the real nature of desire?—that push at the divisive force of binary formulations in general." (p. 23)

2. Elements of Almodóvar in "All About My Mother":

—A melodrama played mostly by women
—Tragedy, humor, wit, color and plot twists: Life as a "theater"
—Life and death
—Sexuality and transgression of traditional gender roles
—An ode to female resilience: survival of women
—Trials and roles of women in life: motherhood
—City space: marginal communities / contrasts
Film: VIRIDIANA
Director: Luis Buñel
Written by Buñel and Julio Alejandro
Producers: Pedro Portabella and R. Muñoz Suay (Spain) and Gustavo Alatriste (Mexico)
Cinematography: Jose F. Aguayo
Edition: Pedro del Rey
Art direction: Francisco Canet
Musical direction: Gustavo Pittaluga
Starring: Silvia Pinal, Fernando Rey, Francisco Rabal, and Margarita Lozano.
Black and white, 90 mins., 1961.

Plot: The title heroine (Silvia Pinal) of Luis Buñuel's masterpiece, a Spanish novice about
to take her final vows, is ordered by her mother superior to visit her rich uncle (Fernando
Rey), Don Jaime, who's been supporting her over the years but whom she barely knows.
He's preoccupied with how closely his beautiful niece resembles his late wife, who died
tragically on their wedding night, and somehow manages to persuade Viridiana to put on
her wedding dress, which he's faithfully preserved. With the help of his servant Ramona
(Margarita Lozano), he then drugs her with the intention of raping her, but deeply
mortified by his behavior, ultimately holds back and hangs himself instead, using the
skipping rope he previously gave to Ramona's little girl. If this opening strongly evokes
the horror of a Gothic novel a form of literature Luis Buñuel was especially drawn to--it
takes on further dimensions just after this suicide, an outcome already complicated by the
fact that Don Jaime, no simple villain and highly principled, is shown rather
sympathetically. Believing herself to have been ravaged, Viridiana renounces her vows
without losing any of her faith and piety, and inheriting Don Jaime's estate, decides to
take in local beggars as an act of charity. Their responses to her generosity are mainly
venal, and they immediately start treating one another with scorn and envy. One of them
takes over the skipping rope as a belt to hold up his trousers—an emblematic example of how Buñuel imbues his universe with a sense of ironic relativity.

Meanwhile, Don Jaime's illegitimate son Jorge (Francisco Rabal) arrives as coheir, hoping to improve the neglected property and meanwhile sharing the house with Viridiana and the beggars. He has a mistress in tow, but she quickly departs after deciding he's more interested in his cousin. Then, when Viridiana and Jorge go off on a day trip, the beggars throw a raucous party and have an orgiastic feast, at one point briefly duplicating in their stances and gestures the figures in Leonardo Da Vinci's "The Last Supper." When Viridiana and Jorge return, another attempt to rape her by one of the beggars is only averted by Jorge's offer of a bribe. In a teasingly ambiguous finale, Viridiana is later seen participating in a three-way card game with Jorge and Ramona.
After watching the film "Viridiana" from director Luis Buñuel, consider:

1. Mention any symbols that you have observed in the film associated with religion, particularly with Christianity.

2. What aspects of the filmmaking are more notorious? Consider camera, lights, space, framing, focus, etc.

3. Which scenes in the film you consider to be the most "controversial"?

4. Why is the film relevant to the history of filmmaking in Spain?
Film: Danzón
Director: Maria Novaro
Year: 1991
Country: Mexico
Plot: Julia is a phone operator in Mexico City who divides her time between her job, her daughter and the Danzón: a Cuban dance very popular in Mexico and Central America. Every Wednesday Julia does the danzón with Carmelo in the old "Salón Colonia". They've danced for years but barely know each other. One night Carmelo disappears without a trace. Feeling lonely and sad, Julia takes a train to Veracruz, where she knows Carmelo has a brother. That sudden trip will change Julia's life forever.

Select ONE of the following critiques and commentaries and find evidence in the film that supports its point of view.

1. Norma Iglesias. “Gazes and Cinematic Readings of Gender: Danzón and its Relationship to its Audience”

In this article the point of departure is the recognition that women directors disclose their gendered subjectivity through film and that this feminine subjectivity motivates, stimulates, and questions the gender of the subject that interprets the film. Studies on the characteristics of women's film have shown that female creators commonly present a feminine -- and in some cases feminist -- gaze and perspective of the reality they choose to narrate.

Danzón is ideal for the analysis of the reception of gender for various reasons. First, the film breaks with traditional forms of gender representation in which women are mere objects, or at best, subjects controlled by male desires. Danzón goes about this rupture in a subtle way that is found to be non-threatening by a male audience, which in turn allows an uninhibited discourse to flow from the male subjects. The film's central characters are all women, and these happen to be of strong character, willing to make decisions and to take control over their lives and dreams. Though we see these characters in scenarios and situations typically ascribed to women, the difference is that in Danzón these are seen from the point of view of the women involved. At the same time, the film "inverts and thus subverts the classic representations of gender and reorients and questions gender roles."
2. Lauro Zavala. “A theoretical Approach To A Reflexive Point Of View”.

Danzón (Mexico, 1992) by Maria Novaro proposes a system of glances (between characters as well as between the spectator and the screen) that involves the spectator in the construction of a space in which it is possible to establish a genuine dialogue between men and women far beyond the moment of watching the film. It is, naturally, a dialogue that might as well go beyond the aesthetic and ideological conventions that have produced so far unnecessarily antagonist visions of the world.

The film Danzón is one of the few, which has been able to reach such a radical proposal at the same time than inviting the spectators to participate in the same play of glances that has been dominant in cinema history. The nature of this film is not narrative or structural, but strictly audiovisual.


The film navigates the spaces of the traditional dance hall culture of Mexico, rife with strict gender codes and procedures, and the less contained space of the port side town of Veraeruz. The film features marginalized characters and less prescribed ethics, and affirms both for their strengths. Danzón is fundamentally the story of an engaging woman’s self-discovery.

David Maciel and Joanne Harshfield. “Women and gender Representation”

Unlike earlier representations of women, femininity in this film is not defined in opposition to masculinity. Women are not the passive objects of the man’s gaze. Each of the women whom Julia encounters—from Julia’s teenage daughter to the prostitute— is portrayed as a person whose self-reliance is not dependent on the whims (impulse) of men, as in the classical narratives, but on her own strengths and on the support of other women. Throughout the narrative, it is Julia who occupies the traditional masculine position of the pursuer, seducer, desirer and possessor of the gaze.
Film: Los Olvidados ("The Forgotten" or "The Young And The Damn")
Year: 1950
Director: Luis Buñuel
Plot: A group of juvenile delinquents live a violent and crime-filled life in the festering slums of Mexico City, and the morals of young Pedro are gradually corrupted and destroyed by the others.

QUESTIONS

1. In this movie, there is direct eye contact made between actor and spectator, or more precisely, when victim meets voyeur. Give examples of how Buñuel accomplishes this dual contact.

2. Is this film an "alternative" to the "official" folklore or national symbols propagated by the classical Mexican cinema? 

3. Is this film unique and avant-garde? Explain

4. How does Buñuel show his refusal to romanticize films?

5. What is the position presented in the film towards capitalist modernization?

6. Is this film a good representation of social realism? Explain

7. What is the importance of the "announcement" made at the beginning of the film? (that all large metro areas--specifically naming New York City, London, and Paris all have impoverished subcultures that breed juvenile delinquency and hopelessness).

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

The controversial film was harshly received when first released; no one with a vested interest in Mexican tourism would ever approve of such a film, for instance. In fact, one of the writing collaborators, Pedro de Urdenalas, was so disgusted that he refused to have his name listed in the credits, a hairdresser on the set quit after a controversial scene with a rejecting Mexican mother, and one film technician asked Buñuel why he didn't "make a real Mexican movie instead of this pathetic one." The public reaction was even worse, as Buñuel reports: "Many organizations, including labor unions, demanded my expulsion, and the press was nothing short of vitriolic in its criticism. Such spectators as there were left the theatre looking as if they'd just been to a funeral. After the private screening, Lupe, the wife of Diego Rivera, refused to speak to me, while Berta, Leon Felipe's wife, attacked me nails first, shouting that it was a crime against the state."
After the initial savagery levied at Los Olvidados, Mexican audiences warmed to the film after it received accolades at the 1951 Cannes Festival, justifiably earning Buñuel the Director's Award. Subsequent groundswell of national pride caused Mexican officials to "see" the film differently, so it played to good box office and dominated the 1951 Ariel Awards, winning top prize in eleven categories. Not an easy film to watch, it's one of the finest films ever crafted that deals with the underclass if not one of the best films of all time.¹

¹ John Nesbit, Old School Reviews, 2006
Film: *Belle Epoque* (1992)
Dir.: Fernando Trueba
Country: Spain
Plot: A Spanish soldier deserts from the army in 1931, only to find himself arrested by a group of local policemen. He is released and soon befriends a lonely, old man in the local village. Problems arise when the old man's daughters come to visit their father and the soldier quickly falls in love with each of them.

Questions to consider after seeing the film “Belle Epoque”

1. What is the theme of the movie and how well does it portray historical events?
2. How does the film portray the ideologies in Spain during this time?
3. How does the film portray the difference between classes?
4. What is the role of religion in the film?

To consider in your film review

Read carefully the following ideas and commentaries from the article “Promiscuity, Pleasure, and Girl Power: Fernando Trueba’s *Belle Epoque*” by Barry Jordan.

“In the opening scene of the film, through the stereotyped pantomimic figures of the Civil Guards, Trueba presents us with a comical father-son relationship fatally undermined by the son-in-law’s absurd, homicidal dedication to discipline. This murderous, macho outlook arguably corresponds to Trueba's own view of traditional patriarchal (and Francoist) Spain: dogmatic, repressive, violent, incapable of dealing with intellectual argument or allowing people to live their lives freely. *Belle Epoque* proposes a radically alternative, libertarian social and family model for Spain, in part represented by a far more benign and successful father-son relationship”.

“The priest, Don Luis, is the foulmouthed, irascible, liberal figure who embodies many of the ideological contradictions of 1930’s Spain. He is described by Dofia Asun as “heretic” and by Juanito as a “disgrace to his calling”. Yet he is a warm, friendly, benign member of the Catholic clergy, with liberal social attitudes, and is generous (to the extent of raising the wages of his sexton, who promptly turns to anarchism and burns down the church).”
For the Discussion Board, consider some of these questions:

- What is the effect of the imaginative and fantastical treatment of history?
- Throughout the film, what is the sexual dynamic? How does Fernando react to the untraditional female roles?
- Discuss this comment from the director: "This film is about paradise and the discovery of life: freedom, art, love, sex, friendship."
- Is it problematic that the film treats violence and war with fantasy and humor?

Don't forget the following elements of contemporary Spanish cinema when analyzing the film "Belle Epoque":

1. Absurdity
2. Extremes / contradictions / ironies
3. Dream / reality
4. Life as theater
5. Critiques of church and government (parody)
6. Vivid portrait of sexual liberation (nudity, eroticism, etc.)
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Cinema Of The Andes  

**Film:** Paloma de Papel ("Paper Dove"), 2003  
**Dir.:** Fabrizio Aguilar  
**Country:** Perú  

**Plot:** Set in the Peruvian Andes in the 1980s, amidst a bloody civil war, it recounts the traumatic coming of age of 11-year old Juan, as he struggles to survive poverty, corruption and violence. After "The Shining Path" guerrilla fighters murdered his best friend’s father and town mayor, Juan discovers that his stepfather Fermin is a "terruco" (terrorist) involved in the crimes. Fermin then arranges for Juan to be kidnapped and indoctrinated by Shining Path rebels. Juan's life undergoes a drastic turn, from innocently chasing sheep with girlfriend Rosita and playing war with best friend Pacho, to learning how to make dirty bombs and shooting.  

**IDEAS TO CONSIDER**  

1. Aguilar compellingly illustrates the limbo in which many rural communities lived, caught between corrupt/unreliable government troops and fanatic Maoist Shining Path terrorists.  
2. The film shows in part the devastation of a civil war that claimed over 30,000 lives in two decades.  
3. Aguilar takes the violence and political turmoil, seen through the eyes of a child, as an opportunity to show a different side of the conflict.  
4. Mixing wide shots of the dramatic Andes with careful close-ups of the characters, it offers a complex combination of beauty and suffering, of open vastness and claustrophobic terror.  
5. The film was received as an effective invocation for human rights, in particular for those Peruvians caught up in the conflict whose story had yet to be told.  
6. *Paloma de Papel* draws cinematic attention to some of the complexities of a conflict that killed many of the most marginalized and impoverished people.  
7. The film’s main concern is with the sudden coming-of-age and abrupt loss of innocence of a child caught not ready to deal with the conflict of adults.
Director: Alfonso Arau
Country: Mexico
Plot: Based on the best-seller book by Laura Esquivel written in 1989. Arau’s story of forbidden love is set on an isolated ranch near the Texas border in 1910 during the Mexican Revolution. The authoritarian, tradition-minded Mama Elena offers Pedro the hand of her oldest daughter Rosaura because the youngest daughter Tita is supposed to look after after her although Tita and Pedro are passionately in love. The film, partly funded by the Mexican Tourist Board, follows the book’s device of starting every chapter with a recipe, associating food and love. The film is told in flashback from Pedro’s daughter’s point of view. The title refers to a sense of boiling anger or passion, like water, which needs to be boiling hot to make chocolate.

Questions to consider

1. Who is the intended audience for this film?
2. What types of morals or values were expressed in this film? Are theses the type of morals one would find in an average Mexican household?
3. What is the importance of the use of fire in the film? (Think back to what the Doctor said about love and matches).
4. How are women represented in the film? Is this how women are represented in Mexico? Is this representation of women sexist?
5. What significance do tears hold in the film? Are they relevant to the film’s central theme?
6. Is the use of spirits important to the film? (Think about the importance of death and spirits in Mexican culture)
7. What was the director’s intended purpose of the film?
8. The author of the book the movie is based on, Laura Esquivel, also wrote the screenplay. Do you think that makes the differences between the book and the movie less of a problem?
9. Is there a lot of information displayed about the Mexican revolution? Why or why

1 Cinergia Movie File. Brandy Navurskis. 2010
10. Why did the director choose to include magical realism in the film? (Examples: Curses, spirits, death)

11. Is the concept of death expressed the way Mexican culture view it? Is it properly represented in the film?

12. Does the use of music add drama to each sentimental scene? If so, what is this type of expression called?

13. Who is the character that represents evil in the film? Is there more than one?

14. How does the use of cinematography affect the film? Does it make the film display melodrama or seriousness or even a comedic approach?

15. Why do you think the director used fire in the very last scene of the film? Does it represent destruction or forbidden love or something else? Does the last scene have a hidden meaning?
Based on the best-seller book by Laura Esquivel written in 1989, Arau’s story of forbidden love is set on an isolated ranch near the Texas border in 1910 during the Mexican Revolution. The authoritarian, tradition-minded Mama Elena offers Pedro the hand of her oldest daughter Rosaura because the youngest daughter Tita is supposed to look after her although Tita and Pedro are passionately in love.

The film, partly funded by the Mexican Tourist Board, follows the book’s device of starting every chapter with a recipe, associating food and love. The film is told in flashback from Pedro’s daughter’s point of view. The title refers to a sense of boiling anger or passion, like water, which needs to be boiling hot to make chocolate.

**Media Literacy Questions**

1. Who is the intended audience for this film?

2. What types of morals or values were expressed in this film? Are these the type of morals one would find in an average Mexican household?

3. What is the importance of the use of fire in the film? (Think back to what the Doctor said about love and matches).

4. How are women represented in the film? Is this how women are represented in Mexico? Is this representation of women sexist?

5. What significance do tears hold in the film? Are they relevant to the film’s central theme?

6. Is the use of spirits important to the film? (Think about the importance of death and spirits in Mexican culture)

7. What was the director’s intended purpose of the film?

8. The author of the book the movie is based on, Laura Esquivel, also wrote the screenplay. Do you think that makes the differences between the book and the

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1 Cinergia Movie File. Brandy Navurskis. 2010
movie less of a problem?

9. Is there a lot of information displayed about the Mexican revolution? Why or why not?

10. Why did the director choose to include magical realism in the film? (Examples: Curses, spirits, death)

11. Is the concept of death expressed the way Mexican culture view it? Is it properly represented in the film?

12. Does the use of music add drama to each sentimental scene? If so, what is this type of expression called?

13. Who is the character that represents evil in the film? Is there more than one?

14. How does the use of cinematography affect the film? Does it make the film display melodrama or seriousness or even a comedic approach?

15. Why do you think the director used fire in the very last scene of the film? Does it represent destruction or forbidden love or something else? Does the last scene have a hidden meaning?
Film: Al Otro Lado (The Other Side)
Year: 2004
Director: Gustavo Loza
Country: Mexico
Plot: three stories about the bonds between children and absent parents. A Cuban boy who lives in poverty with his mother longs to visit his father in the United States, a Moroccan girl attempts to reunite with her father, and in Mexico, a boy disobeys his father to visit a strange lagoon. These related vignettes showcase the powerful hold that parents have upon their children, which often remains strong despite their absence.

Respond to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the film and its title? Explain the paradox and metaphor of “The Other Side”.
2. How is the plot constructed? What is the purpose?
3. What is the relation between story-time and discourse (film)-time?
4. How does the time sequence contribute to mood (suspenseful, satiric, etc.)?
5. Do the 3 main characters develop during the course of the film? How?
6. What is represented on the film? Who represents and who is not represented?
7. What values do the characters seem to represent? What do they say about such matters as their country, authority, family values, education, etc.?
8. Does the film make use of symbols to convey its message? What symbols are particularly noticeable or recurring in the film?
9. How is the construction of National/collective and individual identities represented?
10. Does the film question or reinforce the marginalization of "difference"? How?
11. How do the factors of race, class, and gender play a role in this film?
12. How do cultural institutions and social systems affect the actions and lives of the characters?
13. What particular “cinematic” techniques and strategies are striking about this film? Why?
14. Could you make connections between the movie and other artistic traditions such as literature, dancing, and painting?

15. How does the film make the audience feel at the end? How do reactions change from one spectator to another?

16. What is behind the director’s mind when creating a film like this (3 stories, 3 countries, 3 children)? What aspects came into consideration?
HUM 213
Dr. Fabio Correa
Mexican American Cinema

**Film:** EL NORTE (*The North*)
**Year:** 1983
**Director:** Gregory Nava
**Country:** USA

**Plot:** A young Guatemalan brother and sister, Enrique and Rosa, fearing for their lives, flee their native land following the brutal murder of their father by government soldiers. The film follows their harrowing journey through Mexico and across the border to the promised land of "El Norte." Sustained during the hazardous trip by visions of the American "good life" gleaned from mail-order catalogs, they finally arrive in Los Angeles only to confront a far harsher reality.

Questions for the review and discussion board. Consider the following questions from Eva Rueschmann\(^1\) analysis of the film:

1. Discuss the use of different styles in the film--magical realism and social realism--to depict the harrowing journey and experiences of Maya-Quich exiles in the United States. In what ways does the filmmaker integrate his social criticism and political vision with dream images associated with Latin American literature?

2. Analyze the structure of the film: how are images in the second and third parts of El Norte contrasted with those in the first segment? In what ways does the structure suggest El Norte's ironic and tragic vision of "the promised land"?

3. Discuss Enrique's and Rosa's experiences of being illegal immigrant workers in southern California and their different responses to their new environment, discrimination, and the challenges of building a new life in an alien place.

4. What does Rosa represent in the film, and how does her illness from the rat bites during their escape through the sewer pipes pose a tragic dilemma for her brother caught between two cultures and value systems at the end of the film?

5. Consider Rosa's final words, "We're not free. In our country we have no home. We can make no home in Mexico. In the North we are not accepted. When will we find a home?"

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\(^1\) Eva Rueschmann, Hampshire College, 2000.