

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

May 2012

Discipline: Spanish

Course Title: Conversación: Cine

Proposed as: Upper Division

Faculty Name: David T. Gies (Commonwealth Professor of Spanish)

PRE-REQUISITES

Spanish 2020 (4 semesters of college Spanish) or the equivalent; closed to native speakers. Students will be required to take the UVa on-line placement test. See: <http://webcape.byuhtrsc.org/nwregister.php?acct=virginia> (password: cavalier1). Students may take this exam only once. (Be sure to print the grade confirmation page at the end of the exam.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as an advanced-level conversation class for students who wish to improve fluency in spoken Spanish, build vocabulary, strengthen oral ability, increase listening skills, and learn more "everyday" Spanish. In addition, the subject matter of the films will coincide with the themes of the UN Millennium Development Goals and with the ports we will be visiting. Each class will focus on one Spanish film (to be viewed in whole outside of class). Classroom activities will focus on debate, dialogue, role-playing, group and individual work, writing activities, and oral reports. In-country assignments and visits (Field Program) will tie into the themes of the films and of the voyage. Grades will be based on participation, improvement of oral Spanish, daily vocabulary quizzes, in-class reports, writing assignments, and oral final exam.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to develop each student's individual language skills. It will be conducted entirely in Spanish, and the course materials—the films—and the daily activities are entirely in Spanish. In-country work will be done in Spanish (all of the ports are in Spanish-speaking countries).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

NOTE: No textbook *per se* will be needed, but films (to be provided) will form the basis of the required materials.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

C1 (May 22): Introduction: Selections from "Cine con clase"

C2 (May 23): "Contracorriente" (Peru: 2009)

"Contracorriente" is a love story with a twist of magical realism, which takes place on Peru's gorgeous northern coast. Miguel, a poor fisherman married to Mariela (who is pregnant with the couple's first child), falls in love with Santiago, a photographer/painter, but is unable to reveal that love because of local prejudice and religious inhibitions. As the story unfolds he struggles with what it means to "be a man." The film is touching, realistic, and very moving. Directed by: Javier Fuentes-León.

Millennium Goals: Gender Equity, Maternal Health, Poverty and Hunger.

Reading: King.

C3 (May 24): "La teta asustada" (Peru: 2009)

Critics in Peru were upset that Peru's first Oscar nomination portrayed backwardness and is steeped in memories of war. Fausta is suffering from a rare disease called the "Milk of Sorrow," which is transmitted through the breast milk of pregnant women who were abused or raped during or soon after pregnancy. While living in constant fear and confusion due to this disease, she must face the sudden death of her mother. She chooses to take drastic measures to not follow in her mother's footsteps. Lima's poverty is framed like a painting, and the haunting melodies in the Quechua language underscore the film's tender message. Directed by: Claudia Llosa.

Winner: Berlin International Film Festival, Havana Film Festival, Montreal Festival.

Millennium Goals: Child Health, Poverty and Hunger, Maternal Health.

ARRIVE PERU

C4 (May 28): "Flores de otro mundo" (Spain: 1999)

Patricia, a woman from the Dominican Republic, needs a home and the economic security that her illegal status in Madrid does not provide her. Milady, twenty, was born in Havana and is dying to travel the world. Marirrosi has a job, a home, and the most complete solitude, just like Alfonso, Damián and Carmelo, men from St. Eulalia, a village lacking both women to marry and a future. A clash of cultures ensues as "South America" and "Spain" attempt to reconcile the tensions of immigration vs. the needs of a small rural village. Directed by: Iciar Bollaín.

Winner: Bogotá Film Festival, Bordeaux International Festival of Women, Cannes Film Festival.

Millennium Goals: Universal Education, Gender Equality, Global Partnership.

Reading: Ballesteros.

C5 (May 29): "Todo sobre mi madre" (Spain: 1999)

A single mother in Madrid sees her only son die on his seventeenth birthday as he runs to seek an actress's autograph. She goes to Barcelona to find the lad's father, a transvestite named Lola who 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 bound for El Salvador, but instead finds out she is pregnant by Lola. Manuela becomes the personal assistant of Huma Rojo, the actress her son admired, by helping Huma manage Nina, the co-star and Huma's lover. However, Agrado soon takes over when Manuela must care for Hermana Rosa's risky pregnancy. With echos of Lorca, "All About Eve," and "Streetcar Named Desire," the mothers (and fathers and actors) live out grief, love, and friendship. Directed by Pedro Almodóvar.

Winner: Academy Award (Best Foreign Film); BAFTA Award (Best Foreign Film); British Independent Film Award.

Millennium Goals: Combat HIV/AIDS.

Readings: Acevedo-Muñoz and Epps

C6 (June 3): "Chance" (Panama 2009)

Toña and Paquita are housekeepers for the rich (and snotty) González-Dubois family. When they finally tire of being mistreated, they decide to retaliate. The revenge is sweet (and very funny). And, uncomfortable secrets are revealed. Directed by Abner Benaim.

Millennium Goals: Universal Education, End Poverty and Hunger.

C7 (June 4): "Los puños de una nación" (Panama: 2005)

This documentary film mixes sports and politics. The charismatic boxer, Roberto Durán, whose fight for glory paralleled Panama's fight for independence (Panama did not regain full control of the Canal from the US until 1999), is spotlighted as a symbol of national pride. And finally, Durán squares off against the US champion, Sugar Ray Leonard. Who will win this battle of titans? Directed by Pituka Heilbron.

Millennium Goals: Global Partnership for Development

ARRIVE PANAMA

C8 (June 7): "Te doy mis ojos" (Spain: 2003)

This devastating and brutally honest film depicts the horrors of abuse against women and society's reaction to spousal abuse. One winter night, Pilar runs away from home. She and her son Juan go to live with her sister. While supportive, Ana doesn't fully understand Pilar's situation. Pilar's mother, Aurora, refuses to acknowledge the problem. Antonio is desperate to win back Pilar and struggles to control his violent behavior. He

sends her constant presents and even attends therapy sessions in order to work through his anger. How much can Pilar bear? Pilar gets a job at an art museum and tries to restart her life. Directed by: Iciar Bollain.

Winner: Cinema Writers Circle Awards; Goya Awards.

Millennium Goal: Gender Equity.

Reading: Allison/Jordan.

ARRIVE COSTA RICA

C9 (June 10): "Lake Tahoe" (Mexico: 2008)

Car troubles. Family troubles. Girlfriend troubles. Juan survives and meditates over the strange events that take place in his small Mexican town. An episodic and contemplative journey. Director: Fernando Eimbcke.

Winner: Ariel Awards (Mexico), Berlin Film Festival, Cartagena Film Festival, nominated for Goya (best Spanish-American language film).

Millennium Goals: End Poverty and Hunger

ARRIVE BELIZE

C10 (June 11): "También la lluvia" (Spain: 2010)

As a director and his crew shoot a controversial film in Cochabamba, Bolivia, about the arrival of Christopher Columbus and the subjugation of the indigenous population, local people rise up against plans to privatize the water supply. The contemporary story parallels the abuse that the Indians suffered in the fifteenth century. The director becomes sensitized to the locals' concerns, but the producer pushes for completion of the film before he loses money. Directed by: Iciar Bollain.

Winner: Ariel Award (Mexico), Berlin International Film Festival, Cinema Writers Circle Awards, Goya Award, Palm Springs International Film Festival.

Millennium Goals: Poverty and Hunger, Environmental Sustainability, Global Partnership.

Millennium Goals: Poverty and Hunger, Child Health, Universal Education.

C11 (June 14; Final Exams)

ARRIVE FT. LAUDERDALE

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS (*At least twenty percent of the contact hours for each course.*)

In-country assignments and visits (FL: Field Lab) will tie into the themes of the films and of the voyage. One required FL will be to attend a discussion with film makers in Panama City on June 5. Students will be required to use the vocabulary and grammatical structures they have been learning, employ their comprehension skills, and, following the screening, discuss the film from the perspective of the Millennium Goals. Each student will prepare a written analysis/review of the film.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Grades will be based on class participation (active daily discussion, in Spanish, of the films and participation in the classroom activities), improvement of oral Spanish, daily vocabulary quizzes, in-class reports, written assignments, and oral final exam.

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

AUTHOR: John King
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "Latin American Cinema"
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *The Cambridge History of Latin America. Latin America since 1930.*
(Ed. Leslie Bethell)
VOLUME: 10
DATE: 1995
PAGES: 455-518

AUTHOR: E. Acevedo-Muñoz
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "The Body and Spain: Pedro Almodóvar's *All About My Mother*"
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*
VOLUME: 21.1
DATE: March 2004
PAGES: 25-38

AUTHOR: Brad Epps
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "Figuring Hysteria: Disorder and Desire in Three Films of Pedro Almodóvar"
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Post-Franco, Post-Modern* (ed. Kathleen Vernon)
VOLUME: Greenwood Press
DATE: 1995
PAGES: 99-124

AUTHOR: Isolina Ballesteros
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "Embracing the Other: The Feminization of Spanish Immigration Cinema"
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas*
VOLUME: 2.1
DATE: 2005

PAGES: ??

AUTHOR: M. Allison and Barry Jordan

ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: "Introduction"

JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: *Spanish Cinema: A Student's Guide* (London: Hodder Headline)

DATE: 2005

PAGES: 3-34

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DVD copies of the following films (in Spanish):

"Contracorriente"

"La teta asustada"

"Flores de otro mundo"

"Todo sobre mi madre"

"Chance"

"Los puños de una nación"

"Te doy mis ojos"

"Lake Tahoe"

"También la lluvia"