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**CINE 388: The Great Illusion**  
Spring 2011

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**Course Description**

Film in Spain has a rich but turbulent tradition that, until recently, occupied a marginal position within Cinema Studies departments in American universities. From the pioneering shorts of Segundo de Chomón —often nicknamed “the Spanish Méliès”— to the worldwide success of Pedro Almodóvar’s melodramatic and irreverent films that caricature contemporary (Spanish) culture, this course offers both a survey of Spanish film and an introduction to critical thought in the field of Film Studies. We analyze the trajectory of Spanish film beginning in its silent origins in the nineteenth century, passing through the censorship and hegemonic ideology of the Francoist regime, and ending in the years of Spain’s progressive transition to democracy that leads us to the present-day status of Spanish cinema. Along the way, we supplement the shorts and feature-length films with a diverse selection of critical readings that present pertinent historical and cultural contexts, fundamental cinematic concepts, as well as current theoretical debates in Film Studies. We conclude the class by exploring new trends in cinematic productions including short digital cinema, recent developments in new media, and the rise in participatory cinema.

Over the course of the semester, students will learn to discuss the technical and stylistic aspects of cinema while developing a theoretical language to think critically about the cultural and historical contexts of Spanish cinema. We interrogate the

specificity of cinema as a means of representation (in comparison with literature) and we question the particularities of a cinema “made in Spain.”

### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to introduce students to the history of Spanish national cinema from its beginnings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to its current evolution in new digital formats. Special attention will be paid to the concept of “Spanish national cinema” and to the way cinema participated developing and contesting national agendas.

### **Course Format**

Spanish 388 is crossed-listed with Cinema Studies 388. The course is divided into a lecture session on Tuesdays and multiple recitation sessions on Thursdays. The lecture session is conducted in English to accommodate Spanish and Cinema Studies students. Native speakers teach the recitation sessions in Spanish for Spanish 388 students. There is a theatrical screening on Wednesdays at 5:00 pm in Cohen Hall (402). Students who cannot attend the group screening are responsible for viewing the film on their own by other means such as in the Rosengarten Reserve or online using Netflix.

### **Class Time**

Lecture Session: Tuesdays 12:00-1:20 pm.

Group Theatrical Screening: Wednesdays 5:00-7:00 pm.

Recitation Sessions: Thursdays 12:00-1:20 pm.

### **Instructors**

#### **FACULTY COORDINATOR**

Michael Solomon (503 Williams Hall)  
General Lecture 401 T 12-1:30PM Room TBA

Michael Solomon specializes in Spanish and Latin American cinema, medieval media studies, the remediation of medieval culture in film and digital media, and in the rise of participatory movements from the Middle Ages to the present.

Office Hours: Weds. 3:00-5:00 and Thurs. 3:00-4:00, and by appt.

Email: [solomonm@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:solomonm@sas.upenn.edu)

Webpage:

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/roml/spanish/people/solomon.html>

**RECITATION LEADER**

Bryan Jones (CINE 388 English)

Recitation Group 402 R 12-1:30PM Room BENN 323

Bryan Jones studied Iberian Studies and Mathematics at Wesleyan University. His main research interests include contemporary Latin American culture, focusing on ways to think and imagine Latin America at the onset of the twenty-first century.

Office Hours: TBA

Email: [bryjones@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:bryjones@sas.upenn.edu)

**Course Prerequisites**

CINE 388: No prerequisite

**Required Texts**

Books

Kinder, Marsha. *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. U of California P, 1993.

Hooper, John. *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006.

Triana-Toribio, Núria. *Spanish National Cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003.

**SUGGESTED BACKGROUND READING**

Barsam, Richard, and Dave Monahan. *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film*. Third Edition. W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.

Articles

All required critical essays and articles are available on the course Blackboard site.

## Required Screenings

Students will be required to carefully view approximately 12 feature-length films (90–120 minutes) and a half dozen or more short films (30 minutes or less).

Unless otherwise indicated on the syllabus, the screening of the feature-length films will take place on Wednesdays in Cohen Hall 402 from 5:00-7:00. Students are encouraged to attend these theatrical screening.

Copies of most feature-length films are available in the Rosengarten Reserve for secondary screenings and for students who are unable to attend the theatrical screenings on Wednesdays.

Many of the required films are available on Netflix Instant Streaming.

Short films, clips, and videos can be accessed from the course Blackboard site.

**Important note:** The feature-length film will be introduced during the lecture session on Tuesdays. Students are expected to view the feature-length films prior to the recitation session on Thursdays. We discourage students from depending on viewing the film in Rosengarten given that the class is very large and copies of the films are highly limited. **Remember, it is your responsibility to locate and watch the film prior to the corresponding recitation session.**

## List of Featured Films

Jan 18-20	<i>El espíritu de la colmena / The Spirit of the Beehive</i> (Victor Erice, 1973)
Jan. 25-27	<i>Tierra sin pan (a.k.a Las Hurdes) / Land without Bread</i> (Luis Buñuel, 1933)
Feb. 1-3	In-class screenings of clips from Francoist cinema
Feb. 8-10	<i>Muerte de un ciclista / Death of a cyclist</i> (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1955)
Feb.15-17	<i>Lejos de los árboles / Far from the Trees</i> (Jacinto Esteva, 1972)
Feb. 22-24	<i>La ley del deseo /Law of Desire</i> (Pedro Almodóvar, 1985)
March 1-3	<i>Flores de otro mundo / Flowers from Another World</i> (Iciar Bollarín, 1999)

SPRING BREAK

March 15-17 *Todo sobre mi madre /All About My Mother* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999).

March 22-24 *Soldados de Salamina /Soldiers of Salamina* (David Trueba 2003)

March 29-31 *Vacas /Cows* (Julio Medem 1992)

April 5-7 *Tesis / Thesis* (Alejandro Amenábar 1996)

April 12-14 *Die Stille vor Bach/ Silence Before Bach* (Pere Portabella, 2007)

April 19-21 *Balada triste de trompeta/ The Trumpet's sad song* (Alex de la Iglesia 2010) Note: contingent on the release of the DVD

Online Screenings of Digital Cinema

### Course Requirements

#### Attendance and Participation 20%

Attendance in the lecture and recitation sessions is mandatory. Students earn attendance and participation points by attending all lecture and recitation sessions (3 absences are permitted) and by participating in the class discussions during the recitation sessions. Participation, of course, requires that students arrive at the recitation session having watched the feature film, attended the lecture session, and prepared the assigned readings.

#### Short Essays 60%

Students are required to complete and submit 4 short essays (4-5 pages) over the course of the semester. Keeping in mind relevant discussions from the lecture and recitation sessions, each short essay should rigorously analyze a key element of a particular feature-film or compare a prominent aspect between different feature-films from the previous weeks.

Each paper is due at 5:00 pm on the assigned Monday. Students should submit their assignment through Blackboard in the form of a Word document. More information will be available during the semester.

*Due Dates:* February 14, February 28, March 28, and April 20.

## Final Exam 20%

Students are required to submit a take-home final exam during the final exam period. The format of the exam consists of short-response questions responding to different clips and still images. The exam will be available on the last day of class, and will be due by the end of the university scheduled exam date.

## Grading Scale

98-100	A+	83-86	B
95-97	A	80-82	B-
91-94	A-	75-80	C
87-90	B+	70-74	D
		Below 70	F

**Course Blackboard Sites**

Due to the nature of the course, students in the English section will have access to two different Blackboard sites: one that is course-wide and another that is English specific. Each site will archive the readings, clips, assignment instructions, cue sheets and other documents related to the course. General readings and clips, unless otherwise specified, will be available on the course-wide Blackboard site. Specific readings, clips, assignment instructions, and cue sheets (in English) will be available on the English section's specific site.

**Course Disclaimer**

Students who take this course should be aware of the following:

**1. Spanish Language and Culture.** Although this class is offered in English as CINE 388, it is cross-listed as SPAN 388 and focuses on Spanish cinema. As such, the films discussed are in Spanish with English subtitles and may relate closely to Spanish cultural and socio-historical conditions. Since no previous knowledge of Spain (or Spanish) is required, weekly readings discuss basic contexts that help students fully appreciate the corresponding films. All readings will be in English.

**2. This course deals with visual content that may be offensive for some students.** As a political strategy, Spanish filmmakers often resort to violent

images. They may also incorporate nudity or explicit sexual acts as a commentary on social conditions. Although usually unrated, most of the required films for the course would receive an R rating, some films might be considered among the X rated films, still many other would fall clearly beneath the GP rating.

**3. Laptop computers, iPads and other electronic devices.** Students are not allowed to use these devices during the lecture or recitation sessions. There is much visual information disseminated during the class sessions. Spending time in class checking emails and surfing the web inevitably distracts from the visual content of the course. Moving images (screened at 15-30 frames per second) require close attention. Students who use laptops and electronic devices during class will not receive credit for class participation.



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## Cinema Studies 388

### Detailed Course Syllabus

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#### Jan 13

##### Course Introduction

Students meet with Recitations Leaders.

#### Jan 18-20

“¿Vamos a ver una española?”: The Idea of a Spanish National Cinema.

##### REQUIRED SCREENING

*The Spirit of the Beehive* (Victor Erice, 1973)

##### REQUIRED READING

Triana-Toribio, Núria. “Introduction” *Spanish National Cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003: 1-13.

Higson, Andrew. “The Concept of National Cinema.” *Screen* 30:4 (Autumn 1989): 36-46. **(BB)**

#### Jan 25-27

“Espanolizar el cine”: Early Spanish Film 1896–1930—From Internationalism to National Cinema

##### REQUIRED SCREENING

Segundo de Chomón (Selected Films)

*Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1929)



*Tierra sin pan* (Luis Buñuel, 1933)

**REQUIRED READING**

Triana-Toribio, Núria. "The Cinema from Spain 1896-1939" *Spanish national cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003: 14-37.

Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde." (BB)

Lastra, James F. "Why Is This Absurd Picture Here: Ethnology /Equivocation/ Buñuel Author(s)." *October* 89 (Summer, 1999): 51-68. (BB)

Mercer, Leigh. "Fear at the hands of technology: The Proto-Surrealism of the Films of Segundo de Chomón." *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* 10 (2007): 79-90 (BB)

**Feb 1-3**

"Ni un metro más": Cinema during Francoist Spain

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

In-class screenings of scenes from Francoist cinema (1939–1969):

**Crusade Cinema**

*Raza* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1942)

*Sin novedad en el Alcázar* (Augusto Genina, 1940)

*Locura de amor* ( Juan de Orduña, 1948)

Nodos

**Child Star Cinema**

*El pequeño ruiseñor* (Antonio del Ama, 1956)

*Ha llegado un ángel* (Luis Lucia, 1961)

**"Paleto" Cinema**

*La ciudad no es para mi* (Pedro Lazaga, 1966)

*Abuelo made in Spain* (Pedro Lazaga, 1966)

**"Family Drama**

*La gran familia* (Fernando Palacios, 1962)

**REQUIRED READING**

Triana-Toribio, Núria. "A Constant Concern for the Popular Classes, 1939-1932" *Spanish National Cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003: 38-69.

Hooper, John. "From Hunger to Prosperity" in *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006: 11-25.

**Feb 8-10**

"Politically futile, socially false, intellectually worthless, aesthetically valueless, and industrially paralytic": Spanish Neorealism (1950–1962)

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

*La muerte de un ciclista/Death of a Cyclist* (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1955)

**REQUIRED READING**

Kinder, Marsha. "The Ideological Reinscription of Neorealist and Hollywood Conventions in Spanish Cinema of the 1950s: Falangist Neorealism in *Surcos*". *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993. 18-53.

--- "The Subversive Reinscription of Melodrama in *Muerte de un ciclista*". *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993. 54-86.

Martin-Márquez, Susan L. "Codes and Games in Juan Antonio Bardem's *Muerte de un ciclista*". *Romance Languages Annual* 4 (1992): 511-15.

**(BB)**

Ratner, Megan. "Italian Neo-Realism". *Green Cinema*.

<http://www.greencine.com/static/primers/neorealism1.jsp>

**FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE FEBRUARY 14**

**Feb 15-16**

Old Spanish Cinema (VCE), New Spanish Cinema (NCE), Blood Cinema, and Cinema of the Spanish Transition.

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Lejos de los árboles* (Jacinto Esteva, 1966)

**REQUIRED READING**

Triana-Toribio, Núria. "For and Against Franco's Spain, 1962-1983" *Spanish National Cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003: 70-107.

Kinder, Marsha. "Breaking New Ground . . ." *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993: 86-135

---. "Breaking New Ground . . ." *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993:136-196.

Hooper, John. "From Dictatorship to Democracy" in *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006: 26-34.

Cox, Anna. "A New Cinema of Attractions"? The Barcelona School's Exhibitionist Loops," *Hispanic Review* 78.4 (2010): 529-549. **(BB)**

**Feb 22-24**

Cinema from the 1980's: *La movida madrileña* and Pedro Almodóvar

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

*La ley del deseo /Law of Desire* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1985)

**REQUIRED READING**

Triana-Toribio, Núria. "How to 'Reconquer' Signs of Identity: 1982-9" *Spanish National Cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003: 107-142.

Hooper, John. "Private Domains" in *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006: 89-159.

**SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE FEBRUARY 28**

**March 1-3**

Timid Realism, New Vulgarities: Cinema from the 1990's and Beyond

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Flores de otro mundo / Flowers from Another World* (Iciar Bollarín, 1999)

**REQUIRED READING**

Triana-Toribio, Núria. "Spanish Cinema of the 1990's onward" *Spanish National Cinema*. Psychology Press, 2003: 107-142.

**March 8-10**

SPRING BREAK

**March 15-17**

All About Spanish Mothers

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Todo sobre mi madre / All About My Mother* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999).

**REQUIRED READING**

Kinder, Marsha. "The Spanish Oedipal Narrative and Its Subversion." *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993: 86-135

**March 22-24**

Spanish Cinema and the Spanish Civil War

**REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Soldados de Salamina / Soldiers of Salamina* (David Trueba, 2003)

**REQUIRED READING**

Hughes, Arthur J. "Between History and Memory: Creating a New Subjectivity in David Trueba's Film *Soldados de Salamina*". *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*. LXXXIV. 3 (2007) **(BB)**

Pingree, Geoff and Sebastian Faber. "Garzón on Trial". *The Nation*. May 17, 2010. **(BB)**

Labanyi, Jo. "Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain. The Difficulty of Coming to Terms with the Spanish Civil War". *Poetics Today* (2007). 28:1. 89-116. (BB)

Hooper, John. "Legacies, Memories and Phantoms" in *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006: 80-88.

### **THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE MARCH 28**

#### **March 29-31**

Basques and Catalans: Spanish Regional Cinema

##### **REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Vacas /Cows* (Julio Medem, 1992)

##### **REQUIRED READING**

Hooper, John. "A Fissile State" in *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006: 215-282.

Evans, Jo. "Foundational Myths, Repressed Maternal Metaphors, and Desengaño: Iconography in *Vacas* (1992)". *Hispanic Research Journal* 10.2 (2009): 122-40. (BB)

Santaolalla, Isabel C. "Julio Medem's *Vacas* (1991)": Historicizing the Forest". *Spanish Cinema: The Auterist Tradition*. Ed. Peter William Evans. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. 310-24. (BB)

#### **April 5-7**

Terror Made in Spain: Spanish "*Cine de terror*" and Cinematic Subgenres

##### **REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Tesis / Thesis* (Alejandro Amenábar, 1996)

##### **REQUIRED READING**

Hawkins, Joan, "Sleaze-Mania: Eurotrash and High Art." *The Cutting Edge: Art-Horror and the Horrific Avant-Garde*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000: 3-32.

Totaro, Donato. "The Final Girl: A Few Thoughts on Feminism and Horror." *Offscreen* (2002)

Williams, Linda "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4. (Summer, 1991), pp. 2-13.

Klodt, Jason E. "En el fondo te gusta: Titillation, Desire, and the Spectator's Gaze in Alejandro Amenábar's *Tesis*." *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* 4.1 (2007): 3-17. **(BB)**

### **April 12-14**

New Trends in Spanish Cinema and Experimental Cinema

#### **REQUIRED SCREENING**

*Die Stille vor Bach/ Silence Before Bach* (Pere Portabella, 2007)

*Fuego en Castilla* (José Val del Omar, 1952)

#### **REQUIRED READING**

Hooper, John. "New Perspectives" in *The New Spaniards*. Penguin, 2006: 347-427.

Marsh, Steven. "The Legacies of Pere Portabella: Between Heritage and Inheritance." *Hispanic Review* 78.4 (2010): 551-567.

[More readings TBA]

### **FOURTH SHORT PAPER DUE APRIL 18**

### **April 19-21**

"*Vamos a hacer cine*": Short Spanish Cinema, Internet Based Digital Cinema, and the Rise of Participatory Cinemas

#### **REQUIRED SCREENING**

Selection of online short films and micro short films

#### **REQUIRED READING**

[More readings TBA]

**April 26**

Conclusions and Review

**May 2-May 5**

Final Exams