

ART/SPAN 333E: Film Nations: Comparative Perspectives on Spanish and U.S. Cinema

Course Description

The course is aimed at establishing the points of convergence and divergence between the history, economy, aesthetics, and social significance of film production in Spain and the United States. Issues like the following will all be addressed:

- The political economy of American vs. Spanish cinema (industry, technologies, State policies on film, independent production, etc.).
- Main trends, movements and significant works and authors in both Spanish and U.S. cinemas.
- Film as social and cultural indicator (how do Spanish and U.S. Cinema deal with past and contemporary social dilemmas? How does film relate to ideology and politics in the local and global scenarios?).
- Audience reception (in which ways have Spanish and American audiences related historically to domestic and foreign film productions? Are there distinctive “film cultures” in both countries?).
- Spanish and American cinema at the crossroads with other arts and cultural discourses.

Course Goals and Methodology

By the end of the semester, students are expected to:

- Understand cinema as a multidimensional phenomenon: technological, industrial, artistic, and social.
- Explore two contrasted cinematic traditions.
- Reflect on the ways film operates between the global and the local, the universal and the culturally and historically specific.

The course includes in-class lectures, debates, screenings and film discussions, exams, and a field research (*small group work) on a topic to be discussed with your professor.

Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Increase visual and media skills.
- Discuss film in its industrial and technological dimensions.
- Recognize different trends, traditions/genres, authors and film movements in both Spanish and U.S. Cinema.
- Apply film theory to the analysis of individual films (in-class screenings).
- Gain some basic vocabulary to explore the art and technique of filmmaking.
- Relate film to larger debates on nationalities and globalization.
- Understand the ideological/political dimension of film.
- Complete a project meeting previous learning objectives.

Required Texts

All course materials (presentations, reading assignments, study guides, film handouts, etc.) will be available on Blackboard (virtual platform). Likewise, you will find a list of additional texts on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading

Students' progress will be checked by class participation, journal, a final project, and two exams (mid-term plus final). The final grade is broken down as follows:

- Film Journal (15%)
- Midterm + Final (20% + 20%)
- Engagement (20%)
- Project (25%)

Film Journal

Every three weeks, students will write a short Journal entry (5 entries in total) to reflect upon the material covered in this course (readings, films, discussions, and so forth). The instructor will provide different prompts.

Exams

Exams are aimed at evaluating both the students' specific knowledge of the topics covered in class and their ability to analyze and provide insightful reflections on the material presented in the readings. Questions will cover the contents of the related section/s of the syllabus (*the final will NOT be cumulative) and focus on establishing thematic links between units. The final exam's date will be announced in class.

Engagement

Students will come prepared to class, reading the daily assignments and watching assigned films. Lively discussions will be encouraged at all times. Class participation will therefore be graded in accordance with both the students' previous readings and reflection about the assigned texts and screenings, and also their daily contribution to class and online discussions and debates with relevant (text-based and not random or just personal experience-oriented) comments. Using digital devices for non-class related tasks will negatively affect your participation grade. See rubric.

Project

Students will work in small groups (no more than three-four students) to comply with this assignment. Each group of students will be asked to record a presentation or make a video essay on one topic from a list of suggested topics provided by the professor. In getting ready for this assignment, students should carry out a previous and intensive research on the chosen topic. Every group will get the professor's guidance during the process of research. Every group is expected to produce:

Option A: to record a clear, concise, and illustrative **presentation** using Power Point/Google Slides/Prezi, on which extra material (images, YouTube videos, website links...) may be included. Time limit for each presentation is 12 minutes; *make sure: a) not to exceed your allotted time, and b) not to present for less than 12 minutes).

Option B: a **video essay** (duration: 8-10 minutes) in which excerpts from films / documentaries, still images, etc., as well as audio (voice over) you record yourselves are added.

The professor will be available during office hours to solve any questions on the presentations and will also provide information on grading parameters. Further instructions are posted on Blackboard.

Exams and every other assignment will be marked following the Spanish numerical range. Here is a table to illustrate differences in conversion between the Spanish, U.S. and Standard European grading systems:

SPAIN	10	9,9	9,4	8,9	8,4	7,9	7,4	6,9	6,4	5,9	5,4	4,9
		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		9,5	9	8,5	8	7,5	7	6,5	6	5,5	5	0
USA	A	A	A-	B+	B	B	B-	C+	C	C	C-	F

ECTS	A	B	B	C	C	C	C	D	D	E	E	F
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Please be aware that anything below a 5 (i.e., a C- on the U.S. scale) is a failing grade. There is no pass/fail option at UPO. If you do not officially withdraw from a class by the withdrawal deadline, a failing grade will appear next to the course name.

Essential factors in order to qualify for an A/A+ grade in this course are:

- To comply with reading assignments on a weekly basis.
- To develop analytical and critical skills.
- To participate in class voluntarily and to contribute to discussions with informed reactions.
- To avoid disruptive behavior in class.
- To show excellent writing and interpretative skills when submitting papers and/or exams.

General Course Policies

Each student is expected to be familiar with the course syllabus. Students are expected to focus their full attention on the class, arrive on time, and stay until class ends. Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the 10-minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Students are expected to listen and respect other points of view. Phone calls, social media, email, or Internet browsing at any time during class are not acceptable during class except for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor. You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present for any reason. Students will be held responsible to be up to date by attending class regularly and checking both email and the Blackboard site of the course frequently (monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours).

Communicating with instructor:

Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

Student Engagement Policy

Student's engagement will account for at least 20% of the final grade for every course, thus highlighting its significance for high-impact learning.

Students will receive two engagement grades: a mid-term grade (at least 10%) and an end-of-semester grade (at least 10%). An engagement rubric is provided to ensure transparent and consistent grading.

Absences and lack of engagement

Absences during the add/drop period do not count against students' engagement grade, but may impact their performance in the course.

As a consistent lack of academic engagement may raise concerns about a student's overall academic performance, the following steps will be taken in order to support students' success:

Initial outreach – after missing 3 classes*

E-mail from professor reiterating engagement policy and consequences for additional absences.

Second outreach – after missing 4 classes*

E-mail from professor and notification of academic staff at the International office.

Academic probation – after missing 6 classes*

Student is called in for a meeting with academic staff at the International office. Automatic notification of home institution and further academic consequences.

Any additional absences will result in a failing grade.

Student engagement rubric (each item is equally weighted)

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10)	Proficient (7-8)	Passing (5-6)	Poor (0-4)
Attendance	Arrives on time and stays for the entire duration of class. No absences, or if absent once, demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses no more than two sessions or is occasionally late. Demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses 3 or 4 sessions or frequently arrives late/leaves early; exhibits little knowledge/interest regarding course material missed.	Misses 5 or more sessions and does not demonstrate knowledge of course material missed.
Preparation	Consistently well-prepared; demonstrates deep understanding of readings and completes assignments.	Usually prepared; completes readings with some understanding and usually completes assignments.	Occasionally prepared. Demonstrates limited understanding of materials and occasionally completes assignments.	Rarely prepared; minimal effort to engage with course materials.
Participation	Actively participates in discussions with thoughtful comments/questions; demonstrates knowledge of the material and critical thinking skills.	Participates often demonstrating knowledge of material and critical thinking skills.	Participates once in a while or contributions lack depth or relevance.	Does not participate or is disruptive during discussions.
Attentiveness & Respect	Fully engaged and attentive during all sessions; respectful to professor and fellow students. Use of laptop/tablet for notetaking only; no cellphone use.	Generally attentive, with very infrequent lapses in focus and use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Respectful to professor and fellow students.	Occasionally inattentive or disengaged. Use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.	Rarely attentive, focused or responsive. Repeated use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.
Collaboration & Feedback	Effectively collaborates with peers in group or in-class activities following professor's instructions. Incorporates feedback to improve learning & performance.	Collaborates frequently with peers or in in-class activities. Incorporates feedback and makes moderate efforts to improve learning & performance.	Occasionally works well with peers but does not contribute substantially to in-class or group assignments. Responds to feedback inconsistently with minimal improvement.	Does not collaborate with peers, does not complete in-class or group assignments. Ignores feedback.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. The International Center may also report this to your home university. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

Learning Accommodations

If you require special accommodations or have any other medical condition you deem may affect your class performance, you must stop by the International Center to speak to the Faculty Coordinator to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. The deadline is February 20. The Faculty Coordinator will explain the options available to you.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class.

About using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI tools such as grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc. and automatic translation tools is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the instructor to enhance the students' learning experience. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of these tools to create content submitted as one's own. If the use of any of these tools is suspected, the instructor may request notes and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students must retain these materials until final grades are posted. Failure to produce these materials when requested may negatively impact the student's grades.

*This syllabus is subject to change.