Cinema in Latin America

Class code

Instructor Details
Guido Herzovich | gh55@nyu.edu

Class Details
CORE Expressive Cultures: Latin American Film
Spring 2018
Mondays 3:30-6:45pm, Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm

Office Hours
Wednesdays from 3:15 to 5:15

Prerequisites
This course meets twice a week, in one 1.5-hour session and one 3-hour session, which includes the screening of a film. The class, as well as the readings, will be in English, and the films will have English subtitles.

Class Description
Aimed at fostering a lasting engagement with both film culture and Latin America, this course is an overview of Argentine cinema and culture from the 1950s to the present. It offers tools and guidance for discussing and writing about film and culture, and encourages a personal engagement with the topics and issues raised by the films and their contexts: debates about film as art, political weapon, and/or entertainment, complicity and resistance under conditions of political repression, filmic forms of remembrance and of activism, and the complex relationship between aesthetics and politics, among others.

Expressive Cultures is intended to introduce you to the study and appreciation of human artistic creation and to foster your ongoing engagement with the arts. Through critical engagement with primary cultural artifacts, it introduces you to formal methods of interpretation and to understanding the importance of expressive creation in particular social and historical contexts. As a part of the College Core Curriculum, it is designed to extend your education beyond the focused studies of your major, preparing you for your future life as a thoughtful individual and active member of society.

As such, we will favor an understanding of films within a larger cultural space in close connection with history and society, as well as an understanding of Argentine culture in a regional and global perspective.

We will look at the model of the “film studios” and its decline after the Second World War, followed by the rise of film festivals, film criticism, and an emphasis on filmmakers as “authors”—thus of films as individual artworks—as well as the rise of groups who made films more or less collectively and distributed to advance a political goal. We will explore the political and aesthetic radicalization of film culture (and of culture more generally) during the 1960s and 70s—through works by Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, Fernando Birri, Leonardo Favio, Fernando Solanas, Narcisa Hirsch, and Héctor Olivera, among others.

In the years following the military-civil coup of 1976, and the bloody political persecution that it unleashed, we will discuss the effects of violence and repression in filmmaking and film culture through forms of complicity and resistance, as well as contested memory works produced in the agitated “democratic spring” of the 1980s, such as those by Adolfo Arístarain, María Luisa Bemberg, and Luis Puenzo.

Towards the end of the neoliberal 1990s, we will see the emergence of a New Argentine Cinema in the films of young filmmakers who devised new ways of making films and of engaging with social
Desired Outcomes

- Develop the students’ vocabulary and rhetorical skills to discuss film form and narrative, as well as their relationship to the social and artistic imaginaries that they fed from and fueled.
- Train their analytical skills in a dynamic and engaged classroom.
- Provide them with a solid knowledge of the major trends and events in Argentine cinema since the 1950s as well as a familiarity with the main debates and transformations in film culture in Latin America during the same period.
- Encourage an awareness of the conflicts and debates in a peripheral and dependent cultural space.

Assessment Components

20% **Class Participation & Weekly Postings.** You are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and come ready to discuss the day’s readings and films. Note that since this class meets only twice a week, students with more than two absences are at risk of automatic failure. You will write a weekly, one-paragraph critical commentary about the film to be discussed, to be posted in the “Forums” section on NYU Classes the night before the corresponding class. These will be graded on a V / V+ / V- basis.

10% **In-class Film Presentation.** You will introduce the discussion of one of the films and coordinate the beginning of the ensuing conversation. This Presentation includes a written 1 page component to be handed in to the instructor on the day of the discussion.

15% **Two Short Papers (4 pages, 5% and 10% of the grade respectively).** You will write two short papers on films of your choosing from among the ones required. These should be submitted in hard copy (unless otherwise noted) by the week of February 20th (Paper #1) and March 6th (Paper #2), and should engage with critical approaches and/or debates from the readings.

25% **Take-home Midterm Exam (5 pages).** You will choose one or two topics/questions from a list distributed beforehand and elaborate on them.

30% **Final Sit-in Exam.** To be administered during Exams Week.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** The grade of A marks extraordinary academic performance in all aspects of the course and is reserved for clearly superior work.

**Grade B:** The grade of B represents good work in all aspects of the course—enthusiastic and active participation, demonstrated improvement, and apparent effort.

**Grade C:** The grade of C denotes satisfactory work—regular attendance, ordinary effort, a minimum of demonstrated improvement across the semester.

**Grade D:** The grade of D marks poor work and effort and a need for improvement.

**Grade F:** The grade of F indicates failure to complete the requirements for a course in a creditable manner. It marks a judgment about the quality and quantity of a student’s work and participation—not about the student—and is therefore in order whenever a student fails to complete course requirements, whatever his or her intentions or circumstances may be.

The temporary mark of **I (Incomplete)** is given only when sudden and incapacitating illness, or other grave emergency, prevents a student from completing the final assignment or examination for a course. The Incomplete must be requested by the student in advance; all other course requirements, including satisfactory attendance, must have been fulfilled; and there must be a reasonable
expectation that the student will receive a passing grade when the delayed work is completed. Students must make arrangements with the faculty member to finish the incomplete work as soon as circumstances permit within the following semester. If not completed, marks of I will lapse to F.

Final Exam dates cannot be changed under any circumstance.

Final essays must be submitted to the instructor in print and electronic copy. If the student is not in Buenos Aires, he / she must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FeDEX, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 - (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the instructor.

NYU’s Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a strict policy regarding course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.**

- Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
- Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez, within one week of your return to class.
- A doctor’s note excusing your absence is mandatory. **The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam**
- Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said examination via email to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez (moira.perez@nyu.edu).
- Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your instructors prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your instructor, please contact the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez (moira.perez@nyu.edu)
- If students have more than four unexcused absences, they will fail the course.
- Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. **Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.**
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.
- Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact**
Accommodations

the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Late Submission of Work

You are expected to submit all of your work in a timely manner. If an external situation makes this impossible, you should let your instructor know before the deadline so he can tell you how to proceed.

Plagiarism Policy

Academic Integrity is intimately related to the teaching and learning process. When writing research papers, you need to keep in mind that plagiarism includes the use of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It also includes presenting and/or paraphrasing discourse or ideas from a published work (in print or on internet) without quotation marks and clear without acknowledgment of the original source.

For formatting in your papers, refer to MLA guidelines.

On matters regarding academic integrity, refer to the section “Academic Standards and Discipline” in the College of Arts and Science Bulletin (click here) and to “Statement on Academic Integrity” in NYU Expository Writing Program: Policies and Procedures (click here).

All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.

It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

Required and Supplemental Text(s)

Birri, Fernando. Tite die (1958) (short film / in-class screening)
Corrigan, Timothy. A Short Guide to Writing about Film (9th ed.)


Godard, Jean-Luc & Fernando Solanas, “Godard by Solanas! Solanas by Godard!” (1969)


Stam, Robert, “*Hour of the Furnaces* and the Two Avant Gardes”, *Millenium* 7/9 (1980/81)


Williams, Raymond. “Culture” in *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1978)


Some of the texts listed will be supplemental.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>La casa del ángel</em> (The House of the Angel, Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, 1956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crónica de un niño solo</em> (Chronicle of a Boy Alone, Leonardo Favio, 1966)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
La hora de los hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces, Fernando Solanas & Octavio Getino, 1968)
La Patagonia rebelde (Rebellion in Patagonia, Héctor Olivera, 1974)
Tiempo de revancha (Time for Revenge, Adolfo Aristarain, 1981)
La historia oficial (The Official Story, Luis Puenzo, 1985)
Pizza, birra, faso (Pizza, Beer & Smokes, Adrián Caetano & Bruno Stagnaro, 1997)
Silvia Prieto (Martín Rejtman, 1998)
La ciénaga (The Swamp, Lucrecia Martel, 2001)
Tan de repente (Suddenly, Diego Lerman, 2002)
Los rubios (The Blonds, Albertina Carri, 2003)
Un oso rojo (A Red Bear, Adrián Caetano, 2003)
Estrellas (Stars, Federico León & Marcos Martínez, 2007)
Jauja (Lisandro Alonso, 2015)

Screenings Schedule: Films will be screened during the week prior to the one when they are to be discussed. Schedule TBA.
Week 1

Unit 1. Introduction: A History of the World as Film Knows it.

Monday, February 5th; Wednesday, February 7th
Brief overview of the task at hand. Preliminary debates: do films reflect history? Or do they make it? How to think about cinema and culture?

● Williams, Raymond. “Culture” in Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (1978)
● Corrigan, Timothy. A Short Guide to Writing about Film (9th ed.)

In-class screening: Leopoldo Torre Nilsson’s La casa del angel (1957)

Week 2

Unit 2. Cinema between Popular Culture, Entertainment, and Art.

Monday, February 13th; Wednesday, February 15th
Part 1. From popular entertainment to “seventh art”. The decline of the Hollywood-style studio model in the 1950s and the rise of the independent and of “auteur” theory. Do films have an “author”? Why should they?


Part 2. Discussion of Torre Nilsson’s La casa del angel: an author within the industry.


In-class screening: Leonardo Favio's Crónica de un niño solo (1964)

Week 3

Unit 3. The Hour of the Authors.

Monday, February 20th; Wednesday, February 22nd
SUBMISSION:
1st Short Paper (4 pages)


Part 2. Documentary filmmaking and political activism. Fernando Birri and the Documentary School of Santa Fe.

● Birri, Fernando. Tire dié (1958) (short film / in-class screening)
In-class screening: Solanas & Getino’s *La hora de los hornos* (1968)

**Week 4**

**Unit 4. The Two Avant-Gardes.**

**March 1st**

**Monday, February 27th; Wednesday, March 1st**


- Godard, Jean-Luc & Fernando Solanas, “Godard by Solanas! Solanas by Godard!” (1969)

In-class screening: Héctor Olivera’s *La Patagonia rebelde* (1974)

**Week 5**

**March 6th**

**SUBMISSION:** 2nd Short Paper (4 pages)

**Monday, March 6th; Wednesday, March 8th**


- In-class screening of short films by Claudio Caldini & Narcisa Hirsch.

In-class screening: Adolfo Aristarain’s *Tiempo de revancha* (1982)

**Week 6**

**March 13th**

**Unit 5. The 1976-83 Dictatorship: Complicity and Resistance.**

**Monday, March 13th; Wednesday, March 15th**


Screening: *La historia oficial* (1985)
Unit 6. Post-dictatorship: Contested Memories.

Monday, March 20th; Wednesday, March 22nd

Cinema and democracy during the 80s. Contested memories: Luis Puenzo’s official version of the years of dictatorship (Oscar-winning La historia oficial, 1986) and Albertina Carri’s ground-breaking Los rubios (2003).


In-class screening: Albertina Carri’s Los rubios (2003)

Week 8

Spring Break

March 26th- April 2nd

Week 9

Unit 7. New Argentine Cinema

Monday, April 3rd; Wednesday, April 5th

Young filmmakers and the rebirth of independent cinema. Argentina as a “world cinema hotspot”: the impact of Adrián Caetano & Bruno Stagnaro’ Pizza, birra, faso (1998).

Home Watch: Adrián Caetano & Bruno Stagnaro’s Pizza, birra, faso (1998)


In-class screening: Lucrecia Martel’s La ciénaga (2001)

Week 10

Monday, April 10th; Wednesday, April 12th


- Guest, Haden. Interview with Lucrecia Martel. BOMB Magazine (2009)

Part 2. Neoliberalism, globalization, and “Latin American cinema” today. How to fund, make, and distribute independent cinema in the 21st century?


**In-class screening: Diego Lerman’s *Tan de repente* (2002)**

### Week 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 17th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 8. Reinterpretations of Traditional Genres</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, April 17th; Wednesday, April 19th</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1. Discussion of Diego Lerman’s <em>Tan de repente</em></strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Part 2. From “art film” to “independent cinema”: Film Festivals and Latin American Cinema.**


**In-class screening: *Un oso rojo* (2003)**

### Week 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 24th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, April 24th; Wednesday, April 26th</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1. Violence and class conflicts in the 90s. Adrián Caetano’s <em>Un oso rojo</em> and the suburban western.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Part 2. What is (or was?) the New Argentine Cinema?**


**In-class screening: Federico León & Marcos Martínez’s *Estrellas* (2007, 64’)**

### Week 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May 3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 9. Movies beyond movie theaters.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, May 3rd; Wednesday, May 5th</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cinema beyond the theater circuit. Film, video, and contemporary art. What is art today? Who is an artist? Discussion of Federico León and Marcos Martínez’s <em>Estrellas</em> (2007).</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In-class screening: Lisandro Alonso’s *Jauja* (2015)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Monday, May 8th; Wednesday, May 10th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Exam</th>
<th>FINAL SIT-IN EXAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 15-18th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Classroom Etiquette | The use of phones and iPods in class is forbidden |

| Your Instructor | Guido Herzovich holds a PhD in Latin American Cultures from Columbia University, where he has taught Latin American cinema and literature, and a B.A. in Literary Theory from the University of Buenos Aires. Has been a visiting researcher at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS, Paris) and the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Berlin), and is now a researcher at CONICET, Argentina’s national research agency. As a film critic, he was a regular contributor to *Haciendo Cine* and *Inrockuptibles*, among other publications. He co-edits *El Ansia. Revista de literatura argentina*. He co-wrote the script for *Zainichi* (2011), a medium-length fiction film directed by Federico Pintos, and co-directed a medium-length documentary on the making of Diego Lerman’s award-winning film *Tan de repente* (2008). |