

Graduate seminars in Cinema Studies, spring 2016
(see below for information about AY 2016-17)

“Embodied Cinemas: The Practice of the Theory in Spanish and Argentine Film”

Professor Susan Martin-Márquez (susanmm@rci.rutger.edu)

16:940:660 // 16:195:522*

Seminar: Thursday, 4:30-7:30 PM, Comp Lit Seminar Room (CAC)

Screenings by arrangement

In this seminar we will explore cinematic and cultural theories of the body, paying particular attention to the figuration of onscreen bodies, and to their relationship to the embodied experience of the film spectator. Some topics to be considered include: biopower/biopolitics; the racialization and gendering/sexing of bodies; gaze theory; “body genres” such as melodrama, pornography and horror; disability studies; performance theory; and the “haptic,” or tactile/kinesthetic qualities of cinema.

Theoretical readings may be drawn from: Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Frantz Fanon, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Richard Dyer, Laura Mulvey, Kaja Silverman, Mary Ann Doane, Linda Williams, Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Diana Taylor, Joseph Roach, Rosemarie Garland Thompson, Robert McRuer, Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks, Giuliana Bruno, and Jennifer Barker.

These texts will be read alongside films produced since the 1960s in Argentina and Spain, two nations whose cultural and sociopolitical contexts—inflected by Catholicism, the colonial legacy, and the experience of authoritarian rule and its aftermath—are intensely imbricated with the “disciplining” as well as the “unruly” rebellion of bodies. Filmmakers we are likely to study: Hugo Santiago, Leonardo Favio, María Luisa Bemberg, Albertina Carri, Adrián Caetano, Lucrecia Martel, and Lucía Puenzo (Argentina); Luis Buñuel, Pere Portabella, Bigas Luna, Pedro Almodóvar, Julio Medem, and Isabel Coixet (Spain).

Prior exposure to film studies is welcome but not required. Portions of the seminar will be devoted to close textual readings; by the end of the semester, students should feel comfortable with the formal analysis of cinema. Some supplementary readings will be available in Spanish, but required texts and class discussions will be in English, and all films will be subtitled.

[*Please note that although it shares the same course number, this is not the Core seminar in Cinema Studies, required for completion of the Graduate Certificate. This course counts as a Graduate Certificate elective.]

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For spring 2016, **Professor Sandy Flitterman-Lewis** is also welcoming graduate students to enroll in one of her undergraduate courses (**Film Noir** or **Theories of Women & Film**) and pursue a related independent study with her (under the course number 16:195:518:01; this would also count as a Graduate Certificate elective). Please contact her if you are interested in this opportunity: sweetsod@aol.com. Here are the descriptions for those courses:

Film Noir

T TH 4:30-5:50 PM; Screening: Th 6:10-9:00

This course will consider the film noir- the hard-boiled detective thriller- in terms of gender, power, and sexuality. Whether it is seen as a genre (with a specific set of conventions regarding iconography, character types, plot motifs, and narrative organization) or a cycle of films (marked by a distinctive nocturnal visual style and a thematics of chaos and cynicism amplified by dramatic textual effects), the single defining constant in the film noir is the female character, the femme fatale. The noir woman is encoded as threatening, dangerous and even deadly to the hero, no matter what specific action is developed in the narrative. Whether this takes the form of external social menace through murder and deceit, or psychological terror in which her very presence is threatening to the male, the femme fatale is primarily defined by her desirable but dangerous sexuality. Obviously, this suggests definitions of masculinity as well, and makes what is traditionally considered a "masculine" genre a privileged site for the examination of complex gender relations. We will view such classic film noirs as *Double Indemnity*, *Gilda*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Mildred Pierce*, and *Lady from Shanghai* (among others) from the triple perspective of relations of gender, power and sexuality.

Theories of Women & Film

T TH 1:10-2:30; Screening: T 6:10-9

This course will develop a feminist analysis of the cinema from the dual perspective of individual films themselves and their social/cultural context. Using examples from both Hollywood and alternative feminist cinema, we'll trace the development of feminist film criticism and theory, from the landmark articles of Claire Johnston and Laura Mulvey to the current work of Ginette Vincendeau and Mary Ann Doane, among others. We'll consider such issues as female authorship, the woman viewer, woman-as-spectacle and visual pleasure. Our concern will be to 1) construct a theory of the "female voice" in cinema, 2) define and interpret the function of the woman's image, and 3) understand the concept of sexual difference as a social concept and a phenomenon of the unconscious. Framing our analyses of filmmaking, film viewing, and films themselves will be the ongoing search for an "alternative language of desire." Films will include such Hollywood classics as *Stella Dallas*, *Marnie*, and *Duel In The Sun*, and more recent feminist films such as *Vagabond*, *Daughters Of The Dust*, and *Jeanne Dielmann*.

Cinema Studies graduate seminars planned for AY 2016-17:

Fall: Postwar German Cinema (Professor Fatima Naqvi)

Spring: Film Theory and World Cinema/Core Seminar (Professor Rhiannon Welch)