

Women Filmmakers in Spain

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: BCLA 3026

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: xxx

Course Description

This course explores the contributions of women filmmakers to Spanish cinema, examining their creative strategies and the social, political, and cultural themes they address. Through the works of directors such as Pilar Miró, Isabel Coixet, and Carla Simón, students will analyze key films that challenge traditional narratives and present diverse perspectives on gender, identity, and contemporary Spanish society. The course emphasizes critical thinking and analysis and academic and journalistic writing, integrating film screenings, readings, and class discussions. Students will engage with feminist film theory, Spanish history, and cinematic techniques to deepen their understanding of the unique voice of women in Spanish film, as well as the systemic obstacles that jeopardize their success in the Spanish film industry. By the end of the course, students will enhance their ability to write insightful, research-based essays and specialized journalistic pieces, develop a nuanced appreciation of Spanish women filmmakers, and critically evaluate the intersection of gender and cinematic expression.

Course Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students will:

- Gain insight into the historical and cultural contexts influencing the careers and creative works of women filmmakers in Spain.

- Explore the contributions of Spanish women filmmakers to cinema and their impact on cultural and social discourse.
- Analyze films by Spanish women directors, focusing on themes like gender, identity, and societal change.
- Apply feminist film theory to the works of Spanish women filmmakers.
- Develop critical thinking and academic writing skills through in-depth analysis of films, texts, and scholarly materials.
- Write well-researched and persuasive essays showcasing an understanding of film as a cultural and artistic medium.
- Engage in evidence-based discussions on film's societal and gender-related implications, including controversial aspects of the Spanish film industry.
- Enhance their research, analytical writing, and strategic communication techniques from an intersectional perspective.

Methodology

This course uses a combination of guided lectures (flipped classroom), in-class debates and discussions, written assignments, student presentations, field studies, and company visits in order to merge a first-hand experience, academic learning and critical thinking to better understand the current situation of women filmmakers in Spain and their importance for Spanish film industry, attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to read all assigned materials (20–30 pages per class session) before class and come ready to engage in class discussions. Students are expected to watch the required films in advance according to the course's calendar. The assigned films are available with English subtitles in different streaming platforms catalogues in Spain, mainly in Netflix. Additionally, DVD copies will be available for screening for those who cannot access those platforms. The professor reserves their right to change the selected films as needed.

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Required Reading / Materials

- Bernabo, L. (2021). Whitewashing diverse voices: (de)constructing race and ethnicity in Spanish-language television dubbing. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(7), 1297–1310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443721999932>
- Brady Cohen Marshall, L. (2009). *Film theory and criticism: introductory readings*. Oxford Univ. Press.

- █ Clover, C. (1993). *Men, Women and Chain Saws. Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Princeton University Press.
- █ D'Lugo, M., & Smith, P. J. (2012). Auteurism and the Construction of the Canon. In J. Labany & T. Pavlovic (Eds.), *A Companion to Spanish Cinema* (pp. 113–151). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118322765.ch5>
- █ Gamman, L., & Marshment, M. (Eds.). (1989). *The Female Gaze: Women As Viewers Of Popular Culture*. Real Comet Press.
- █ Gil, F. (2016). Exemplary Women: The Use of Film and Censorship as a Means of Moral Indoctrination during the Franco Dictatorship in Spain. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 49(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12442>
- █ Higginbotham, V. (1988). Spanish Film Under Franco. In *Spanish Film Under Franco*. <https://doi.org/10.7560/775916>
- █ Hill Collins, P., & Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
- █ hooks, bell. (1992). The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (pp. 115–131). South End Press.
- █ Jordan, B., & Morgan-Tamosunas, R. (2000). *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*. Arnold.
- █ Kinder, M. (1983). The children of Franco in the new Spanish cinema. *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208309361157>
- █ Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Columbia University Press.
- █ Labanyi, J., & Pavlović, T. (2012). A Companion to Spanish Cinema. In *A Companion to Spanish Cinema*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118322765>
- █ Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6–18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>
- █ Sharrett, C. (2017). The Horror Film as Social Allegory (And How it Comes Undone). In H. M. Benshoff (Ed.), *A Companion to the Horror Film*. Wiley Blackwell.
- █ Williams, L. (1984). When the Woman Looks. In M. A. Doane, P. Mellencamp, & L. Williams (Eds.), *Re-vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism* (Vol. 3). American Film Institute Monograph Series.
- █ Williams, L. (2001). *When Women Look: A Sequel*. Senses of Cinema.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	15%
Guided class discussion	20%
Written reports (5 at 7%)	35%
Group project	30%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Participation: Students are expected to engage in class discussion, dialogue and debate with their classmates and the professor, and raise relevant questions. Students are encouraged to express their opinions in class with the professor and the other students, always with a tolerant and respectful tone to create an inclusive environment for everyone. Class participation will request students to engage with Spanish media and culture by watching, reading, and/or listening to different academic and advertising products that will often need to be analyzed through the lens of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Guided class discussion: With the support of the professor, students will be asked to guide and moderate one of the in-class debates or discussions, by briefly presenting a critical analysis of one of the materials to their classmates, encouraging discussion and raising relevant and thoughtful questions to help create a welcoming environment for reflection.

Written reports: Students will write individual reports (around 1,500 words each) every two weeks, in the form of brief academic essays or journalistic pieces, analyzing and reflecting on the course topics. Those assignments may deal with field study visits, guest speakers, company visits, or product analysis and, when some of them may be more academic essays, others will belong to journalistic genres such as critiques, columns, or specialized newspaper features. These reports will be submitted as a draft and reviewed by the professor. Students will receive timely feedback, which will be sent back to them for revision before the final submission deadline. Only the final submission will be graded, as the draft is a tool for students' writing improvement.

Group project: This final project offers students a hands-on opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to practical challenges in specialized film journalistic writing. Working in groups of 2–3 people, students will research and prepare to interview a Spanish filmmaker connected to the topics covered during the course. Each group will receive contact information for CIMA (Women Filmmakers and Audiovisual Media Association), local film schools in Barcelona, and other relevant organizations and will be responsible for scheduling the interview. To successfully complete the assignment, students must conduct thorough research on their chosen course-related themes, the filmmaker’s background and work, and the current status of Spanish cinema for women, particularly in Barcelona. This research must be evident in the interview, demonstrating respect for the filmmaker’s expertise and achievements.

The project will assess students’ research quality, understanding of the host culture, and the filmmaker’s contributions, as well as the depth, relevance, and professionalism of the interview. Additionally, the final product—written or recorded—must effectively communicate the insights gained during the process. The assessment for this project will be split into three aspects: research skills and knowledge about the author (30%), analysis and understanding of the author’s work (35%) and writing and communication skills (35%).

In the event that students are not successfully able to contact a filmmaker and perform the interview, they will be able to submit an alternative interview to one of the filmmakers whose work is covered during the course. To do this, they will need to write both the questions and answers, as well as a robust introduction for the interview. Deep research and understanding of the author are expected, including reading additional literature to improve and expand their knowledge on the author’s context and work.

Course Content

Introduction to academic research and journalism writing: How do we write a good essay?

Unit 1

History of Spanish Film with a Gender Perspective

- Early Beginnings: Spanish media in early 20th Century
- Civil War: Women and war journalism and film
- Dictatorship: Women in Francoism
 - Writing tips: critical essay
- Transition and Early Democracy
 - Screening: El crimen de Cuenca (Pilar Miró, 1980)
- 21st Century
 - Screening: Requisitos para ser una persona normal (Leticia Dolera, 2015)

Unit 2

Film Criticism & Aesthetic Contributions

- Feminist Film Theory: Key Concepts and Frameworks
 - Writing tips: audiovisual analysis
- Narrative and Visual Strategies in Women's Cinema: Identification and male gaze
 - Screening: No estás sola, la lucha contra La Manada (Almudena Carracedo y Robert Bahar, 2024)
- Genre Exploration: Romantic Comedy, Documentary, and Horror Film
 - Screening: Cerdita (Carlota Pereda, 2022)

Unit 3

The Spanish Film Industry & Gender Inequalities

- The Role of Women in Spanish Film Production and Direction
 - Writing tips: Film critique

- Institutional Support: CIMA and Advocacy for Gender Equality
 - Screening: La vida secreta de las palabras (Isabel Coixet, 2005)
- Challenges in the Industry: Funding, Distribution, and Recognition
 - Screening: Te doy mis ojos (Icíar Bolláin, 2003)
- Comparative Analysis: Spain and Other Global Cinematic Industries
 - Screening: ¡Salta! (Olga Osorio, 2023)
- Strategies for Change: Emerging Voices and Industry Movements

Unit 4

Intersectionality in Spanish Women's Cinema

- Intersecting Identities: Race, Class, and Gender in Film
 - Writing tips: Newspaper feature
- Representations of Migrant and Marginalized Communities
 - Screening: Alcarràs (Carla Simón, 2022)
- Rural vs. Urban Narratives in Women's Filmmaking
 - Screening: La novia (Paula Ortiz, 2015)
- Case Studies: Exploring Intersectional Themes in Spanish Cinema

Unit 5

Queer Representation & the LGBTQIA+ Community

- Queer Filmmakers and Storytelling in Spain
 - Writing tips: The interview
- Exploring Gender and Sexuality in Women-Directed Films
 - Screening: Carmen y Lola (Arantxa Echevarría, 2018)
- Breaking Stereotypes: LGBTQ+ Characters and Narratives
 - Screening: Todo lo otro (1x01+1x02) (Abril Zamora, 2021)
- The Role of Women Filmmakers in Advancing LGBTQ+ Rights

- ▣ Case Studies: LGBTQ+ Themes in Spanish Women's Cinema

Field study and experiential learning components may include:

- ▣ Afroféminas
- ▣ Ateneu del Raval
- ▣ Visit to TV3
- ▣ Gremi de Cinemes de Catalunya
- ▣ CIMA
- ▣ Ca la Dona
- ▣ Walking Tour of Spanish Women History (Barcelona Other Eyes Tour)
- ▣ Women's Library in Barcelona
- ▣ Associació Dona i Cinema
- ▣ Dones Visuals

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).