



BSAS FILM 3310

Cultural Identity and Multiculturalism in Contemporary Film

Course Description

Argentina and the United States –along with Australia, Canada and Brazil- are considered to be “countries of immigrants”, whose societies have been largely influenced by the mass migration waves of the mid-19th century as well as subsequent immigrant arrivals. Both societies have been defined as “melting pots”.

This class will examine the ways in which racial and ethnic differences have been visualized in the United States and Argentina. Students will study how Hollywood has created films that analyze issues of race and ethnicity in a multicultural United States and, in a comparative perspective, examine how independent filmmakers have portrayed ethnic relations in Argentina’s social and economic reality of the 21st century.

We will explore how images have helped to “inscribe” a diverse range of narratives around cultural identity. By tracing the visual markers of difference(s) historically, we will discuss how images have operated both to “naturalize” structural patterns of oppression as well as to critique and challenge received notions regarding diversity.

Course Learning Objectives

- To do an overview of approaches to multiculturalism.
- To analyze theories of race, ethnicity and nationalism and their reflection in practice.
- To discuss various models of interethnic relations (segregation/separation, assimilation, amalgamation, accommodation, integration, inclusion)
- To analyze definitions and forms of discrimination (direct, indirect, victimization) as well as levels of discrimination (personal, cultural, institutional, structural).
- To examine bias and explore the relationship between film and national culture in the United States and Argentina.
- To analyze the ways in which racial and ethnic difference has been visualized in the United States and Argentina through application of image “codes” (framing, focus, costume, setting, performance) in films.
- To understand how images support and disseminate narratives regarding racial and ethnic difference in the United States and Argentina.
- To critique narratives regarding racial and ethnic difference in the United States and Argentina.

Required Materials

Course Reader prepared by professor.

Methodology

Students are expected to read the assigned materials and participate actively in class discussion. The six films to be analyzed will be viewed in class.

Evaluation and grading

The course requires the writing of **two papers** on topics suggested by the professor. In addition, students will have one **oral assignment**.

First paper	35 %
Second paper	35 %
Oral assignment	20 %
Class participation	10 %

To pass this course you must fulfill all instances of evaluation and attendance requirements. Any paper receiving a 3 (three) or below is considered a requirement not met. Make-ups will be at the professor's discretion.

Requirements:

To credit the course the student must fulfill all requirements including reading, hand in the **two papers** on time, participate in class and meet the attendance requirement.

Attendance:

A minimum 75% attendance is necessary to pass this course.

Grading scale:

10 (ten)	Excellent
9 (nine)	Very Good
8 (eight)	Good
7 (seven)	Above Average
6 (six)	Average
5 (five)	Below Average
4 (four)	Lowest Passing Grade
3 (three) 2 (two) 1 (one)	Failure

Plagiarism:

You commit plagiarism if you:

- 1- Fail to acknowledge the sources of any information in your paper which is not either common knowledge or personal knowledge.
- 2- Fail to acknowledge direct quotation either by using quotation marks or (for longer passages) indentation.
- 3- Merely paraphrase the original words of your source.
- 4- Borrow the ideas, examples, or structure of your source without acknowledging it.
- 5- Take, buy, or receive a paper written by someone else and present it as your own.
- 6- Use one paper for two different courses, or re-use a paper previously submitted for credit, without the prior approval of the instructor and instructors.

You commit collusion if you:

- 1- Allow someone else to write your papers.
- 2- Allow someone else to edit your papers without your instructor's knowledge or permission.

Source: University of Texas, Austin

Should you get caught committing plagiarism you will receive an automatic 1 (one).

Contents and Schedule

Week 1

* The puzzles of Race, Ethnicity and Nationality *

Introduction:

Terms for Multicultural Studies: Defining "Race," "Ethnicity," and "Nationality" by Professor Gregory Jay, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, "Mapping the Terrain. Definitions" in Cornell et. al. *Ethnicity and Race. Making Identities in a Changing World*, London & New Delhi: Pine Forge Press, 2007, pp. 15-40.

"The Other"

Deborah Young, "A Chinese Tale: Rome Film Review", *The Hollywood Reporter*, November 8th, 2011.

Ignacio Huang, "The real Chinese tale", *Clarín*, 2001.

Nancy Liu, "The Chinese Diaspora in Latin America", at <http://www.danwei.org> January 13th, 2009.

Film viewing: *A Chinese Tale* (2011)

An Argentine comedy that chronicles a chance encounter between Robert and a Chinese named Jun, who wanders lost through the city of Buenos Aires in search of his uncle, the only living relative who has. Robert meets Jun at the time that the latter is thrown into the streets from inside a taxi after being assaulted by the driver and his henchmen. From then began a forced and strange coexistence between the two, because Roberto does not speak Chinese and Jun does not know a word of Spanish.

Week 2

* History by Hollywood *

Class discussion:

Avital H. Bloch, "The History of United States Pluralism: From the Melting Pot to Multiculturalism and Beyond" (English version of the essay published in *De Sur a Norte. Perspectivas Sudamericanas sobre Estados Unidos. Multiculturalismo: E Pluribus Unum*. Vol. 9, Nro. 17, 2008, pp. 37-53.

Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, "African Americans and American Film", in Benshoff, et.al. , *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*, Wiley-Blackwell, A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication, 2009, pp. 78-101.

Robert Brent Toplin, "Preface" in Toplin, *History by Hollywood. The Use and Abuse of the American Past*, Urbana & Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1996, pp. vii-xii.

The controversy over *Mississippi Burning* (1988), an American crime drama film loosely based on the FBI investigation into the real-life murders of three civil rights workers in the U.S. state of Mississippi in 1964.

Robert Brent Toplin, "*Mississippi Burning*: 'A Standard to which we couldn't live up'" in Toplin, *History by Hollywood. The Use and Abuse of the American Past*, Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1996, pp. 25-44.

Week 3

History by Hollywood in *The Help* (2011) – The latest controversy

Film viewing: *The Help* (2011)

An aspiring author during the civil rights movement of the 1960s decides to write a book detailing the African-American maid's point of view on the white families for which they work, and the hardships they go through on a daily basis.

Class discussion:

Association of Black Women, "An Open Statement to the Fans of *The Help*".

Honoree Fanonne Jeffers, "Chocolate Breast Milk: A Review of *The Help*", *A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies, Issues of Our Time: The Help* (# 19, 2011).

Roxane Gay, "The Solace of Preparing Fried Foods and Other Quaint Remembrances from 1960s Mississippi: Thoughts on *The Help*". *A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies, Issues of Our Time: The Help* (# 19, 2011).

Stepahnie M. Crumpton, "The Help and White Female Identity", *A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies, Issues of Our Time: The Help* (# 19, 2011).

Valerie Boyd, "The Help, a feel-good movie for white people", *A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies, Issues of Our Time: The Help* (# 19, 2011).

Week 4

* Politics and Anti-Racism in *Crash* (2004) *

Class discussion:

Ronald Takaki, Chapter 1: A different mirror. The Making of Multicultural America" in *A Different Mirror. A History of Multicultural America*, New York, Boston & London: Back Bay Books, Little, Brown and Company, 1993, 2008, pp. 3-20.

Jaap Van Ginneken, "The Loud and the Silent: Global Film in the Twenty-First Century", in *Screening Difference. How Hollywood's Blockbuster Films Imagine Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.

Film viewing: *Crash* (2004)

American drama film co-written, produced, and directed by Paul Haggis. The film is about racial and social tensions in Los Angeles, where several characters' stories interweave during two days.

Week 5

* Politics and Anti-Racism in *Crash* (2004) *

Class discussion:

Hsuan L. Hsu, "Racial Privacy, the L.A. Ensemble Film, and Paul Haggis's *Crash*," *Film Criticism* 31, Numbers 1/2 Fall/Winter 2006, pp. 132-56.

"Paul Haggis's *Crash*: The Evaporation of White Accountability", *Writing from the Barricades*, March 10th, 2009. <http://daretostruggle.wordpress.com/2009/03/10/crash-setting-back-racial-progress-in-america/>

Lesette R. Heath, "Seeing Beyond Black and White: A Critical Reading of Race and Ethnicity in the Film *Crash*" excerpts from the thesis submitted to The Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication, Baltimore, Maryland, December 2009.

David G. Holmes, "The Civil Rights Movement According to *Crash*: Complicating the Pedagogy of Integration," *College English*, Vol 69, Number 4, March 2007, Academic Research Library, pp. 314-320. SYMPOSIUM: Paul Haggis's *Crash*.

Week 6

*** Race Relations and Stereotypes in *Gran Torino* (2008)***

Class discussion:

Benedict Anderson, "The nation and the origins of national consciousness" in Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997, 1999, 2001, pp. 43-51.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Ethnicity, race and nation" in Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997, 1999, 2001, pp. 33-41.

Film viewing: *Gran Torino* (2008)

The film tells the story of Walt Kowalski, a retired Polish American Ford factory worker and Korean War veteran, who has recently been widowed. His neighborhood in Highland Park, Michigan, formerly populated by working-class white families, is now dominated by poor Asian immigrants, and gang violence is commonplace.

Week 7

*** Race Relations and Stereotypes in *Gran Torino* (2008) ***

Class discussion:

Reviews:

Scott Foundas, "Clint Eastwood Finds Salvation in *Gran Torino*. Forgiven", *Los Angeles Weekly*, December 11, 2008.

Scott Foundas, "Clint Eastwood, America's Director. The searcher", *Los Angeles Weekly*, December 18, 2008.

"Collected thoughts about *Gran Torino*." January 8, 2009.

<http://greaterdetroit.wordpress.com/2009/01/08/collected-thoughts-about-gran-torino/>

Ly Chong Thong Jalao, "Looking *Gran Torino* in the Eye: A Review", *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement*, Volume 5, 2010.

Journal articles:

Louisa Schein and Va-Megn Thoj, "*Gran Torino*'s Boys and Men with Guns: Hmong Perspectives," *Hmong Studies Journal*, Volume 10, 2009, pp. 1-52.

Francesca Tognetti, "*Gran Torino*: a foreign neighborhood", *Other Modernities*, Università degli Studi di Milano, N. 2, 10/2009, pp. 378-381.

Week 8

*** Mass Immigration and Cultural Identity in Argentina ***

Gino Germani, "Mass Immigration and Modernization in Argentina", *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Volume 2, Number 11, 1966, pp. 165-182.

Adela De la Torre, Ph.D. and Julia Mendoza "Immigration Policy and Immigration Flows: A Comparative Analysis of Immigration Law in the U.S. and Argentina". *The Modern American*, Special Summer-Fall 2007, pp. 46-52.

Tamara L. Falicov, "Chapter 4. Young filmmakers and the new independent Argentine cinema" in *The Cinematic Tango. Contemporary Argentine Film*, London & New York, Wallflower Press, 2007, p. 150.

Week 9

* Economic crisis, immigration and the new independent Argentine cinema * *Herencia/Inheritance* (2001)

Film viewing: *Herencia/Inheritance* (2001)

Italian immigrant Olinda has lived in Buenos Aires for years. Having chased her lover to the city, Olinda found herself alone, eventually working to start her own restaurant. Younger German Paul has also come to Buenos Aires after his lover. After a chance encounter, Paul and Olinda begin an unlikely relationship.

Class discussion:

Director's Interview:

Gisela Benenzon, "Paula Hernández, directora (parte I)", en *Cómo Hacer Cine*, May 23rd, 2003.
http://www.comohacercine.com/articulo.php?id_art=193&id_cat=2

Gisela Benenzon, "Paula Hernández, directora (parte II)", en *Cómo Hacer Cine*, June 20th, 2003.
http://www.comohacercine.com/articulo.php?id_art=240&id_cat=2

Week 10

* Migrating to the Third World: *Bolivia* (2001) *

Class discussion:

Andrew Eller, "Argentina's Embedded Migrants", *COHA* (Council on Hemispheric Affairs) 12 August 2010,
<http://www.cetri.be/spip.php?article1739&lang=en>

Julia Albarracín, "Explaining Immigration Policies in Argentina during the 1990s: European Immigration, "a Marriage in Sickness and in Health." Prepared for delivery at the 2003 meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Dallas, Texas, March 27-29, 2003.

Joanna Page, "Introduction", in *Crisis and Capitalism in Contemporary Argentine Cinema*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 1-8.

Week 11

* Migrating to the Third World: *Bolivia* (2001) *

Film viewing: *Bolivia* (2001)

The film tells the story of Freddy (Freddy Flores), a Bolivian with a gentle disposition, who loses his job. With little work opportunities in Bolivia, he leaves his wife and three daughters and travels to Argentina to search for employment as an undocumented worker. He hopes to make money and later return to his family.

Class discussion:

Elvis Mitchell, "Film Review: Resentment Festers at Ladder's Bottom Rung", *The New York Times*, February 26, 2003. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9400E2D6163CF935A>

Joanne Page, "Bolivia: The Liminal Spaces of a Divided Community", in *Crisis and Capitalism in Contemporary Argentine Cinema*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 125-129.

Lorena García, "Bolivia según Caetano", *La Nación*, April 10th, 2002.

Week 12

* The search for personal and cultural identity: *El abrazo partido/Lost Embrace* (2004) *

Class discussion:

Victor A. Mirelman, Haim Avni, Ignacio Klich & Efraim Zadoff, "Historical Overview: Jews in Argentina," *Jewish Virtual Library, A Division of The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise*
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0002_0_01284.html

Film viewing: *El abrazo partido/Lost Embrace* (2004)

Ensemble drama set at a shopping centre in downtown Buenos Aires; the shopkeepers are mainly Argentinean Jews, apart from a Korean couple who run a Feng Shui store. The main focus is on Ariel, a young man who works in his mother's lingerie store and is searching for his true identity.

Week 13

* The search for personal and cultural identity: *El abrazo partido/Lost Embrace* (2004) *

Class discussion:

Reviews:

J. Hoberman, "Time Regained Scenes from a mall: An Argentine comedy evokes a rural Jewish past in urban Buenos Aires," *The Village Voice*, January 18, 2005.
<http://www.villagevoice.com/content/printVersion/188854/>

A. O. Scott, Movie Review. "Lost Embrace". "Resenting an Absent Father, Very Present in the Mind," *The New York Times*, January 28, 2005.
http://movies.nytimes.com/2005/01/28/movies/28lost.html?_r=1&page

Jules Becker, "In 'Lost Embrace,' a Jew finds himself", *Jewish Advocate*, Boston, August 19-August 25, 2005. <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/thejewishadvocate/access/911259361.htm>

Journal article:

Dr. José R. Ayaso, "Between Israel and the Diaspora *Lost Embrace* (Daniel Burman, 2004)", *Metakinema* 5, pp. 56-67.

Conclusion:

Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, "Making Sense and Making Selves in a Changing World" in Cornell et. al. *Ethnicity and Race. Making Identities in a Changing World*, London & New Delhi: Pine Forge Press, 2007, pp. 247-266.

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance

CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Students are also expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read

assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Attendance is mandatory and is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and ultimately in a F for the course.

Missing classes for medical reasons

If you need to miss a class for medical reasons or for a family emergency, you must send an e-mail to let the Director of Academic Affairs (DAA) or Resident Director know at least one hour in advance of your class or meeting by emailing. Note that calling the CAPA Center is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. You will need to provide evidence of the reason for your absence. Unexcused absences will result in a grade reduction. In the event of a missed class or field trip, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation

Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from you, the student, a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class

All devices such as laptops, I-pods, I-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are NOT allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Director of Academic Affairs or the Resident Director at the beginning of Term.

Use of Electronic Translators

In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

Late Submission

Late submission of papers due, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behavior during Examinations

During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.