

Course Syllabus-Filming from the Margins: Gender, Class Equality and Minority Groups in Contemporary Catalan Cinema

Language of Instruction: English

Professor: Eva Pujadas Capdevila, Sasa Markus Koncurat

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Course Contact Hours: 45 hours

Recommended Credit: 6 ECTS credits

Weeks: 4

Course Prerequisites: None

Language Requirements: Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent: Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish)

Course Description:

The Catalan audiovisual sector is expanding despite facing obstacles, since Spanish politics diminishes its singularity. Catalan language productions encounter a disadvantage in the broader market dominated by Spanish-speaking audiovisuals. On a global scale, small, regionally produced Catalan films and TV shows compete with major blockbusters, successfully gaining visibility. Overall, Catalan cinematography is progressing, while at the same time navigating marginalization and actively constructing its distinctive identity. The course explores how this regional cinema achieves distinctiveness, with a focus on the representation of women, social inequality, diverse minorities, and sustainability. Emphasizing the intersection of these issues, the course delves into the complexities of current Catalan social struggles on and off the screen.

Keywords: Regional Cinematography, Feminism, Equity, Identity, Media Representation

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To gain knowledge about the Catalan cinematography and culture, its legal and commercial frame, as well as its marginal status
- 2) To develop nuanced understanding of diversity and plurality within the Catalan and Spanish culture and its relationship to audiovisual sector
- 3) To understand the social and political impact of the media representation of disadvantaged and minority groups, to foster critical thinking, promote cultural awareness and enhance media literacy
- 4) To learn how to create adequate, inclusive audiovisual representation when it comes to gender and minority issues.

Course Workload:

The course is divided into lectures, screenings, readings, discussions, group presentations and field trips. Students should be prepared to actively participate in discussions/analysis and to creatively approach the problem of on-screen minority representation through group assignments.

Methods of Instruction:

Lectures, films screening and analysis of specific examples, class debate, readings, field trips to filming locations and Catalan production firms, guest speaker - a Catalan filmmaker, creative work in groups.

Method of Assessment:

- 1) Multiple answers test about the Catalan cinema, its definitions, Spanish, Catalan and European Union's legal frame related to audiovisual productions (20%)
- 2) Group assignment - Creative proposal 1: to convey the idea for Catalan production that would re-force female struggle for accurate visibility (group assignment - 20%)
- 3) Group assignment - Creative proposal 2: to choose one minority group within Catalan society and to convey the example for its respectful and accurate screen representation (20%)
- 4) Paper: analysis of a minority representation in one Catalan film (20%)
- 5) Class participation and debate (20%)

Absence Policy:

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. The impact of absences on the final grade is as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to three (3) absences	No penalization.
Four (4) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)
Five (5) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)
Six (6) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE for the course

The BISS attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency, etc.) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the UPF Summer School.

Classroom Norms:

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- No food or drink is permitted.
- Students must come to class fully prepared.

Course Contents:

Week 1

About Catalan audiovisual sector

Session 1

Syllabus, assessment and readings. Identity of Catalan cinema: Is it a regional or national sector? Is Catalan cinema work in Catalan or a work produced in Catalonia, regardless of the language. Affirming the criteria based on cultural components.

Session 2

Spanish state's legal frame regarding national and autonomous/regional cinematographic production: the position of Catalan cinema. Challenges of transnational filmmaking: works co-produced with other states/regions. European Union's legal frame about national/regional co-productions in the audiovisual sector.

Session 3

Building the autonomous self-representation. The controversy of *La teta i la lluna* (Bigas Luna, 1994). Contemporary local stories, for local audiences: analysis of *A la Ciutat* (Cesc Gay, 2003), *Tres dies amb la família* (Mar Coll, 2009), *Estiu 1993* (Carla Simón, 2017).

Session 4

Position of cinema in Catalan within the frame of Spanish state: screening and analysis of *V.O.S.* (Cesc Gay, 2009)

Session 5

Multiple answers test.

Catalan audiovisuals on global ground: TV series *Polseres vermelles* (2011-2013) and *Merlí* (2015-2018). The case of *REC* (Jaume Balagueró, Paco Plaza, 2007). The trajectory of Albert Serra.

Week 2

Women as agents (directors, producers) and as object of representation in Catalan cinema

Session 1

Configuring the cinematographic language in Catalonia: Montserrat Casals i Baqué (Elena Jordi), 1822 - 1945. Isona Passola i Vidal: Producer's struggle for Catalan- speaking films since 1992. Analysis of her trajectory and productions

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Pa negre (Agusti Villaronga, 2010), *Inserta glòria* (Agusti Villaronga, 2017), *Altsasu* (Ametz Arzallus, Marc Parramon, 2021)

Session 2

Isabele Coixet: Creative ways of reaffirming the Catalan culture in trans-national cinematographic productions *La vida secreta de las palabras* (2005), *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo* (2009), *The Bookshop* (2017). New generation of Catalan female directors: the films of Clara Simon, Neus Ballus y Mar Coll, Roser Aguilar y Elena Martín

Session 3

Stereotyped, sexualized and placed on the global market: the case of *Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona* (Woody Allen, 2008). Spanish actresses in Hollywood and in the global context: from Carmen Amaya to Penelope Cruz

Session 4

Female subjectivity and capitalism in Catalan, urban context. Screening and analysis of *Tots volem el millor per a ella* (Mar Coll, 2013).

Session 5

Group assignment - presentations. Creative proposal 1: to convey the idea for Catalan production that would re-force female struggle for accurate representation

Week 3

Class, cultural diversity and race in Catalan cinema

Session 1

Working class views: *Numax Presenta...* (1980) and *Vint anys no són res* (2005) by Joaquim Jordà. On capitalism, humans and depredators from marginal perspective: analysis of *Petit Indi* (Marc Recha, 2009). Working class neighborhoods and women: *Yo soy la Juani* (Bigas Luna, 2006)

Session 2

Focusing on plurality within the Catalan culture: *El amante bilingüe* (Vicente Aranda, 1993). *Los tarrantos* (Francisco Rovira Beleta, 1993). Contemporary immigration topics, racial issues and classist stereotypes from female perspective: *Sis dies corrents* (Neus Ballus, 2021), *La mujer ilegal* (Ramon Térmens, 2020).

Session 3

Catalans and global, multicultural society: analysis of *Truman* (Cesc Gay, 2015)

Session 4

Class, race and gender intersection: screening and analysis of *Sis dies corrents* (Neus Ballus, 2021)

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Session 5

Group assignment - presentations. Creative proposal 2: to choose one minority group within Catalan society and to convey the example for its respectful and accurate screen representation

Week 4

Sexual minorities. Sustainability issues.

Session 1

Sexual minorities in Catalan context after Spanish transition. The unique perspectives of Ventura Pons, analysis of *Ocaña* (1978). *Cambio de Sexo* (Vicente Aranda, 1977) LGBTQIA+ characters in contemporary Catalan audiovisual narratives. Lesbian love, polyamory and family issues in *Terra ferma* (Carlos Marqués-Marcet, 2017). Adolescents, gayness and TV series *Merlí* (2015-2018). Self-denial of lesbian tendencies and social stigma: *A la ciutat* (Cesc Gay, 2003)

Session 2

Legal controversies about filming the suffering of animals: *Pa negre* (Agustí Villaronga, 2010). Sustainable cinema: examples from the works of Marc Recha.

Session 3

Sustainability issues and class struggle in contemporary rural surroundings: screening and analysis of *Alcarràs* (Carla Simón, 2022)

Session 4

Guest speaker

Session 5

Field trip

Required Readings: The professor will assemble a course pack/or indicate mandatory textbooks and films to view.

Recommended bibliography:

Students are encouraged to consult the following sources on their own

D' Lugo, Marvin. "Catalan Cinema: Historical Experience and Cinematic Practice". *Otherness and the Media: The Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged*, edited by Hamid Naficy, and Teshome H Gabriel, Routledge, New York, 2017, pp. 145 -160.

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Epps, Brad. "Echoes and Traces: Catalan Cinema, or Cinema in Catalonia". *A Companion to Spanish Cinema*, edited by Jo Labanyi and Tatjana Pavlovic, Blackwell, 2013, pp. 50-80.

James David E., Berg, Rick. *The Hidden Foundation: Cinema and the Question of Class*, University of Minnesota Press, London, 1996.

Dawson, Leanne (edited by). "The other: Gender, sexuality and ethnicity in European cinema and beyond". *Studies in European Cinema*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2015, pp. 151-222.

Ramanathan, Geetha: *Feminist Auteurs: Reading Women's Films*, Wallflower, London, 2006.

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