

## HISP 445

# Crime, Sex, and Ghosts of the Past: Contemporary Spanish Fiction and Film



Spain's transition to democracy following Franco's death in 1975 was characterized by two contradictory phenomena: a sudden moral, sexual, and political liberation, and a collective "pact of oblivion" that indefinitely postponed any reckoning with the dictatorial past. This course studies the film and fiction of post-Franco Spain, rife with sex and crime but also haunted by the ghosts of history. The reading and viewing list includes works by Martín Gaité, Vázquez Montalbán, Llamazares, Marías, Chacón, Almodóvar, Medem, and Bollaín. Taught in Spanish. *Enrollment Limit:* 15

### **Sebastian Faber**

MWF 1:30-2:20p, 302 Peters  
(Wed 7-9pm film screenings, 327 Peters)

# HISP 445

## Crime, Sex, and Ghosts of the Past: Contemporary Spanish Fiction and Film

### SYLLABUS

#### **instructor**

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**office hours:** MWF 11-12am or by appt

**messages:** The fastest and most efficient way to contact me is via email. You can also leave a message on my voicemail or with Blanche Villar at x55256, or stick a written note in my box in 301 Peters.

#### **course prerequisites**

“Any two 300-level courses taught in Spanish normally serve as a prerequisite for admission to those at the 400 level” (Hispanic Studies Course Catalog).

#### **required readings** [any edition in Spanish is fine]

- Vázquez Montalbán, Manuel. *Los mares del sur*. Madrid: Planeta. 1st ed: 1977.
- Martín Gaité, Carmen. *El cuarto de atrás*. Barcelona: Destino. 1st ed: 1978.
- Llamazares, Julio. *La lluvia amarilla*. Barcelona: Seix Barral. 1st ed.: 1988.
- Marías, Javier. *Corazón tan blanco*. Madrid: Alfaguara. 1st. ed: 1992.
- Atxaga, Bernardo. *Memorias de una vaca*. Ediciones SM, 1993.
- Chacón, Dulce. *La voz dormida*. Punto de lectura, 2006.

#### **tentative viewing list**

- *El espíritu de la colmena* (Victor Erice, 1973)
- *Sombras en una batalla* (Mario Camus, 1993)
- *Volver* (Pedro Almodóvar, 2006)
- *Vacas* (Julio Medem, 1991)
- *La vida secreta de las palabras* (Isabel Coixet, 2005)
- *Silencio roto* (Montxo Armendáriz, 2001)
- *Lucía y el sexo* (Julio Medem, 2001)
- *El misterio Galíndez* (Gerardo Herrero, 2003)
- *Te doy mis ojos* (Iciar Bollain, 2003)
- *Soldados de Salamina* (Fernando Trueba, 2002)

#### **course description**

This course provides an eclectic overview of some fascinating developments in Spanish fiction and film since Franco's death in 1975 and the country's subsequent transition to democracy. Analyzing five novels and ten films, we will touch on a range of topics and issues, including:

- developments in Spanish culture and politics since 1975 (sexual liberation, Europeanization, democratization, secularization, regionalism, etc.);
- the way Spanish politics has, or hasn't, dealt with the memory of the Civil War and its recent dictatorial past;
- the role and function of literature and film in a post-dictatorial democracy, particularly with regards to collective memory;

- the effects of the commercialization and remarkable international success of recent Spanish fiction and film;
- postmodernism in Spanish fiction and film (blurred boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultural forms, metafiction, depoliticization, etc.)

### Course objectives

To develop an understanding of:

- The intellectual, literary, cinematic, and political dimensions of post-Franco Spain
- The way in which Spaniards’ relationship to their collective past has changed since the end of the Civil War and particularly since the transition to democracy

To (continue to) develop the skills necessary to:

- Read, write, and speak Spanish in an academic register
- Write a research paper in Spanish
- Conduct formal, thematic, and ideological analyses of films and literary texts

### course requirements

- Students are expected to have read or viewed the **assigned texts and films** by the day indicated on the syllabus.
- Hand in **type-written answers** to the assigned reading or viewing questions will be handed in at the end of each class, and be prepared actively to participate in class discussion; alternatively, **discussion board** contributions are due by 12 midnight on the day before the class.
- Two in-class group **presentations** of about 10 minutes about one of the novels and one of the films, where available, two scholarly articles dealing with the work in question. The presentations are meant to lead into a class discussion moderated by the presenters.
- Two **midterm papers** (of 3 and 4 pages each), as well as an 8-page **final paper**.
- Students are expected to attend around ten **film screenings** (on Wednesday nights at 7pm, Peters 327). Those who can’t make it to the screening are expected to have seen the film before Friday’s class. All films will be placed on reserve, either in Mudd or in the Language Lab.
- Since a great part of the class time will be taken up by presentations and group discussions, **attendance** to *all* class sessions is mandatory. Following Department policy, any absence over 3 will lower the final class grade with 1 %.
- Email and Blackboard will be the preferred media for announcements, questions, and assignments; students are expected to check their mail and Blackboard page every day.

### evaluation

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- Presentations and reading questions: 20%
- Two midterm papers: 30%
- Final paper (8 pags): 30%

### Honor Code

This course and all its assignments are covered by the Oberlin College honor code. This means, most importantly, that—unless otherwise indicated—you are to produce your own work and honor the rules and conventions of quotation, attribution, and citation. While you are allowed to ask advice and help from librarians and official writing tutors, you are, in the end, to submit work produced by *you*. Some assignments may be collaborative in nature; those will be clearly identified as such. Any case of (suspected) plagiarism will be reported to the Honors Committee. For more details, see [www.oberlin.edu/students/student\\_pages/honor\\_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html)

### other regulations

- This course is covered by the Oberlin College honor code.
- No late homework will be accepted.
- Students are expected to be on time and to remain for the entire class. Unexcused tardiness or early departure will be regarded as an absence. The student who misses any part of the class is responsible for acquiring the information missed.

### Programa de curso (tentativo)

Wed Sept 5 Introducción (estructura y temas principales de la clase; panorama de la historia española desde 1936)

Fri Sept 7 Acontecimientos y cambios en España desde 1975; introducción a Carmen Martín Gaité  
*Lecturas:* Santos Juliá (History, Politics & Culture, ERes); Labanyi (Narrative in Culture, ERes); Labanyi (Memory and Modernity, ERes); Brown (Carmen Martín Gaité, ERes).

Mon Sept 10 Carmen Martín Gaité, *El cuarto de atrás*, parte 1 (caps. 1-2)

Wed Sept 12 CMG 2 (caps. 3-4)



**Película 1** – Fernando Trueba, *Soldados de Salamina* (2003)

Fri Sept 14 Discuss Película 1  
Readings: see Bb.

Mon Sept 17 CMG 3 (caps. 5-7)

Wed Sept 19 CMG –recap + presentation / discussion  
Readings: see Bb/Eres



**Película 2** – Victor Erice, *El espíritu de la colmena* (1974)

Fri Sept 21 Discuss Película 2  
Readings: see Bb.

Mon Sept 24 Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Los mares del sur* 1 (pp. 7-57)

Wed Sept 26 MVM 2 (pp. 57-113)



**Película 3** – Gerardo Herrero, *El misterio Galíndez* (2003)

Fri Sept 28 Discuss Película 3; **Draft Paper 1 Due**

Mon Oct 1 MVM 3 (pp. 113-167)  
**Entregar paper 1** (3 pp.)

Wed Oct 3 MVM 4 (pp. 167-220) recap + presentation / discussion



**Película 4** Mario Camus, *Sombras en una batalla* (1993)

Fri Oct 5 Discuss Película 4

Mon Oct 8 Julio Llamazares, *La lluvia amarilla* 1 (caps. 1-6)

Wed Oct 10 JLL 2 (caps. 7-11)



**Película 5** – Pedro Almodóvar, *Volver* (2006)

Fri Oct 12 JLL 3 (caps. 8-19) / Discuss Película 5

Mon Oct 15 JLL – recap + presentation / discussion

Wed Oct 17 Javier Marias, *Corazón tan blanco* 1  
**Draft Paper 2 due**



**Película 6** – Isabel Coixet, *La vida secreta de las palabras* (2005)

Fri Oct 19 Discuss Película 6 -- **Paper 2** (4 pp.)

\*\*\*\*\* **FALL BREAK Oct 20-28** \*\*\*\*\*

Mon Oct 29 JM 2 & 3

Wed Oct 31 JM 4



**Película 7** – Julio Medem, *Lucía y el sexo* (2001)

Fri Nov 2 JM 5 / Discuss Película 7

Mon Nov 5 JM 6

Wed Nov 7 JM – recap + presentation / discussion



**Película 8** Montxo Armendáriz, *Silencio roto* (2001)

Fri Nov 9 Discuss Película 8

Mon Nov 12 Bernardo Atxaga, *Memorias de una vaca* 1

Wed Nov 14 BA 2



**Película 9** – Julio Medem, *Vacas* (1991)

Fri Nov 16 Discuss Película 9; discussion about final paper & preliminary bib

Mon Nov 19 BA 3 – recap + presentation / discussion

Wed Nov 21 [hand in *idea* for final paper + preliminary bib]

**Fri Nov 23 THANKSGIVING**

Mon Nov 26 Dulce Chacón, *La voz dormida*

Wed Nov 28 DC 2

Fri Nov 30 DC 3

Mon Dec 3 DC 4

Wed Dec 5 DC recap + presentation; discussion



**Película 10** Iciar Bollain, *Te doy mis ojos* (2003)

Fri Dec 7 Discuss Película 10

Mon Dec 10 discusión del trabajo final

Wed Dec 12 Último día de clases  
***Draft Trabajo Final Due***

**Entrega del TRABAJO FINAL: Miércoles 19 de diciembre**