Politics 269  
Latin American Politics: Past and Present through Film  
Fall 2012 Second Module  
Thursdays, 1:30-4:30pm, AJLC 120  
1SS credit, CD

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Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00am-12:00pm, and by appointment  
Students can sign up for office hours at http://tinyurl.com/34ywc3f

The end of authoritarian regimes in the 1980s marked the beginning of a vibrant new wave in Latin American filmmaking. Exploring the political and social conditions of both the dictatorship past and democratic present, this realist cinema presents powerful critiques of social justice, political power, and economic conditions in the region. We will screen and discuss 5 feature films from the New Wave cinema of Argentina and Chile: from Chile, Machuca and La Frontera, and from Argentina El secreto de sus ojos, Bolivia, and Leonera. In addition, we may include a further film based on popular demand – probably the Argentine comedy-drama Historias Mínimas or the Chilean documentary El edificio de los Chilenos. We will screen one film per week, and students will discuss the film in either a Spanish or English language discussion group following the screening.

The course encourages students to make interdisciplinary connections in their study of Latin America. In particular, it is intended to build linkages between the social scientific and the humanities-based study of Latin America. Through discussions and through written assignments, it brings cultural and artistic components systematically into dialogue with social science themes, particularly those explored in the following courses: HISP 318 Survey of Latin American Literature II, HIST 293 Dirty Wars and Democracy, and POLT 210 Latin American Politics. It is therefore offered primarily to students concurrently enrolled in these courses (enrollment is by instructor consent).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Regular attendance at film screenings and active participation in discussion.

2) Reflection Papers: two short (2-page) Reflection Papers are required. One is due by the end of the 3rd week of the course, Friday 11/16; the second by the end of the 7th week, Friday 12/14. In the papers, you should make linkages between the films and specific topics covered in your course. You have substantial freedom in what you choose to write about, but in general it would be good to write in each paper about at least 2 of the films, potentially in comparison.

3) Blackboard Posts: In addition, students should post at least two shorter commentaries on the films in the course Blackboard discussion page. These can be drawn from your
Reflection Papers or respond to each other’s posts – the idea is to get into the forum your interpretations of the films and their connections to your other courses.

CREDIT/GRADING MODE. This is a 1-credit course counting toward 200-level comparative politics credit in the Politics major (credit also for LATS major). Grading mode is Pass/No Pass, with work in the A+ to C– range meriting a Pass.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS. All academic work for the course must meet the standards of the Honor Code. Students must complete the assigned papers in order to be eligible for a passing grade in the course. Those with a documented disability needing academic accommodations should speak with Jane Boomer in the Office of Disability Services (440-775-8464) and with me as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

FILM SCHEDULE

November 1: Machuca (Chile / Dir: Andrés Wood, 2005)
Relates the end of the Allende years through the eyes of children from different social classes.

November 8: La Frontera (Chile / Dir: Ricardo Larraín, 1991)
A simple story full of profound allusions to the culture of mistrust that was fostered by political division and deepened in the Pinochet years, this film portrays the experience of a politically active high school teacher who is punished with internal exile to a remote town in Patagonia.

November 15: El Secreto de sus Ojos (Argentina / Dir: Juan José Campanella, 2009)
Set in present day and recalling key moments of the protagonists’ lives during the Proceso dictatorship, the film evokes the issue of individual and group responsibility in punishing crimes of the past.

November 22: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

November 29: Bolivia (Argentina / Dir: Israel Adrián Caetano, 2001)
Captures the experience of Bolivian immigrants in Argentina in the 1990s.

December 6: Leonera (Argentina / Dir: Pablo Trapero, 2008)
Portrays the injustice of the contemporary Argentine justice system, through the story of women and their children in an Argentine prison.

December 13: Wrap-Up of Course
If there is sufficient class desire, possible screening of Historias Mínimas (Argentina / Dir: Carlos Sorin, 2002) or El Edificio de los Chilenos (Chile / Dir: Macarena Aguiló, 2010).

9.4.12