

# Texas Woman's University

Department of English, Speech, and Foreign Languages

Fall 2008

SPAN 4903.01 (Gender Issues in Hispanic Cinema) / WS 4030 (Text, Trends, and Issues)

Time: Mondays 3:00-5:50

Place: ASB 301

Instructor: Rubén Rodríguez Jiménez, Ph.D.

Office Hours: I usually have an open door policy; however, the following are my established office hours

Tuesdays: 9:00 to 10:00 and 1:00 to 5:00

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## Course Description:

**Welcome to Spanish 4903 / WS 4030.** This course will study contemporary film in Spain, Latin America and the Caribbean. The course is designed to enhance your abilities to interpret, to analyze, and to appreciate Hispanic films in its cultural, historical and ideological context. The films are not your stereotypical Hollywood production; they are classified as Foreign Films—i.e., in a sense World Cinema. In this sense, the films are more open when it comes to the representation of nudity and sexuality. The course will specially focus on issues dealing with representations of gender and sexuality in Hispanic cinema. In order to achieve this end, the course will use films that deal with serious political, social, and cultural topics. These films are classified either “R” or “NR” due to their strong language and sexual scenes. The films deal with controversial topics and are not suitable for children. The course will be divided in three units. The first unit will engage students on the topic of **Transcending the Sex/Gender System**. In this section student will view, discuss and critique films such as *Kika*, *Todo sobre mi madre* (*All about my mother*) and *Hable con ella* (*Talk to her*). The second unit will engage students on the issue of **History and Gender**. In this section student will view, discuss and critique films such as *La historia oficial* (*The official Story*), and *Antes de que anochesca* (*Before the night falls*). These films will be discussed within their historical context and their historical impact on their respective societies. Unit Three will engage students on the issue of **Gender Violence**. In this section students will discuss films such as *Amores Perros* (*Love's a Bitch*), *Tesis* (*Thesis*), and *En los tiempos de la mariposas* (*In the times of the Butterflies*). All the films will be accompanied by supplementary reading materials which will be provided by your instructor. The course will require weekly questions on critical readings, 3 page reaction papers based on the movies seen and materials read, and regular examination; the examinations are based on the films and the supplementary material. There will be a take home final exam based on an independent film selection.

**Daily preparation and study.** Before class, read all assigned readings and write out all questions about said material to be discussed in class. You are ultimately responsible for what you do and do not do both inside and outside the classroom. There are daily assignments, and you will benefit most from your classroom experience if you keep-up with these. The movies are available at the Foreign Language Section of any video store. If you have the opportunity, you can rent the movies so you can actually view it again in the comfort of your own home.

**Textbooks: None**

Rodríguez-Jiménez, Rubén. Gender Issues on Hispanic Cinema: A Reader.

**Course objectives and Assessment Measures:**

At the end of the course students will:

- Be able to understand, discuss and analyze different cinematic genres and styles of Post-1950s Hispanic cinema.
- Have developed and be able to express an understanding of the socio-cultural context of the contemporary Hispanic world.
- Be able to understand, discuss and analyze the ways in which selected films reflect on and interpret social, cultural, and gender issues in Hispanic culture.
- Have developed an ability to engage with written and visual texts and be able to understand a body of critical writing in the field.

**Assessment measures:**

Objective one will be measured through quizzes and exams.

Objective two will be measured through class discussions which will focus on the students' understanding of a given reading.

Objective three will be measured through class discussion.

Objective four will be measured through Response Papers.

**Course grading system:**

The final grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

Participation	15%
Response Papers	15%
Preparation (homework and quizzes)	20%
Partial Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

**A** = 100.0-90.0%; **B** = 89.0-80.0%; **C** = 79.0-70.0%; **D** = 69.0-60.0%; **F** = 59.0 and below

**Expectations and Policies:**

**Participation:** 15% of your final grade will be based on your participation in classroom activities. Students are expected to (1) attend class daily with their class material and the homework assignments completed. If you do not bring the corresponding material to class, participation points will be deducted. (2) Actively participate in classroom and group activities. No matter what the reason for an absence, failure to attend always results in missed opportunities to learn from class discussions and will have a negative impact on your performance and, thus, on your final class grade. Attendance will be taken every day at the beginning of class. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to find out what was covered and the assignment for the next day (missing class the day before will not be accepted as an excuse for not being prepared when you return). On a weekly basis your instructors will assign you a grade based on your participation (0-100%). In order to receive the highest grade for your participation, you must show outstanding enthusiasm, listen attentively to the instructor's presentations, volunteer to answer questions, participate well in small-group activities, always come with your class materials, and always have the homework assignment completed. If you leave class early, or arrive late, you may not receive credit for a quiz or homework collected that

day. Obviously, if you are not in class, you are unable to participate and learn from the instruction. An **absence will be considered excused only if (1) it is due to an illness, official university travel, or a medical emergency and (2) if the student brings the instructor written documentation on the day s(he) returns to class.** Being that participation can sometimes be subjective, a participation grading scale is included for your benefit.

### ***CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADING SCALE***

#### **Outstanding = 5**

- I always arrive for class on time
- I speak during whole class and group discussion
- During class discussion, I often respond to classmates' comments in addition to responding to instructor questions
- I work on comprehension skills by always listening attentively when others speak
- I participate in all activities with enthusiasm and a positive attitude
- I always contribute actively during group activities

#### **Average = 4**

- I arrive no more than 5 minutes late for class
- I speak during whole class discussions, and only rarely during group discussion
- During whole class discussion, my participation is sometimes limited to only answering instructor's questions
- I am usually an active listener when not participating during whole class or group interactions
- I am usually enthusiastic and positive when participating in activities
- I usually contribute actively during group activities

#### **Below Average = 3**

- I sometimes arrive more than 5 minutes late for class
- I speak during whole class discussions, but sometimes during group activities
- During whole class discussion, my participation is often limited to only answering instructor's questions
- I am only sometimes an active listener, but at other times I do not listen while others speak
- I participate in all activities, but sometimes not enthusiastically
- I only sometimes contribute actively during group activities

#### **Unacceptable = 0**

- Most of the time I arrive more than 15 minutes late for class
- I rarely speak during class discussions, and almost never answer the instructor's questions nor my colleagues.
- During whole class discussion I participate minimally (e.g., only sometimes answering instructor's questions)
- I do not listen while others talk
- I often demonstrate a negative attitude toward activities
- I do not contribute much to getting the task done in-group work. Or I work on assignments for other classes.

**An unexcused absence constitutes a 0 since YOUR PRESENCE is required to evaluate you on any given day.**

**Response Papers 15%.** Throughout the course you will write a few Response Papers reacting to a class reading, a class discussion topic or a film; the Reaction Papers' topic will be given in class. Out of a possible total of 22 points, your instructor will evaluate your response papers according to the following criteria:

### **I. Content / Ideas**

- 5 - Very complete, thorough, relevant information; topic developed with effective supporting detail; has anticipated reader's questions.
- 4 - Adequate information; some topics developed with supporting detail but others may be incompletely supported; has anticipated most reader questions.
- 3 - Limited information; ideas presented but undeveloped; lack of supporting details/evidence; some ideas irrelevant; has anticipated few reader needs.
- 2 - Minimal information without substance; ideas superficial; little development; little awareness of reader needs

### **II. Organization**

- 4 - Logically, effectively ordered; fluent; connection of main points, details
- 3 - Apparent order; somewhat choppy; loosely organized, but with clear main ideas
- 2 - Limited order; very choppy; lacks logical sequencing
- 1 - Separate sentences with no transitions or very choppy; disconnected ideas

### **III. Vocabulary**

- 5 - Broad, impressive; accurate / extensive word use, especially those studied in lesson; appropriate for topic and level
- 4 - Adequate, but lacks variety and/or sometimes inaccurate; some use of words studied in lesson; generally appropriate for topic and level
- 3 - Frequent erroneous word use; invented words; limited use of words studied in lesson; some words inappropriate for topic.
- 2 - Inadequate; repetitive; incorrect/non use of words studied in lesson; invented words; very inappropriate use of words for topic.

### **IV. Grammar**

- 5 - No errors in grammar; wide range of structures for level with few or no significant errors
- 4 - Some minor errors of grammar but meaning seldom obscured; adequate range of structures for level; tends to overuse simple constructions
- 3 - Frequent errors of grammar; limited range of structures with weak control of grammar in general, meaning often confused or obscured
- 2 - Very frequent and persistent errors of basic grammar and sentence construction; meaning obscured because text is dominated by errors; Or not enough to evaluate.

### **V. Mechanics**

- 3 - Very few or no errors in spelling, punctuation, and presentation
- 2 - Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or presentation
- 1 - Frequent errors in spelling and punctuation; messy presentation (faint typing/typos, illegible writing)

**Preparation (Homework and quizzes):** 20% of your final grade will be based on homework and written quizzes. Assignments will be announced in class. Assignments may be collected randomly for a grade, announced or unannounced. Therefore, every day, you should be prepared to turn in the work that has been assigned up to that point. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to find out what the assignment is and have it completed by the day it is due. You will **not** be given the chance to turn in work late simply because you were not in class to receive the assignment (check with another student!). If an assignment is collected, you will **not** be allowed to turn it in a short while later! Written quizzes will be given either at the beginning or end of class, and often will be taken directly from homework assignments and in-class activities. Each quiz lasts from 5-10 minutes. **There will be no opportunity to make-up graded homework assignments and quizzes, except for those with an “excused absence”.** Furthermore those arriving late or leaving early will not be given additional time to complete a quiz.

**Partial Exam:** 25%. The Partial Exam will test your understanding of the material viewed, read and discussed. The following are suggestions on how to best prepare for the exam: (1) complete all homework on time, (2) attend class regularly and participate actively, (3) systematically go back and review material from previous sections, (4) seek extra help from your instructor early on if you are seriously confused or doing poorly on your homework and written quizzes. (5) If you have the opportunity, you can rent the movies so you can actually view it again in the comfort of your own home. Go to the Foreign Films Section of any video store rental. **If you miss the exam due to an excused absence, you must contact your instructor [RRodriguezJimenez@twu.edu](mailto:RRodriguezJimenez@twu.edu) within 24 hours after the exam, AND you must provide a valid written excuse for your absence before a make-up exam is considered.** Make plans now to take your exam and all quizzes on time and on their corresponding dates!

**Final Exam:** 25% The final exam is an essay format take-home question.

**Behavioral Norms:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment which is conducive to learning! In order to assure that all students have an opportunity to benefit from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, during class time students are **prohibited** from (1) using cellular phones or beepers (so turn them off before entering the classroom!), (2) sleeping (even if you don't snore!), (3) reading newspapers, (4) doing homework (even if it is related to Spanish), (5) making offensive remarks, (6) speaking out of turn or chatting, (7) dominating discussion, or (8) engaging in any other form of distraction. **Repeated inappropriate behavior in the classroom will result in 1) being invited to leave and 2) being dropped from the course! ABIDE BY THE GOLDEN RULE.**

**Academic Integrity or Dishonesty:** The attempt of students to present as their own any work which they have not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension. In other words, **you should do your own homework and should not copy from others or bring notes during quizzes and exams. Failure to comply with the conditions stated above will result in a failing grade on the assignment, and possibly and “F” in the course and/or suspension from the university!**

*Forms of academic dishonesty:*

1. Cheating: deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that s(he) has not mastered; given or receiving aid unauthorized by the instructor on assignments or examinations.

2. Academic misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a schedule test.
3. Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research.
4. Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation and/or paraphrase of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own in work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information or essays from the Internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism.

For a clear TWU definition of what constitutes academic dishonesty, please visit the Student Life Office's webpage at <http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/StudentLifeOffice/>. There you will find a link which describes TWU's policy on Academic Dishonesty. Tools to help you avoid plagiarism are available through the TWU library link: [http://www.twu.edu/library/res/res\\_plagiarism.htm](http://www.twu.edu/library/res/res_plagiarism.htm).

**Students with Special Needs:** Texas Woman's University seeks to provide appropriate academic adjustments for all individuals with disabilities. This University will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines, specifically Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the American and Disabilities Act (ADA), with respect to providing appropriate academic adjustments to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the responsibility of the student to register with and provide medical verification and academic schedules to Disability Support Services (DDS) at the beginning of each semester and no later than the second week of school unless otherwise determined by the coordinator. The student also must contact the faculty member in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate academic adjustments. For further information regarding Disability Support Services or to register for assistance, please contact the office for Disability Support Services (<http://www.twu.edu/dss/>) at (940) 898-3835 (voice), (940) 898-3830 (TTY) or visit CFO 106.

**Sexual misconduct:** *Sexual misconduct will not be tolerated in this classroom.* "It is the policy of Texas Woman's University to maintain a workplace and educational environment that is free from intimidation, coercion, or harassment, including sexual harassment." Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subjected to disciplinary action. For a detailed description of TWU's stance on Sexual harassment please visit the Human Resources webpage at: <http://www.twu.edu/humanresources/SexualHarassmentPol305.htm>.

**Addendum:**

*This syllabus is intended as a set of guidelines for this course. Texas Woman's University and your professor reserve the right to make modifications in content schedule, and requirements as necessary to promote the best education possible within prevailing conditions affecting this course.*