

## **The Citadel**

### **450 Spanish Society Through Film**

#### **Objectives**

This Course spans a wide range of cultural perspectives, thus taking it beyond the limits of the cinematic and the historical strictly speaking. Movies are perceived as audiovisual works, approachable as texts, as the artistic expression of an author and, at the same time, as being determined by circumstances involving their social, historical, linguistic, and literary contextualization.

According to psychologists, most of what human memory retains is visual. No wonder why films can exert such a powerful role in shaping our views of history, society, and who we are. In the United States people get most of their historical knowledge through Hollywood and TV programs rather than history books. Most of the movies produced in Spain, however, are not part of an “entertainment” industry. Rather, they tend to be self-reflective—a means through which people seek to understand themselves, their societies and their past.

We will use films as a window to explore broad historical problems. Just as books, movies cannot be taken as “true” representations of reality but as an interpretation of it. And just as written works, movies ought to be subject to critical scrutiny. One of our tasks in this course is to understand how the context of production of the films and the author’s background shape the themes and messages of the movie. The other goal is to use the film as a window to explore the historical reality it portrays. For this purpose you will engage in weekly readings relevant to the films and account for them in short papers and a final longer paper.

#### **Course Policies**

-- **Absolutely no late work accepted!!:** If subject to extreme and uncontrollable circumstances, i.e., death, grave illness, etc., and he/she is unable to submit work or take an exam on the scheduled day, the student must contact his/her instructor either 24 hours before or after the class corresponding to the date in question to explain his/her situation.

-- Papers: You will have to write five 450 to 500 word papers for each movie (roughly two double spaced pages), discounting footnotes and references, which are worth 20 % of your final grade, and one longer paper of 16 pages (roughly eight to ten double spaced pages) due by the end of the term, which is worth 20 % of your grade. The final paper will explore a topic relevant to the films and readings of the course, which you will decide in consultation with the professor.

-- Guidelines for short papers

Short papers consist of a critical appraisal of the reading and watching materials for the week in which they are due. In your papers, make sure you follow the following general guidelines:

- Papers should always, and preferably at the outset, summarize, in one or two paragraphs, the main argument(s) in the assigned readings.
- If the readings are by different authors, you should first identify the common thread and lay out the main questions and arguments put forth by the authors. Explain whether the articles complement each other or whether they express contrasting points of views.
- Pay attention to the evidence presented by the authors to substantiate their arguments: is it compelling?
- Starting from week three, and to the extent that the topic allows, you will make every possible effort to engage with the previous readings and films.
- When the readings include primary sources (i.e. historical documents), you should explain how these documents help illustrate, expand, complement, or (if appropriate) challenge the articles.
- Make sure that all your papers are well written, proof read, and free of typographical errors. The quality of your writing will affect your grade. Papers are due in class, in hard copies. Papers by email will not be accepted, unless in extreme circumstances and prior consultation with the professor..
- Please notice that regardless of whether it is your turn to write a short paper, you are expected to have read all the assigned materials and engage in class discussion every week.

(15) <u>Grade Scale:</u>	<b>A</b>	90-100
	<b>B</b>	80-89
	<b>C</b>	70-79
	<b>D</b>	60-69
	<b>F</b>	0-59

(16) Course Grade Distribution:      Participacion y comunicacion con el instructor

30% Pequeños ensayos

30% Ensayo Final

*The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus at any time in order to accommodate better the learning needs of the students. During any class period, the professor also reserves the right to dismiss any student whose behavior negatively affects the learning environment of the classroom. The professor will record cases of dismissal*

*as an absence "A" for the student. By remaining enrolled in this class, the student agrees both to read carefully and subsequently accept the professor's policies as outlined in this document.*