

history 383 | fall 2017

Prof. Chad Black

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:00-4:00, Wednesday, 3:00-4:00

syllabus

As in the rest of the world, moving pictures have long marveled Latin America. In what was most certainly the first demonstration of “moving pictures” south of the Rio Bravo, the Lumière brothers showed then Mexican President Porfirio Diaz their early films in Chapultepec Castle in 1896. As moving picture technology spread through out the world, including Latin America, it radically altered how individuals and groups in the region perceived of themselves, and were represented by others. Film (and later television) has been a source of enjoyment, a powerful propaganda tool, a medium of artistic expression, and driving force of national identity.

In this class we will focus on films that portray the history of early Spanish America as complex indigenous societies were flourished, were conquered by Iberian empires, and developed into new colonial societies of Europeans, and creole, afro-descendent, and indigenous peoples. How has the popular cinema industry portrayed the colonial period in Latin American history? We will watch and analyze films from the United States and Latin America that grapples with various aspects of Latin American society before, during, and after the Iberian conquests of the Americas. Through these films, we will both critically analyze their historical content, as well as the assumptions and ideological perspectives that go into the making of films on this period of Latin American history.

Most films will be in Spanish with English subtitles. The majority of the films are rated R for strong language, violence, and/or sexual content. These topics (sex and violence) are not the main topic of the films, but are used to convey the struggles and reality of much of the colonial period, but also of contemporary struggle in the twentieth century in, for example, the Central American revolutions. In class we will discuss at length the themes that go beyond the uninformed viewer’s interpretation of the film. If, however, you feel uncomfortable with these topics please come speak to me.

required readings

There is one required purchase for this class:

- Matthew Restall and Kris Lane, *Latin America in Colonial Times*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

There will be many more assigned chapter, article, and primary source readings. They will be available via the university library website, or in a dropbox folder that I will share with enrolled members of the course.

films for viewing

We will watch seven feature-length films this semester, as well as other selections or shorts:

1. *The Five Suns: A Sacred History of Mexico* Patricia Amlin, 1996. 59min.
2. *Popul Vuh: The Creation of Myth of the Maya*, Patricia Amlin, 1989. 60min.
3. *Apocalypto*, Mel Gibson, 2006. 139min.
4. *1492: Conquest of Paradise*, Ridley Scott, 1992. 154min.
5. *La otra conquista*, Salvador Carasco, 1998. 110min.
6. *Yo, la peor de todos*, Maria Luisa Bemberg, 1990. 105min.
7. *La ultima cena*, Tomás Gutierrez, 1976. 120min.
8. *The Mission*, Roland Joffé, 1986. 126min.
9. *También la lluvia*, Icíar Bollaín, 2010. 104min.

policies



Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner with appropriate documentation.

Attendance: Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. We only meet once a week. If you miss one class, you've missed an entire week of class. Viewing and discussion of films, group editing work, etc. that is done in class is indispensable to success in this class. If you will not be able to attend class, please contact me ahead of time.

Deadlines: Assignments must be emailed to the instructor no later than the beginning of class on the day they are due, or at some other specified time established by the professor. It is important to be technologically savvy in today's world. Much of our communication occurs through email, including the

sharing of documents and other work product. Late papers will not be accepted for any reason without prior arrangement. This includes technology problems. You're responsible for attaching your work correctly and sending it in on time.

Cell Phones and Laptops: Please silence our cell phones prior to class. Please do not text during class. Laptops are allowed only for tasks that require them. In other words, plan to have paper with you. Based on the prevailing literature, hand note-taking—both while reading and in class—leads to substantially better educational outcomes. You are not required to have a laptop in class, so feel free to leave it at home. During film viewing, no laptops or glowing screens can be open. If, however, you have compelling reasons to use your laptop for notetaking, particularly during films, consider sitting at the back in order to prevent your screen's glow from distracting others.

Office Hours: Students are strongly encouraged to speak with me outside of class. The advantages of talking with me include: extra help on an assignment or preparation for an exam; clarification of materials covered in lecture, discussion of my comments on your work; discussion of this or related courses. I am available during office hours on a first-come, first-served basis; if you cannot come by during office hours, please contact me via email or phone and I will be happy to set up an appointment with you.

Changes: I reserve the right to change this syllabus as the semester progresses. This is not a contract, but rather a document to guide expectations and clearly communicate weekly assignments. Please bring the syllabus with you to our class meetings. Or, keep up with it on the course website.

Assignments

1. **Film introductions and discussions:**
2. **Readings Précis:**
3. **Reaction Papers:**
4. **Final Paper:**

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction (August 29)

Read:

- This Syllabus!!

Week 2: Precolombia I (September 5)

Read:

Week 3: *Apocalypto* (September 12)

Read:

Week 4: Caribbean Phase (September 19)

Read:

Week 5: *1492* (September 26)

Read:

Week 6: Conquest I (October 3)

Read:

Week 7: *La otra conquista* (October 10)

Read:

Week 8: Colonial Society I - Gender (October 17)

Read:

Week 9: *I, Worst of All* (October 24)

Read:

Week 10: Colonial Society I – Slavery (October 31)

Read:

Week 11: *La ultima cena* (November 7)

Read:

Week 12: Bourbon Reforms (November 14)

Read:

Week 13: *The Mission* (November 21)

Read:

Week 14: Colonial Legacies (November 28)

Read:

Week 15: *Tambien La Lluvia* (December 5)

Read:
