

MC366: Romancing the Nation: Film, History and Nation  
Unit: Cinema, memory and the Nation in post-dictatorial Southern Cone of America  
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Through this project I will develop a unit on cinema from the Southern Cone of America for MC366, Romancing the Nation: Film, History and Nation. Its objective is to use cinema as a medium to discuss the concept of memory and its role in the (re)construction of nations that have been under military dictatorships and that have suffered massive human rights violations. Memory, collective memory, and memory studies have developed since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an interdisciplinary field that has its roots mainly on history, sociology and anthropology. Post-dictatorship cinema in the Southern Cone (defined as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) has centered on presenting an interpretation of the countries recent past; even before historians have come to grips with this past (with few exceptions). Other social scientists (mainly political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists) have engaged with this past trying to reconfigure the social spaces that were 'disturbed' by the military governments. Among others, the question that arises is what is the role of cinema in representing memories and its influence in the (re)construction of states. Another possible question is which is the importance of recuperating or maintain memory for the societies that have suffered human rights abuses? From an instructional perspective, relevant questions are: What is the relationship between history and memory? How do we teach memory and its intersections with the social sciences and humanities? And, what is the use of cinema as a medium to teach memory?

Following the objective mentioned above, in this project I will develop a unit of a course from present an interdisciplinary framework to analyze the process of national (re)construction in the countries of the Southern Cone of America. I will utilize theories and concepts developed mainly by historians, sociologists and political scientists to integrate the different analyses onto an examination that it is centered in the object of study and not in the discipline. Using movies as cultural artifacts I will evaluate a representation of reality that is directly influence by time (historical and personal) and ideology and which itself can be read from an interdisciplinary perspective.

## Class outline

### **Class I**            **03/03/10**

Topic                    Dictatorial regimes, transitions to democracy and the politics of memory in the Southern Cone

- Required readings
- C. Burucúa's "Introduction" and Chapter One, in *Confronting the 'Dirty War in Argentine cinema, 1983-1993: Memory and gender in historical representations*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Tamesis, 2009. Pages 1-37. (A)
  - James Cisneros's "The Figure of Memory in Chilean Cinema: Patricio Guzmán And Raúl Ruiz". *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*. 15.1 (2006): 59-75. (A)
  - Elizabeth Jelin and Susana G. Kaufman's "Layers of Memories: twenty years after in Argentina," in Lorey, David E., and William H. Beezley. 2002. *Genocide, collective violence, and popular memory: the politics of remembrance in the twentieth century*. Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 2002 Pages 31-52

Screenings            Fragment on Chile from the film *11'09'01 - September 11*

Class Objective        In this class I intend to develop the context that surrounded the military dictatorships in the Southern Cone as well as to develop the importance of memory in the construction of post dictatorial societies. This will be a lecture centered class, encouraging students participation and debate.

### **Class II**            **02/24/10**

Topic                    Southern Cone cinema during and after dictatorship

- Required readings
- Mark Szuchman's "Depicting the past in Argentine Films: Family drama and historical debate in "Miss Mary" and "The Official History" pp. 173-200. In Stevens, Donald F. 1997. *Based on a true story: Latin American history at the movies*. Latin American silhouettes. Wilmington, Del: SR Books (2002). Pages 173-200.
  - Zarakin, A. & Niro's. chapter 6, "The Materialization of Sadism; Archaeology of Architecture in Clandestine Detention Centers (Argentinean Military Dictatorship, 1976–1983)," in Funari, P. P. A., Zarankin, A., & Salerno, M. A. (2009). *Memories from darkness Archaeology of repression and resistance in Latin America*. New York: Springer

Screenings            - Luis Puenzo "The Official Story" (1985).

Class                    This class will be the first of two where a movie on the topic will be shown to

Objective students. The movie will be “The Official Story”. Discussion on the development of national cinema and the relationship between cinema and post dictatorial societies. Analysis of film.

**Class III 03/03/10**

Topic Human rights, justice, memory and the new nation

- Required readings
- Barahona de Brito, Alexandra. 2001. “Truth, justice, memory and democratization in the Southern Cone” pp. 119-159. In Barahona de Brito, Alexandra, Carmen González Enríquez, and Paloma Aguilar Fernández. 2001. *The politics of memory: transitional justice in democratizing societies*. Oxford studies in democratization. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  - Luis Roniger and Mario Sznajder’s chapter 6, “Oblivion and Memory in the Redemocratized Southern Cone,” in *The legacy of human-rights violations in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*. Oxford studies in democratization. New York: Oxford University Press (2003/1999). Pages 182-223

Screenings - Roman Polanski “Death and the Maiden” (1994).

Class Objective This class will be the second where a movie on the topic will be shown to students. The movie will be “Death and the Maiden”. Discussion on the Human rights, memory, forgiveness and post dictatorial nation building. Analysis of film. Conclusion of the unit