

RCAH Research/SOTL Project
Using cinema as a pedagogical tool
Abstract
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The objective of this project is to analyze possible uses and abuses of using cinema to teach history and social sciences. This project will be applied during the Spring semester of 2011 in the courses RCAH202: The Presence of the Past taught by Dr. Mark Sullivan and HST201: Historical Methods and Skills¹ taught by Cristián Doña-Reveco. This project is a continuation and expansion of the project design during 2009 as part of my IIT application project. There I developed a unit on cinema from the Southern Cone of America for MC366, Romancing the Nation: Film, History and Nation. It was my objective 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 suffer massive human rights violations. Among others, the questions that directed my analysis were what is the role of cinema in representing memories and its influence in the (re)construction of states that had suffered massive violations of human rights of its citizens; as well as exploring the relationship between history and memory. Also I attempted to understand the way we can teach memory and its intersections with the social sciences and humanities. A first analysis on this topic will be presented at the 11th Conference on the Americas: Creative Agents of Change: Facing Challenges in our Communities at Grand Valley State University under the title of "Cinema, memory and the promise of Nation reconstruction: Teaching the recent history of the Southern Cone".

Following the objective presented above this research paper will deal with at least four understandings and uses of cinema on the classroom. These consider cinema as a) palpable historical events; b) examples of ideological constructions; c) representations of social reality(ies); and d) depictions of faraway lands and cultures. Student discussion will be directed to this four uses of cinema and the influence or application that has on learning contemporary history and the social sciences. This project will be asses using student written journals in each class in which cinema is used or referred to.

¹ The title of my section will be "History and films: Scenes of Twentieth Century Latin American Cinema".