Latin American History through Film

Document published by Marc Becker on Wednesday, November 25, 2020

milanesiofall2020film.pdf

Description:

Submission for 2020 CLAH/H-LATAM Syllabus Prize: “Not Another Exam: Creative Assignments for Latin American History Courses”

HIST 4371-Latin American History through Film Synchronous Online Course Thursdays 5.30-7.00 pm

Assignment Guidelines (seven creative assignments) are provided at the end of the syllabus.

University of Houston- Fall 2020

Prof. Natalia Milanesio nmilanesio@uh.edu

Course Description

This class explores how popular cinema produces and circulates different versions of the Latin American past that are historically and culturally determined. The course focuses on films about key moments and central figures of twentieth-century Latin America and asks students to engage critically with the ways in which both are represented. Films will be treated as cultural constructions. Through their analysis, students will gain a deep understanding of the context of production and of the historical events depicted.

This course is being offered in the Synchronous Online format. Synchronous online class meetings will take place on Thursdays from 5.30 to 7.00 pm. There is no face-to-face component to this course.
WEBCAMS: Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams and microphones must be turned on during meetings to engage in class discussions.

Learning Objectives

1. Learn Latin American history.

2. Reflect on how art and the media construct history as narrative and popularize different accounts about the past.

3. Familiarize students with diverse aspects of the craft of the historian including comprehensive reading, research, and writing.

4. Examine the differences and similarities between academic historical narratives and cinematic historical narratives.

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

5. Examine central components of Latin American culture and society in different historical contexts, including racial and class relations, gender roles, political participation, and revolutionary activism.

UH email and Email Etiquette

Email communications related to this course will be sent to your Exchange email account which each University of Houston student receives. The Exchange mail server can be accessed via Outlook, which provides a single location for organizing and managing day-to-day information, from email and calendars to contacts and task lists. Exchange email accounts can be accessed by logging into Office 365 with your Cougarnet credentials or through Access UH. They can also be configured on IOS and Android mobile devices. Additional assistance can be found at the Get Help page.

Since you are communicating with professors and classmates in an academic environment, address professors and students directly by name or title, choose an appropriate greeting,
be polite, and sign your emails.

The professor WILL NOT reply emails that do not meet these conditions:

- Make the subject line clear.

- Use a professional greeting: address professors with their correct titles, such as Prof. or Dr.,

  avoid Mr. or Mrs.

- Identify yourself: name and class

- Remain formal: this is not a text message to a friend, avoid emojis and slang.

- Communicate clearly and concisely.

- End with a formal acknowledgment: thank you, sincerely, regards.

- Sign your email using your name.

- Do not send attachments without a text following 1-8

- I will not respond to emails that do not follow proper email etiquette.

  CHECK YOUR EMAIL EVERYDAY AND RESPOND RAPIDLY: any changes in the schedule, meetings, assignments, etc. and clarifications will be announced through email.

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy and Graduate Excused Absence Policy for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a
close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Additional policies address absences related to military service, religious holy days, pregnancy and related conditions, and disability.

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

2

Interim Undergraduate Grading Policy

Due to the unique and unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Houston has implemented an Interim Undergraduate Grade Policy for undergraduate grades which applies to all undergraduate students in courses offered in all sessions during fall 2020. Under this policy, students have the option of converting final assigned letter grades to S (Satisfactory, applicable to any letter grade from A to D-) or NCR (No Credit Reported COVID-19, applicable to grades of F) on their transcripts. Please visit FAQs for additional information.

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor’s recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor’s recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email.

Students with Disabilities
The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, the University of Houston strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. Students seeking accommodation in this course should contact the instructor after obtaining the appropriate documentation through the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS

http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

Resources for Online Learning

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our Power-On website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

Grading

Class attendance and participation: 200 points (Virtual meetings on Thursday) Twelve (12) Assignments: 50 points each= 600 points Latin American Films Podcast: 200 points Total: 1000 points

Assignments: Content

Quizzes and short questions will be focused on BOTH the films and the readings for each
week. The links to access the assignments will be posted in each of the film folders where
you will also find some of the required readings.

Instructions for the podcast will be provided in advance.

Assignments: Deadlines

Assignments will be posted weekly, on Monday.

Most quizzes and assignments are due on Thursdays at 4.00 pm. NO MAKE UPS Students
WILL NOT BE able to complete late assignments.

The Latin American Films Podcast is due on Thursday December 3 at 4.00 pm. Late
submissions will not be accepted.

4

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Professional Conduct

PLAGIARISM will not be tolerated. For information about plagiarism and UH policy,
see: http://www.class.uh.edu/wconline/plagiarism/

Grading Scale

1000-930 is an A 920-900 is an A- 890-870 is a B+ 860-830 is a B 820-800 is a B- 790-770 is
a C+

Readings and Films:

760-730 is a C 720-700 is a C- 690-670 is a D+ 660-630 is a D 620-600 is a D- below 600 is
an F

Course Materials and Classes

5
Required articles and book chapters are posted on Blackboard.

We will also read Teresa Meade, A History of Modern Latin America: 1800 to Present (Wiley, 2016).

We are using the SECOND EDITION. The pages provided for the assignments are from the SECOND EDITION.
I also listed the subtitles of the required sections for clarification and for students with an earlier edition.

For the films, check Vudu, Amazon, Netflix, Kanopy (free with UH account, availability changes), and other online sources.

Attendance and Class Participation:

Virtual meetings are considered as face-to-face classes and the same rules and etiquette apply. Students are expected to attend class every week and to connect on time. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. If you know you will be late with a justified reason, inform me BEFORE class.

Avoid distractions, turn off your phone, and have a working webcam and microphone. Students are required to complete the readings and watch the films before class to engage in informed conversations. Both the quality and quantity of participation is important.

A note about the films:

In telling a story, many filmmakers use violence, nudity, and sexuality, sometimes in dramatic, shocking, and offensive ways. The films for this class were chosen on the basis of their relevance to our understanding of Latin American history and should be analyzed and appreciated in this context. Watching all the listed films is mandatory for this class and required for the completion of the assignments.

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Course Schedule Week 1
8/27: Introduction

Week 2
9/3: Vazante (Brazil, Daniela Thomas, 2017).

Mead, p. 51-65 (Ch. 3, from beginning to Resistance and Rebellion, included)

Assignment: Film Analysis
Week 3
9/10: Xingu (Brazil, Cao Hamburger, 2012).


Assignment: Intersections

Week 4
9/17: Cidade de Deus (City of God) (Brazil, Fernando Meirelles, 2003).


Assignment: Quiz

Week 5
9/24: Che 1 (Steven Soderbergh, 2008)

Meade, Ch. 11 on Cuba (WHOLE CHAPTER)


Assignment: Short Questions

6

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Week 6
10/1: Diarios de motocicleta (The Motorcycle Diaries) (Walter Salles, 2004).

Jorge Castañeda, “What is Che Guevara’s Legacy after his Death?” NYT, 10/25/17.


Assignment: Film Analysis

Week 7
10/8: Un traductor (A Translator) (Cuba, Rodrigo and Sebastián Barriuso, 2018).


Assignment: Film Festival

Week 8


Assignment: Sequel

1

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Week 9


Assignment: Short Questions

Week 10

Meade, Ch. 13, p. 301-306, from Central America in Turmoil to The Fighting Ends, included.


Assignment: Primary Source Analysis

Week 11
11/5: La Llorona (Jayro Bustamante, 2020)

Meade, Ch. 13, p. 306-311, from Guatemala: The Bloodiest War to the Evangelical Alternative, included.


Assignment: Historical Consultant

Week 12
11/12: No (Chile, Pablo Larraín, 2012).

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Mead, Ch. 12 p. 267-270, from The Chilean Road to Socialism to The Chilean Road to Socialism Ends and Ch. 14, pp. 331-32, section Chile’s Transition to Democracy.


Assignment: Quiz

Week 13
11/19: También la lluvia (Even the Rain) (Spain, Iciar Bollaín, 2010).

Assignment: Short Questions

Week 14

Thanksgiving

Week 15
12/3: Assignment: Latin American Films Podcast

HIST 4371- Dr. Natalia Milanesio

HIST 4371- Latin American History through Film Infancia Clandestina.
Sequel Assignment
Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Based on the readings, think of an idea for a sequel to Infancia Clandestina.

Watch the film and read:


Based on both readings, write an essay detailing a plot for a sequel that continues the story. Times New Roman 12, 700-1000 words, double space. DO NOT EXCEED WORD LIMIT

Required Essay Components:

1. Title
2. Start by offering a brief description of Infancia Clandestina.

3. Provide a brief analysis of the end of the film.

4. The sequel must be focused on Juan/Ernesto and his sister Vicky in direct relation to what Druiollle and Lazzara examine in their articles.

5. You must provide specific details about historical events, actors, processes related to the themes examined by both scholars.

6. The goal is to use the Infancia Clandestina to trigger your plot for the sequel and to use the readings to provide the historical foundations for continuing the story.

7. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE READINGS IS KEY

8. The essay must have two quotes from each reading. Use quotation marks and this format for reference (Lazzara, p. 326)

IMPORTANT:
THIS IS NOT AN ASSIGNMENT IN WHICH I WILL EVALUATE CREATIVE WRITING.

I WILL EVALUATE HOW YOU USE THE READINGS AND HOW YOU CONNECT THEM TO THE FILM TO CONTINUE THE STORY WITH HISTORICAL BASIS.
DO NOT WRITE DIALOGUES BUT FOCUS ON DEVELOPING YOUR OWN STORY BASED ON THE READINGS AND THE FILM.

HIST 4371- Latin American History through Film

Historical Consultant Assignment

Dr. Natalia Milanesio

A film director has contacted you to serve as a historical consultant for a historical documentary on:

1- The 1954 coup that overthrew President Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala
2- The government of Rafael Trujillo (Dominican Republic)
3- The 1910 Mexican Revolution
4- The life of Latin American women workers from a historical perspective
5- The guerrillas in Latin America

CHOOSE ONE TOPIC

As a historical consultant, you will develop a plan for the film production with these components:

1- A list of 5 articles and books about the subject (published by academics in academic journals and by academic presses) NO NEWSPAPERS OR POPULAR MAGAZINES!

2- A list of 5-7 issues/ problems/ themes that you advice must be featured/ discussed in the documentary because they are KEY to understand the subject matter. Briefly explain these issues/problems/themes.

Go to the UH library webpage.

Go to databases.

Use Worldcat for books

Use databases of academic journals to find articles or use e-journals to find articles in specific journals listed below:
Online Databases (provide access to academic journals): JSTOR (the most popular and complete)

History Cooperative Project Muse

Academic Journals on Latin America:

*Hispanic American Historical Review* *The Americas*
*Latin American Research Review* *Cuban Studies* (Project Muse) *History Compass*

*NWSA Journal*
*Bulletin of Latin American Research* *Latin American Politics and Society* *Latin American Perspectives* *Journal of Latin American Studies*

HIST 4371- Latin American History through Film Dr. Natalia Milanesio

Film Festival Assignment

The goal of this assignment is for you to curate a film festival featuring a group of movies devoted to a particular topic of Latin American history.

- **TOPICS ON LATINOS/ HISPANICS IN THE US ARE NOT ALLOWED**—all movies must reflect the history of Latin America as a whole and/or individual Latin American countries.

- **CONTEMPORARY THEMES ARE NOT ALLOWED**, that is, movies telling a story taking place in current times.

- **ALL MOVIES MUST BE ON HISTORICAL TOPICS**: movies must tell stories taking place ON or BEFORE the 1990s.

Format: Word documents; follow example/model.

Components of the assignment:

1. Title of the festival
2- One paragraph explaining the content of the festival by answering these questions: What is the festival about? Explain the topic in detail. Why has the curator chosen these movies? What do audiences will learn by attending the film festival?

3- List of three movies about the topic. You will list the original title, year, country of origin, and director. Write a brief synopsis of the movie. Films can be fictional or documentaries and they must directly engage with the main topic.

4- List of three academics/scholars who are specialists in the field who will debate/comment on the movies.

a- Each scholar must have a book published on the topic BY AN ACADEMIC PRESS, that is, a UNIVERSITY PRESS (see example).

b- Use Worldcat to find the academics. Go to the UH library main webpage; databases; Worldcat; search by subject, title, name, etc.

c- For each scholar you will write her/his name, current institutional affiliation (where do they teach/research, work, etc.), name of book/books they have written on the subject, publisher, and year of publication.
Grading criteria:

Conception and conceptualization of the festival; overall presentation and format; information about films and scholars; correct selection of films and correct selection of scholars; description of films; correct citation.

You can communicate with me through email if you want to check that the topic/films are well-chosen.

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:
Do not copy and paste from the Internet. Turnitin will detect this. This is plagiarism, a serious academic offense that could equal an F in the assignment and/or an F in the course and goes in your academic record permanently.

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR PLAGIARISM.
Use your own words when summarizing the films and writing the rationale for the festival.

HIST 4371-Latin American History through Film Dr. Natalia Milanesio
Podcast assignment
Deadline 12/3 at 4.00 pm; through Blackboard

You do not need any particular software for this assignment. You can record it with your phone and/or computer with any free podcast or recorder app. Audacity can be downloaded for free and is quite good—I used it for my podcast. There are several videos on YouTube to help you with Audacity.

You will need to create a MP3 file that you can upload for submission through Blackboard.

Do not worry about the technical aspects—unless you want to, enjoy it, or want to explore podcasting. The focus should be the content and overall presentation as detailed below.

IN PREPARATION:
a) Watch the trailers for ALL the movies listed below.

b) Choose one film and accompanying readings for your podcast. Contact me if you need advice or have questions before making the selection. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!

c) You will be the host of the “Latin American History through Film Podcast” where you will discuss the film and what it teaches us about Latin American History.

d) Listen to the sample podcast I recorded and posted on Blackboard to show you what I expect. ALL ELEMENTS THAT I REQUIRE FOR YOUR PODCAST ARE INCLUDED IN MINE. Listen to the audio with the list of requirements (items 1-7 below) on hand so you can clearly identify the structure/parts of the podcast.

e) You will write the script for the podcast by addressing these 7 questions:

**SCRIPT/ PODCAST:**

1. Brief introduction with general information about the movie: title, country, year, director, language. (0.30-1 minute)

2. Brief description of the historical context and the historical problems addressed in the film. Imagine a listener who knows nothing about the country and time period. You need to provide this listener with enough clear and accurate information to understand the film. Here you will use the reading/s. I WILL BE LOOKING FOR CONCRETE INFORMATION FROM THE READINGS IN THE PODCAST. (3-5 minutes)
3. Explain what the film is about: plot, characters, and all other aspects connected to the main theme. (2-4 minutes)

1

1. Choose the character that you find the most exciting and/or interesting and explain why this is your choice. (2-3 minutes)

2. Choose the scene that you find the most interesting and/or powerful. Describe it and explain why this is your choice. (If you explain a scene to answer 4, here choose a different one) (1-2 minutes)

3. Choose and explain TWO historical aspects/themes/actors that viewers will learn from the movie. (2-3 minutes)

4. Final words: why should you watch this movie? (0.30-1 minute)

Important:

- Sound must be clear and narrative should flow smoothly.

- DO NOT IMPROVISE: WRITE THE SCRIPT AND READ IT WITH YOUR BEST “PODCAST VOICE.”

- MAINTAIN A REASONABLE PACE, BE ENGAGING IN YOUR NARRATION.

- Music is optional (I WILL NOT DEDUCT OR ADD POINTS FOR THIS).

- PODCAST MUST BE 10-12 MINUTES LONG—NOT SHORTER THAN 10
MINUTES. If you exceed the recommended length, do not go longer than 15 minutes.

• Practice and time yourself to make sure each part of the podcast meets the length requirements.

• To meet the length requirement (with narration at a reasonable pace), estimate to write a script of 1300-1500 words.

Grading criteria: Content:

1- Questions 1-7 are correctly and completely addressed.

2- Readings are productively used and incorporated.

3- Overall podcast length requirement is fulfilled and expected podcast sections length are fulfilled

Presentation:

1- Quality of narration

2- Use of a script

3- Clarity of sound

Films- CHOOSE ONE:

2

Un traductor (A Translator) (Rodrigo and Sebastián Barriuso, 2018) (ONLY AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

Machuca (Andrés Wood, 2004)
Xingu (Cao Hamburger, 2012)
NN (Héctor Gálvez, 2015)
La Noche de Doce Años (A Twelve-Year Night) (Álvaro Brechner, 2018)

Readings:

The readings are posted on separate folders named with the movie titles. They are marked as required and optional. Optional readings are highly recommended but not expected to be included in the podcast.

Readings for each movie are fairly distributed, balancing length and complexity so all students will be faced with similar tasks. Do not choose a movie based on the number or length of readings: some movies have more readings but they are shorter and simple; some movies have one reading because it is longer and/or more complex.

Choose the film because you are interested in the topic and/or the movie: this will make the assignment easier and more enjoyable.

If you have time, watch as many movies as you can, and then choose one for the podcast. All the movies are great.

Submission:

In the Podcast folder where you found these guidelines for the assignment, click on Podcast. This will lead you to “Assignment Information” where you can go to “Attach Files.” Here, browse your computer and upload/attach the MP3 file.

Make sure that the audio file was correctly attached and submitted. Students are allowed multiple submissions so you can re-enter and re-check as many times as needed and address problems if any.
DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

3

HIST 4371- Latin American History through Film Dr. Natalia Milanesio Romero
Primary Source Analysis

Answer ALL PARTS OF the questions.
Number responses and identify a and b parts separately.

1- The film depicts the transformation of Oscar Romero from a “bookworm,” as he was identified at the moment he was named Archbishop, to an activist.
   a- Explain the reasons WHY this transformation took place.
   b- Analyze a scene of the film that illustrates this transformation.

2- The film depicts a divided Catholic Church where different members of the clergy face the political and social repressive situation in El Salvador differently. Explain this argument in detail.

3- In “The Voice of Blood,” Romero makes an argument about the relation of the Church with the poor and the rich AND about how the rich should act towards the poor to be part of the Church.
   a- Find the quote that is the BEST and MOST ACCURATE in addressing this subject
      and transcribe it between quotation marks.
   b- Analyze a scene from the movie that illustrates the quote, that is, the tensions between
      the rich and the poor that Romero addresses in “The Voice of Blood.”

4- Identify and explain the two arguments/ideas with which Romero most
radically challenged the Salvadoran government in “The Last Sermon.”

5- Imagine you watch the film with a friend or a family member who has no previous knowledge of Romero or the history of El Salvador (or maybe you did!). Choose and explain the three most important pieces of information and/or arguments from Jon Lee Anderson’s article that you would like this person to know after watching the film.

Xingu

Identify and analyze four differences AND four similarities between the film and Seth Garfield’s reading. You can address themes like: approach/focus, tone, particular contents, etc.


Length: 700-1000 words

Be specific, provide examples, do not exceed word limit, and do not write less than 700 words. Structure the assignment in two sections with the following subtitles—Differences and Similarities—and enumerate and explain the four elements for each section.

Times New Roman, 12, double space.
The goal is to write short thoughtful reflections that effectively discuss how the film represents these topics. Be very thorough when identifying all the variables/aspects/challenges/problems that come into play for a comprehensive discussion.

1- Being a man

2- Being a woman

3- Being a child