Advanced Topics in Hispanic Literature & Film

Topic for Fall, 1999: The Films of Luis Buñuel

SYLLABUS

Mondays = 11:00-12:30
Wednesdays = 11:00-1:30

Professor: Elizabeth Garrels

Students view, in class, one feature-length or, at most, one feature-length and one short film per week by Spanish film director Luis Buñuel (1900-1983), that is, thirteen out of Buñuel’s total production of thirty-two films. The subject includes two hours per week of discussion dedicated to the films and related texts, including film criticism, the director’s autobiography Mi último suspiro (orig. publ. in French, in 1982, as Mon dernier soupir), and the novel Tristana, by 19th c. Spanish writer Benito Pérez Galdós, that inspired Buñuel’s film of the same title, one of the director’s eighteen films based on literary texts. The subject considers the thirteen films chronologically, from Buñuel’s early silent surrealist classics of 1929 and 1930 to his last film, “Cet Obscur objet du désir” (“Ese oscuro objeto del deseo,” 1977).

Class discussion conducted entirely in Spanish; advanced reading knowledge of both Spanish and English required.

Assigned Readings


**Recommended Readings**


All films will be viewed first in class on Wednesdays. Students will need to review many if not all the films, and can do this, after the in-class screening. When requesting individual films, always identify the film by its LLARC call number. These numbers are indicated in this syllabus.

**Calendar of Assignments**

   - Lecture on Surrealism and the friendship of Luis Buñuel, Salvador Dalí, and Federico García Lorca in the 1920s.
   - View slides of Surrealist paintings.
   - Review terminology useful in discussing Buñuel’s films.
   - View “Un Chien andalou” (Paris, 1929, 24 minutes), by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. (LLARC # SP 144)

-Williams, "Introduction," xiii-xvii, Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 3-105.


-Read: Evans, "Introduction."
-Buñuel, Chapters 1-7.

4. Mon., 9/20/99 - Discuss "L’Age d’or."

Read: Edwards, Chapter 2, pp. 63-86.
-Williams, Chapter 3, pp. 106-50.
-Buñuel, Chapters 8-11.

5. Wed., 9/22/99 - View "Las Hurdes" (English title: "Land Without Bread") (Spain, 1932, 27 minutes) (#SP 144), and "Los olvidados" (English title: "The Young and the Damned") (Mexico, 1950, 88 minutes). (#SP 116)

Read: Buñuel, Chapters 12-18.

6. Mon., 9/27/99 - Discuss "Las Hurdes" and "Los olvidados"

Read: Edwards, Chapter 3.
-Evans, Chapter 2, first pages up to Section 1, and all of Section 3.
-Luis Buñuel, "Land Without Bread" (Lecture in Spanish, in spite of title, delivered by Buñuel in New York City on March 18, 1940, to introduce a screening of the English language version of "Las Hurdes." Rpt. in Nickel Odeon: Revista, trimestral de cine, #13, winter 1998, pp. 65-68. On reserve.)

7. Wed., 9/29/99 - View "Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie" (English title = "The
Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie"
(France/Spain/Italy, 1972, 105 minutes).
(# FR 185)

Read: Buñuel, Chapters 19-21.


-Evans, Chapter 1.

9. Wed., 10/6/99 - Oral reports: Each student chooses a short scene (max. 4 mins.) from either “Los olvidados” or “Le Charme Discret,” makes a video copy of it, shows it to the class, and discusses the scene in terms of 1) its filmic construction and 2) its relevance with regard to the film’s narrative as a whole.

Also due today: Informal handwritten blue book with reading notes and critical response to Buñuel’s autobiography Mi último suspiro.

Mon., 10/11 - Holiday. No class.

(# SP 163)

Read: Freud, “Family Romances” (1909),
(On reserve)
-Start reading Galdós’s late 19th-century novel Tristana (1892).

By today, students must e-mail the instructor the name of the film they will discuss in their 10 pp. paper due on Wed., Dec. 8. The 10-page paper is to be a monograph focused on a single film by Buñuel. Students can choose among the films corresponding to classes #10 (“Susana”) through and including #25 (“Tristana”). To get some quick information re. these eight films, check out Amazon.com on the Web. Specifically, go to http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ts/browse-video. In the “Search by Actor, Title, Director” box, write “Luis Buñuel” and click Go! This page gives you access to information on all eight films you
can choose from for your papers. Click the desired film title and explore the options. Among other things, you should be able to get reviews, plot summaries, and the Maltin Summary (from Leonard Maltin’s Movie & Video Guide).

11. Mon., 10/18 - Discuss “Susana.”

Read: Evans, Chapter 2, Section 1.
- John Berger, Chapter 3 of Ways of Seeing (1972), pp. 45-64. (On reserve)
- Continue reading Galdós, Tristana.

12. Wed., 10/20 - View “Una mujer sin amor” (Mexico, 1951, 85 minutes). (SP 181)


Read: Evans, Chapter 2, Section 2.
- Continue reading Galdós, Tristana.


By today, students should have seen their chosen film for their 10 pp. paper due 12/8/99, and sent the instructor by e-mail a paragraph in Spanish that defines the topic of their paper. The paper should discuss a particular aspect or theme of the film. It is to be a critical/analytical paper, not a description of the plot and not an overview of the film’s history (production, history, etc.).
15. Mon., 11/1 - Discuss “Ensayo de un crimen.”

Read: Evans, Chapter 3, up to and including Section 1.
-Finish reading Galdós, Tristana.

16. Wed., 11/3 - View “Viridiana” (Spain/Mexico, 1961, 90 minutes). (SP 008)


During Weeks 10 and 11 (11/8-11/17), students are invited to pass in rough drafts or outlines of their 10 pp. paper, or of any part of it. This is optional, and is not considered work for extra credit. No draft will be accepted after class on 11/17. Drafts passed in on time will be read and commented on by the instructor and returned to students on Mon., 11/29.

17. Mon., 11/8 - Discuss “Viridiana.”

Read: Edwards, Chapter 5.

18. Wed., 11/10 - View “El ángel exterminador” (Mexico, 1962, 95 minutes). (SP 115)


Read: Edwards, Chapter 6.


21. Mon., 11/22 - Discuss “Belle de Jour.”

Read: Edwards, Chapter 7.
- Evans, Chapter 4, up to Section 1, and Section 2.


Read: Evans, Chapter 3, Section 3; Conclusion.
- Williams, Chapter 4, pp. 151-54 and pp. 185-209; Chapter 5.


- Discuss Galdós’s novel Tristana.

25. Mon., 12/6 - Discuss “Tristana.”

Read: Edwards, Chapter 8.


Also due today: 10-page double-spaced type written paper (or 250 words per page). Topics chosen earlier in the semester. See deadlines for 10/13, 10/27, 11/8-11/17.

DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE:

1. Attendance* and quantity and quality of active participation in class discussions = 30%

*Unexcused absences at more than two classes will negatively affect the final grade.
2. Oral report on 10/6/99 = 15%
3. Blue book on *Mi último suspiro* = 10%
4. Blue book on novel *Tristana* = 10%
5. Oral report on 10 pp. paper = 10%
6. 10 pp. paper = 25%

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total = 100%