



Cinematic Auteurs: Pedro Almodóvar */ Queer Cinema: Pedro Almodóvar*

FILM 3390 / WS 3336
CRN: 36006 / 36170

June 8th – July 2nd

[Online class]

Summer I Semester – 2020

Instructor: Roberto Avant-Mier, Ph.D.
Office: Cotton Memorial Bldg. #304
Phone: (915) 747.6588
Office Hours: Digital office hours by email, phone, or Zoom/Skype (by appointment)
Email: ravantmier@utep.edu

Required Texts:

REQUIRED Textbook: *Desire Unlimited: The Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar* [3rd Edition]
Author: **Paul J. Smith** Year: **2014** Publisher: **Verso**

REQUIRED Access: **iTunes account**, for the purpose of watching P. Almodóvar films for this class. All of P. Almodóvar's movies are currently available through *iTunes* (as "Rent" or "Buy" options.)

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to increase understanding of a specific film director, in this case Pedro Almodóvar, with the goals of enlightenment about cinema, filmmaking, and critical thinking about media. This course will introduce you to background information about the director, and will help you apply this knowledge in understanding cinema as meaning-making cultural practice. From a communication perspective, it will improve your understanding of communication from both transmission and ritual/symbolic perspectives. From a cultural perspective, the course will focus on social, societal, cultural, structural and historical dimensions of film production, and therefore emphasizes racial, ethnic, class, and gender analyses of film/media production. Finally, the course will emphasize a critical/cultural approach to communication.

Course Objectives: In this course you should,

- Become familiar with the director and his body of work, and develop a familiarity with the director's style, thematic concerns, and commitments.
- Develop an understanding of how the director's films have been received by the public and understood by academics.
- Develop a working vocabulary of terms and concepts that relate to film studies as well as film studies from a communication/media studies perspective.
- Discover the importance of the roles of history & context in film as a communication medium.
- Become more sensitive to the complexity of discursive practices in society, and knowledgeable about film and communication.
- Recognize the influence of an individual's group, cultural, or ethnic/national identity on mediated productions.

Course Policies:

1. ATTENDANCE:

Obviously, since this is a 100% online class, in-person attendance is not a requirement as in regular university classes. Nevertheless, the student is also responsible for following directions (or asking for help from the professor if things are not clear) and keeping up with the syllabus & all scheduled assignments.

Since absences or lates will not be counted as in a typical semester format, absences are irrelevant. Again, students are expected to keep up with all scheduled work for throughout the course. Furthermore, since all assignments and deadlines are included in this syllabus (and announced very clearly at the beginning of the class), “extensions” for work trying to do “make-up” work” is largely irrelevant. As per university policy, the only legitimate reasons for missing any work deadlines are (a.) university-related activities (that cause delays or some kind of problems), or (b.) hospitalizations, illness, or personal emergencies of the student. Anything beyond these is considered irrelevant regarding this class.

2. DEADLINES:

All assignments and exams/quizzes will be scheduled far in advance, and due dates for exams and assignments are announced in this syllabus. Therefore, you must plan your work and personal schedule far in advance to accommodate these deadlines and policies. Once again, because the attendance policy dictates that you will (for the most part) be present in this online-format class, make-ups and late work are therefore largely irrelevant. Otherwise, for a few special cases at the discretion of your instructor, late work will be docked one letter grade for each day late (each calendar day, not each day of class).

3. EXAMS:

Make-up tests will not be given, except for emergencies. If a student misses an exam or quiz because of a documented emergency or situation, he/she will be required to fulfill an alternative assignment. Only in extreme circumstances will your instructor make arrangements with you to complete your coursework through alternative assignments.

4. ADA STATEMENT (Americans with Disabilities Act):

The University of Texas at El Paso seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) to make arrangements for accommodations in advance.

5. CASS POLICY (Center for Accommodations & Support Services):

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) at (915) 747.5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu. Or visit their office located in the UTEP Union – East, Room #106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

6. PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

The use of cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices is NOT recommended during in-person or face-to-face classes (reading assigned readings, online discussions, watching films, etc.), so phones should be turned off AND put away during “class” time. Since this is a 100% online-format class however, there is no regulation of phone use or electronic devices.

Students should be advised that the online quizzes and exams are TIMED EXAMS. This means that students are expected to follow through with any questions and tasks within the quiz/exam and complete the quiz/exam within the time limits. Students who allow themselves to be distracted by phones or other device could be risking not completing the exam or not finishing the exam on time. Please remember that there will be no special arrangements for students to be allowed extra time or do “re-takes” of any exam or quiz. Put simply, students are expected to follow all directions (and recommendations) and complete all tasks on time and within deadlines.

7. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence, and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

8. ADVISORY / “HEADS-UP” / FAIR WARNING:

One final thing to note for taking this class is that we’ll be watching the films of Pedro Almodóvar (obviously), but it is important to note beforehand that his films can be considered offensive by some people. Almodóvar films are famous and infamous for things like nudity, sex scenes, drug use, or other outrageous acts or behavior. Sometimes, the films might other “adult content” such as a rape scene or sexual assault, or a church scene that could be offensive to somebody that’s very religious. While this type of content is NOT gratuitous and always has a specific point (see your readings on this matter), it is important to note that such content will occur throughout his films. Thus, students who might have major issues with watching such things on-screen, or who might be offended by this are advised NOT to take this class.

9. ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING SCALES

Assignments

* Discussions (& Participation)	20 %
Mid-Term Exam:	25 %
Final Exam:	25 %
Quizzes (2 total / 15% each)	30 %

Please Note:

- Discussion Posts are worth 20% of the overall Final Grade (20% Total).
- That means weekly Discussion posts are 5% each.

Numeric Scale – Letter Grade Achieved

90 – 100 = **A** 80 – 89 = **B** 70 – 79 = **C** 60 – 69 = **D** below 60 = **F**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE – Summer I 2020 (June – July)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Reading:</u>
1	6/ 08 - 6/12	00. Introductions, syllabus & course overview 1. <i>Pepi, Luci, Bom...</i> (film) 2. <i>Dark Habits</i> (film) 3. <i>What Have I Done to Deserve This?</i> (film)	(Get the books/ materials!) a. "A Punk Called Pedro" (Triana Toribio) b. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 1 a. "Interview: Dark Habits" (Llauradó) b. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 3 a. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 4 b. "Music and Songs" (Allinson)
Graded Assignments: Wk 1 Discussions + Quiz #1			[Due Sun. 6/14, see Blackboard details]
2	6/15 - 6/19	1. <i>Law of Desire</i> (film) 2. <i>Women On the Verge...</i> (film) 3. <i>Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!</i> (film)	a. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 6 b. "Figuring Hysteria" (Epps) a. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 7 b. "Women on the Verge..." (Strauss) a. "Melo-Thriller" (Acevedo-Muñoz) b. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 8
Graded Assignments: Wk 2 Discussions + Mid-Term			[Due Sun. 6/21, see Blackboard details]
3	6/22 - 6/26	1. <i>Live Flesh</i> (film) 2. <i>All About My Mother</i> (film) 3. <i>Talk To Her</i> (film)	a. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 12 b. "Almodóvar's Post-Modern Cinema" (Fuentes) a. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 13 b. "All About My Mother" (Strauss) a. Almodóvar's Girls" (Bersani & Dutoit) b. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 14
Graded Assignments: Wk 3 Discussions + Quiz #2			[Due Sun. 6/28, see Blackboard details]
4	6/29 - 7/02	1. <i>Volver</i> (film) 2. <i>The Skin I Live In</i> (film) 3. <i>I'm So Excited</i> (film)	a. "Spanish Film Music" (Vernon/Eisen) b. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 16 a. "Three Films Close-Up" (Goss) b. <i>Desire Unlimited</i> , Ch. 18 a. "The Auteur Theory" (Goss) b. "Almodóvar's Master Class" (article)
Graded Assignments: Wk 4 Discussions + Final Exam			[Due Sun. 7/05, see Blackboard details]
***	7/15 ?	FINAL GRADES DUE	

Further Reading Suggestions:

- ***A Spanish Labyrinth: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar***, by M. Allinson (2001, I.B. Tauris)
- ***Pedro Almodóvar: Contemporary Film Directors***, by M. D'Lugo (2006, University of Illinois Press)
- ***Almodóvar on Almodóvar*** [Revised Edition], edited by F. Strauss (2007, Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- ***All about Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema***, edited by B. Epps & D. Kakoudaki (2009, University of Minnesota Press)
- ***All About Almodóvar's Men (Masculinity Studies Book 8)***, by J. Rey and F. Uceda (2017, P. Lang)
- ***Aesthetics, Ethics and Trauma in the Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar***, by J. D. Gutiérrez-Albilla (2018, Edinburgh University Press)
- ***A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar***, by M. D'Lugo & K.M. Vernon (2013, Wiley-Blackwell)
- ***Pedro Almodóvar: Interviews*** [Conversations With Filmmakers Series], by P. Willoquet-Maricondi (2004, University Press of Mississippi)
- ***Desire Unlimited: The Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar*** [3rd Edition], by **Paul J. Smith** (2014, Verso)
- ***Master of Cinema: Pedro Almodóvar***, by T. Sotinel (2010, Phaidon Press)
- ***Post-Franco, Post-Modern: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar***, edited by **K.M. Vernon & B. Morris** (1995, Praeger)
- ***Los Archivos de Pedro Almodóvar***, by P. Duncan (2017, Taschen)
- ***Gay Directors, Gay Films?: Pedro Almodóvar, Terence Davies, Todd Haynes, Gus Van Sant, John Waters***, by E. Levy (2015, Columbia University Press)
- ***How the Films of Pedro Almodóvar Draw Upon and Influence Spanish Society***, edited by **M.R. Matz & C. Salmon** (2012, The Edwin Mellen Press)
- ***Un Caníbal en Madrid: La Sensibilidad Camp y el Reciclaje de la Historia en el Cine de Pedro Almodóvar***, edited by **A. Yarza** (1999, Ediciones Libertarias)
- ***Transmutaciones de Género en el Cine de Almodóvar: Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios***, by **B. Pastor** (2002, Universidade de São Paulo)