Cinematic Auteurs: Cuarón, del Toro, & Inárritu (Or… "Los Tres Reyes")

FILM 3390 / CHIC 4350 **T/Th 12:00 – 1:20 pm** **Old Main #201**
CRN: 13242 / 18117

Fall Semester – 2024

Instructor: Roberto Avant-Mier, Ph.D.
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Required Texts:

REQUIRED Textbook: ***The Three Amigos: Transnational Filmmaking of del Toro, Iñárritu, and Cuarón*** [By author **Deborah Shaw,** Year: **2013,** Publisher: **Manchester University Press**]

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to increase understanding of a specific film director (in this case, the three Mexican directors: Alfonso Cuarón, Guillermo del Toro, & Alejandro González-Iñárritu)… with the goals of enlightenment about cinema, filmmaking, and critical thinking about media. This course will introduce you to background information about the director(s), 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 as well, and therefore also emphasizes racial, ethnic, class, and gender analyses of film/media production. Finally, this class will emphasize a critical-cultural approach to media / communication overall.

Course Objectives: In this course you should,

- Become familiar with the director and his/her body of work, and develop a familiarity with the director's style, thematic concerns, and commitments. (In this case, the three Mexican directors)
- Develop a basic 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 and context in film as communication.
- Become more sensitive to the complexity of discursive practices in society, and knowledgeable about film and communication.
- Recognize the potential influence of an individual's group, cultural, or ethnic/national identity on mediated productions.

Course Policies & Details:

1. ATTENDANCE:

In accordance with the Dept. of Communication Attendance Policy, **ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED** as a condition of successful completion of all courses in the department. **Second, after missing any class session, a student is responsible for finding out about assignments**, due dates, announcements, handouts, and so forth that were covered during the missed session, and for making up any missed work. The student is also responsible for obtaining class notes from a classmate (not the professor) for the session, and for learning material from that session for any relevant exams or quizzes.

Third, the equivalent of 1 week of absence from any course will reduce a student's course grade by percentage points on their eventual "Attendance & Participation" grade. However, absence from a combined total of 3 weeks of class meetings will result in automatic failure of the course. Thus, if the class meets once a week, 3 missed sessions means automatic failure. If a course meets twice a week, 8 missed sessions will result in failure of the course, and a combined total of 9 missed class sessions will result in automatic failure of a course that meets 3 times per week. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Fourth, absences for any reason, including illness, personal crises, athletics or other extra-curricular activities are included in this total. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss 3 or more weeks of a particular course, then that student should not enroll in the course. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss an exam or quiz, then that student should not enroll in the course.

Next, it is important to note that tardies (arriving late to class) will also be marked and counted, and a simple class rule is that excessive tardies/lates will result in the reduction of the student's final grade. More specifically, for "Attendance & Participation" purposes two tardies will be considered the same as one absence (for final grading). [*i.e.*, 2 tardies/lates = 1 absence]

Finally, students are required to keep track of their own absences, and therefore should not expect the instructor to regularly report absences or notify students in case of attendance issues or problems (unless as a courtesy by the instructor, determined by the instructor's discretion).

2. DATES/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**. Because the attendance policy dictates that you will (for the most part) be present in 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 (Re: The *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:

Cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices are NOT permitted during class, so phones should be turned off AND put away during class. Laptops for note-taking are permitted, only with (a.) instructor permission and (b.) as long as the student sits in the front rows of the classroom. [In other words, students cannot sit in the back rows when they are using laptops.]

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. NOTE ON USAGE OF **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** (or, "AI")**:**

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted in this course must be your own and completed in accordance with the **UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures Chapter 1 Section 1.2.3.** AI generated submissions that use ChatGPT, Grammarly, Chegg or other AI composition software is strictly prohibited, and will be treated as cheating and reported to the Dean of Students (with absolutely no exceptions).

9. COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT:

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

10. ASSIGMENTS AND GRADING SCALES:

Assignments

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

***** Attendance & Participation Points Earned

0-1 absences = 90-100% for attendance grade
2-3 absences = 80-89% for attendance grade
4-5 absences = 70-79% for attendance grade
6-7 absences = automatic "D" for final grade
8 or more = automatic failure of course / "F" or "W"

NOTE:

2 Tardies = 1 Absence

Numeric Scale – Letter Grade Achieved

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

11. ADVISORY / "HEADS-UP" / FAIR WARNING [especially for potential triggers]:

One final thing to note for taking this class is that we will be watching movies & films (obviously), but it is important to note beforehand that sometimes these movies are considered offensive by some people. Sometimes films have foul language, drug use, nudity, sex scenes, or other acts or behavior. Sometimes, the films might show other "adult content" such as a rape scene or sexual assault, or maybe a comment about church/religion 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 might appear in these 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.

12. COURSE SCHEDULE:

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE — Fall 2024

Week	**Date**	**Topic**	**Be ready to discuss:**
1	T 8/27	Introductions, syllabus & course overview	(Get the books/ materials!)
	Th 8/29	Cuarón #1: *Sólo Con Tu Pareja* (1991)	*The Three Amigos*: "Introduction"
2	T 9/ 3	Cuarón #1: *Sólo Con Tu Pareja* (1991)	a. *The Three Amigos*, Ch. 7 b. "Sex, Lies, & Mariachis" (by R. Long)
	Th 9/ 5	del Toro #1: *Cronos* (1993)	a. "Introduction" (Tierney/Shaw/Davies) b. "G. del Toro: At Home w/ Monsters" (Salvesen & Shedden)
3	T 9/10	del Toro #1: *Cronos* (1993)	a. *The Three Amigos*, Ch. 1
	Th 9/12	Iñárritu #1: *Amores Perros* (2000)	a. *A. González-Iñárritu*: "Preface" (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
4	T 9/17	Iñárritu #1: *Amores Perros* (2000)	a. *The Three Amigos*, Ch. 4 b. *Amores Perros*, pp. 9 - 72 (P. Smith)
	Th 9/19	**QUIZ #1**	
5	T 9/24	Cuarón #2: *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001)	*A. González-Iñárritu*: pp. 1-19 (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
	Th 9/26	Cuarón #2: *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001)	*The Three Amigos*, Ch. 8
6	T 10/ 1	del Toro #2: *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006)	*The Three Amigos*, Ch. 3
	Th 10/ 3	del Toro #2: *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006)	a. "Introduction" (by McDonald & Clark) b. "Desire & Disobedience…" (J. Orme)
7	T 10/ 8	Iñárritu #2: *Babel* (2006)	*A. González-Iñárritu*: pp. 49-65 (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
	Th 10/10	Iñárritu #2: *Babel* (2006)	*The Three Amigos*, Ch. 6
8	T 10/15	**MID-TERM EXAM**	
	Th 10/17	Cuarón #3: *Children of Men* (2006)	[Watch film]

9	T 10/22	Cuarón #3: *Children of Men* (2006)	a. "Bridging Worlds…" (J. Pellicer) b. *A. González Iñárritu*: pp. 86-119 (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
	Th 10/24	Iñárritu #3: *Biutiful* (2010)	"Chicano Monsters…" (M. Lechuga & R. Avant-Mier)
10	T 10/29	Iñárritu #3: *Biutiful* (2010)	*The Three Amigos*, Ch. 9
	Th 10/31	Iñárritu #4: *The Revenant* (2015)	a. "Spirits… in *Biutiful*" (K. Connolly) b. "A.G. Iñárritu," pp. 67-75 (D. Tierney)
11	T 11/ 5	Iñárritu #4: *The Revenant* (2015)	c. "Global Ghosts" (J. Hanley)
	Th 11/ 7	**QUIZ #2**	
12	T 11/12	del Toro #3: *The Shape of Water* (2017)	a. "An Interview w/ Guillermo del Toro" (K. McDonald & R. Clark)
	Th 11/14	del Toro #3: *The Shape of Water* (2017)	b. "Falling for Amphibious Man" (A. Adji)
13	T 11/19	Cuarón #4: *Roma* (2018)	[Watch film]
	T 11/21	Cuarón #4: *Roma* (2018)	* Online articles: D. Tierney, D. Shaw, P. A. Palou, O. Consentino, Sánchez Prado, & J. Middents (* See Bb for details)
14	T 11/26	del Toro #4: [TBD]	[Watch film]
	T 11/28	**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**	**[no classes]**
15	T 12/ 3	del Toro #4: [TBD]	[Watch film]
	Th 12/ 5	Course Review & Final Discussions	"Interview with A. G. Iñárritu" (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
16	Thurs. Dec. 12th	**FINAL EXAM**	**(as per university schedule)**
***	12/ 18	FINAL GRADES DUE	

Director Filmography(ies)

Alfonso Cuarón:

Sólo con Tu Pareja (1991) [Or, “Love in the Time of Hysteria”]
A Little Princess (1995)
Great Expectations (1998)
Y Tu Mamá También (2001) [Or, “And Your Mother Too”]
Harry Potter & The Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)
Children of Men (2006)
Gravity (2013)
Roma (2018)

Guillermo del Toro:

Cronos (1993)
Mimic (1997)
The Devil’s Backbone (2001)
Blade II (2002)
HellBoy (2004)
El Laberinto del Fauno (2006) [Or, “*Pan’s Labyrinth*”]
HellBoy II: The Golden Army (2008)
Pacific Rim (2013)
Crimson Peak (2015)
The Shape of Water (2017)
Nightmare Alley (2021)
Pinocchio (2022)

Alejandro González Iñárritu:

Amores Perros (2000) [Or, “Love Is a Bitch”]
21 Grams (2003)
Babel (2006)
Biutiful (2010)
Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) (2014)
The Revenant (2015)
Bardo (or False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths) (2022)

Further Reading Suggestions, Resources, and References:

- ***The Three Amigos: The Transnational Filmmaking of Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and Alfonso Cuarón,*** by D. Shaw (2016), Manchester University Press.

- ***Alejandro González Iñárritu***, by C. Deleyto and María del Mar Azcona (2010), University of Illinois Press.

- ***Amores Perros***, by Paul J. Smith (2003), Palgrave Macmillan.

- ***Hermeneutic Humility and the Political Theology of Cinema: Blind Paul*** by S. Desilets (2016), Routledge.

- ***The Supernatural Cinema of Guillermo del Toro*****,** by J.W. Morehead (2015), McFarland & Company.

- ***The Transnational Fantasies of Guillermo del Toro*****,** by A. Davies, D. Shaw, and D. Tierney (2014), Palgrave Macmillan.

- ***Guillermo del Toro: Film as Alchemic Art***, by Keith McDonald and Roger Clark (2015), Bloomsbury Academic.

- ***Guillermo del Toro "At Home With Monsters": Inside His Films, Notebooks, and Collections,*** by B. Salvesen, J. Shedden, & M Welch (2016), Insight Editions.

- ***Guillermo del Toro "Cabinet of Curiosities": My Notebooks, Collections, and Other Obsessions,*** by G. del Toro & M. Zicree (2013), Harper Design.

- ***Guillermo del Toro "Don't Be Afraid of the Dark": Blackwood's Guide to Dangerous Fairies,*** by G. del Toro & C. Golden (2011), Hyperion Books.

- ***Guillermo del Toro's The Devil's Backbone,*** by M. Z. Seitz & S. Abrams (2017), Insight Editions.

- ***Guillermo del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth: Inside the Creation of a Modern Fairytale,*** by G. del Toro, N. Nunziata, & M. Cotta Vaz (2016), Harper Design.

- ***Guillermo del Toro's The Shape of Water: Creating a Fairy Tale for Troubled Times,*** by G. McIntyre (2017), Insight Editions.

- ***Pan's Labyrinth: The Labyrinth of the Faun,*** by G. del Toro & C. Funke (2019), Katherine Tegen Books.