



Cinematic Auteurs: Cuarón, del Toro, & Inárritu (Or... the “Three Amigos”)

FILM 3390 / CHIC 4350
CRN: 25122 / 28867

T / Th 10:30 – 11:50 am

LART #205

Spring Semester – 2020

Instructor: Roberto Avant-Mier, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Tues. / Thurs. 8:00 - 10:30 am, and 1 - 3 pm (or by appointment)
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Required Texts:

REQUIRED Textbook: *The Three Amigos: Transnational Filmmaking of del Toro, Iñárritu, and Cuarón*
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: A. Cuarón, G. del Toro, & A. 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 communication overall.

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. (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:

1. ATTENDANCE:

First, 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 for the session, and for learning the 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 equals 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 (for a 3 times per week class). 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). [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. 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 (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. Students are required to follow these simple rules, and failure to comply with phone rules during class will result in students being counted absent for the day. Also, it is NOT the instructor's responsibility to notify the student if/when he or she has been counted absent for this reason. Thus, a student may possibly (or likely) be counted "absent" as a result of using phones in class, without being notified about the marked absence. Finally, laptops for note-taking are permitted but 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. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING SCALES

Assignments

* Attendance & Participation	20 %
Mid-Term Exam:	25 %
Final "Project":	25 %
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 final class grade
6-7 absences =	60-69% for final class grade
8 or more =	automatic failure of course

<p>Please Note: 2 tardies = 1 absence</p>
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Numeric Scale – Letter Grade Achieved

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

9. IDEAS & SUGGESTIONS (OPTIONS) FOR “FINAL PROJECT” OR FINAL CLASS GRADE

- A. FINAL EXAM – A standard final exam, in a similar format as previous exams such as the Mid-Term exam, and/or quizzes.
- B. MOVIE REVIEW – Write a review/analysis of the film from the perspective of a professional movie critic or a cultural critic. Your task to analyze the film critically and to address the strengths and weaknesses of either the film or the director. Topics to address could include: Biography/history of the director, How this film fits into the larger body of work by the director or how it fits into contemporary film in general, or the social significance of this director's work or a particular film genre.
- C. CRITICAL ANALYSIS – Write about specific topics that can be related to this director's films such as: “La Movida,” Sexism, Gender representation or other issues, visual features/art direction, fetishism, the use of music in film, violence, sex and violence, sexual identity or sexual orientation, differences between obscure/independent (low-budget) films and more recent international releases, etc.
- D. DIRECTOR'S EVOLUTION – Write about specific things related to this Director's evolution as a filmmaker. What themes are common throughout? What things have changed? What has remained the same? What things have been improved? What patterns are noticeable in the Director's films?
- E. COMMUNICATION/MEDIA PAPER – With specific attention to media & communication studies, analyze a specific film that we addressed in class (or more than one) and discuss how can we understand film as communication. What do films convey? How do they communicate? What do they communicate? What can we say about films as a form of media or communication?
- F. SHORT FILM – This assignment is a creative option in which the student engages in film production. The task to produce a short film (max. 15 minutes) that addresses the work of A. Cuarón, G. del Toro, or A.G. Iñárritu (one of them OR all three of them), or makes a kind of statement about their work, or tells a story through their style(s) as directors or filmmakers. These films will be shown to the entire class on the last day of class.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE — Spring 2020

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Be ready to discuss:</u>
1	T 1/21	Introductions, syllabus & course overview	(Get the books/ materials!)
	Th 1/23	Cuarón #1: <i>Sólo con Tu Pareja</i> (1991)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> : "Introduction"

2	T 1/28	Cuarón #1: <i>Sólo con Tu Pareja</i> (1991)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 7
	Th 1/30	del Toro #1: <i>Cronos</i> (1993)	a. "Introduction" (Tierney/Shaw/Davies) b. "G. del Toro: At Home With Monsters" (Salvesen & Shedden)

3	T 2/ 4	del Toro #1: <i>Cronos</i> (1993)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 1
	Th 2/ 6	Iñárritu #1: <i>Amores Perros</i> (2000)	a. A. González-Iñárritu: "Preface" (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona) b. <i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 4

4	T 2/11	Iñárritu #1: <i>Amores Perros</i> (2000)	<i>Amores Perros</i> , pp. 9 - 72 (P. Smith)
	Th 2/13	<u>QUIZ #1</u>	

5	T 2/18	Cuarón #2: <i>Y Tu Mamá También</i> (2001)	A. González-Iñárritu: pp. 1-19 (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
	Th 2/20	Cuarón #2: <i>Y Tu Mamá También</i> (2001)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 8

6	T 2/25	del Toro #2: <i>Pan's Labyrinth</i> (2006)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 3
	Th 2/27	del Toro #2: <i>Pan's Labyrinth</i> (2006)	a. "Introduction" (by McDonald & Clark) b. "Desire & Disobedience..." (J. Orme)

7	T 3/ 3	Iñárritu #2: <i>Babel</i> (2006)	A. González-Iñárritu: pp. 49-65 (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
	Th 3/ 5	Iñárritu #2: <i>Babel</i> (2006)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 6

8	T 3/10	<u>MID-TERM EXAM</u>	
	Th 3/12	Cuarón #3: <i>Children of Men</i> (2006)	"Bridging Worlds..." (J. Pellicer)

9	3/16 – 3/20	SPRING BREAK	(No classes)
10	T 3/24	Cuarón #3: <i>Children of Men</i> (2006)	A. González Iñárritu: pp. 86-119 (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
	Th 3/26	Iñárritu #3: <i>Biutiful</i> (2010)	“Chicano Monsters...” (M. Lechuga & R. Avant-Mier)
11	T 3/31	Iñárritu #3: <i>Biutiful</i> (2010)	<i>The Three Amigos</i> , Ch. 9
	Th 4/2	Iñárritu #4: <i>The Revenant</i> (2015)	“Spirits... in <i>Biutiful</i> ” (K. Connolly) “A.G. Iñárritu,” pp. 67-75 (D. Tierney)
12	T 4/7	Iñárritu #4: <i>The Revenant</i> (2015)	“Global Ghosts” (J. Hanley)
	Th 4/9	<u>QUIZ #2</u>	
13	T 4/14	del Toro #3: <i>The Shape of Water</i> (2017)	“An Interview w/ Guillermo del Toro” (K. McDonald & R. Clark)
	Th 4/16	del Toro #3: <i>The Shape of Water</i> (2017)	“Falling for Amphibious Man” (A. Adji)
14	T 4/21	<i>The Shape of Water</i> (discussion)	[catch up w/ assigned readings]
	T 4/23	Cuarón #4: <i>Roma</i> (2018)	* Online articles: D. Tierney , D. Shaw , P. A. Palou , O. Consentino , I. M. Sánchez Prado , & J. Middents
15	T 4/28	Cuarón #4: <i>Roma</i> (2018)	[catch up w/ assigned readings]
	Th 4/30	<i>Roma</i> (discussion)	[catch up w/ assigned readings]
16	T 5/5	Reygadas: <i>Batalla en el Cielo</i> (2005) [Intro.]	“Nation & Post-Nationalism” (J. Hershfield)
	Th 5/7	Course Review (+ Student Films ???)	“Interview with A. G. Iñárritu” (Deleyto & del Mar Azcona)
17	Thurs. May 14 th	FINAL EXAM	[As per university schedule]

Director's 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)

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)

Carlos Reygadas:

Japón (2002) [Japan]
Batalla En El Cielo (2005) [Or, "Battle In Heaven"]
Luz Silenciosa / Stellet Licht (2007) [Or, "Silent Light"]
Post Tenebras Lux (2012) [Or, "Light After Darkness"]
Nuestro Tiempo (2018) [Or, "Our Time"]

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.