Course Title: CUL 2248-09 The Culture and Language of Latin America through Film

(3.0 Units)

Summer Term II 2020

June 29th - August 15th, 2020 Online Course (Moodle)

Instructor Contact Information:

Email: ngomez@ndnu.edu
Phone: (650) 888-6838

Course Description: This course examines social, historical, political, and cultural issues of Latin America through film. Social and political themes will be discussed in the context of the films viewed. A large number of the films cover heavy subjects such as war, immigration, the drug trade and poverty. The films can be graphic in nature, so students opposed to viewing strong violence, profanity, or nudity should not take this class. Students are encouraged to think of culture in a broad context that moves beyond the safe topics of food, travel, language and dance. The films I have selected for this course have received numerous awards at various independent and international film festivals. I have attended some of these festivals, and have had the opportunity to speak with the directors and producers. Research assignments will give the opportunity for students to learn more about the filmmakers and to highlight important aspects of the films’ production. Students will gain exposure to the Spanish language by viewing films in Spanish with English subtitles. No prior knowledge of Spanish is required as the course will be conducted in English, however, students with some knowledge of Spanish may find it easier to follow the films, as they will not have to rely entirely on the subtitles.

Learning Objectives/Program Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify significant socio-political issues in Central America, South America, and Mexico.
- Understand the connections between the civil wars in Central America, the U.S. involvement in these wars, and immigration.
- Discuss Latino culture beyond the safe topics of food, dance and travel.
- Differentiate between Central, South and North America.
- Understand the factors that cause some Latin Americans to flee their countries for the United States.
- Demonstrate awareness and sensitivity towards the immigrant experience, especially towards the undocumented.
● Comprehend and translate course-specific Spanish terms and phrases.
● Appreciate the independent/international film genre.
● Apply the NDNU Learning Hallmarks to our course topics.

**Program Learning Outcomes:** cultural knowledge and respect, critical thinking, historical knowledge of culture, social justice.

**Assignments and Grading**

**Assigned Readings:**

● All readings are available electronically on Moodle. The readings are divided by film topics. There are several readings associated with each of the seven films. Be sure to click on the bulleted links provided under each weekly heading on Moodle. Some of the links also contain audio/video clips. The weekly Article Reflection assignments are based on these readings.

**Required Film Viewings:** I strongly suggest completing your weekly assigned readings, prior to viewing the film of the week. They will provide helpful background information before you begin the film.

Week of June 29th: *Maid in America directed by Anayansi Prado* (not to be confused with *Maid in Manhattan*, the Hollywood film starring JLo)
Available for free on Kanopy with a public library card.
https://www.kanopy.com/product/maid-america

Week of July 6th: *Maria Full of Grace directed by Joshua Marston* rental available on Amazon Prime, YouTube and Google Play for $2.99-$3.99
https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.54b03d1c-64c5-de
d0-d9bc-338b75c4984d?autoplay=1&ref_=atv_cf_strg_wb

Week of July 13th: *The Hand that Feeds directed by Rachel Lears and Robin Blotnik* available on Amazon Prime and Google Play for $2.99
https://play.google.com/store/movies/details?id=-kWa6NnjjRc

Week of July 20th: *Wetback; The undocumented documentary directed by Arturo Perez Torres* available on Vimeo for $1.99
https://vimeo.com/ondemand/wetback

Week of July 27th: *Voces Inocentes (Innocent Voices) directed by Luis Mandoki* available on YouTube for free.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brGMs_NiV6A

Week of August 3rd: *NarcoCultura directed by Shaul Schwarz* available on Tubi for free.
https://tubitv.com/movies/464191/narco_cultura?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed
Week of August 10th: *Dolores! directed by Peter Bratt* available on Amazon Prime and Vudu for $3.99
[https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Dolores/940919](https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Dolores/940919)

Assignments and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Article Reflections (Seven @ 10 pts each. Due weekly.)</td>
<td>70 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post film quizzes (Seven @ 10 points each. Students choose their own dates for taking these, but they must be completed before August 15th)</td>
<td>70 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Assignments (Two @ 10 points each. Due anytime before August 15th, no extensions beyond this date)</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
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Points to Grade Conversion Table

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>200-190</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>189-179</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>178-168</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>167-157</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>156 or less</td>
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Assignments in Detail

**Weekly Article Reflections:**

Weekly Article Reflections must use the PPP (Pre-knowledge, Post-knowledge, Pose questions) format that I have outlined below. Weekly reflection assignments are an opportunity for you to share thoughts and make connections to the assigned readings and lecture topics for the week. They should not be summaries of the assigned readings. In other words, do not simply regurgitate the articles. Do not cut and paste paragraphs from the articles. I will deduct three points if your reflection does not follow the PPP format. Reflections must be computer generated, with 1.5 inch spacing and 1 inch margins. They must be at least one page in length, and a maximum of three pages. A title page is not necessary. Two points will be deducted if the reflections do not meet these requirements. Two points will be deducted if your reflection has more than 10 typos or grammatical errors.
The PPP format explained in detail:

1- Each week before you begin the assigned readings, look at the lecture topics. What do they mean to you? What do you expect your readings to cover? What is a personal or professional connection you can make to the weekly topics/articles? As you are reading keep these questions in mind. This is your Pre-knowledge. Knowledge or experiences that you already bring to the table regarding the assigned topics. In the first part of your reflection, you should write about this.

2- Once you are done with your assigned readings for the week, ask yourself what you learned about the weekly topics? Did you change your mind about something? Did you learn to look at the topics from a different angle? Is there an aspect of the topic(s) that you didn’t consider previously? Were you shocked or startled by something you learned? Did it trigger strong emotions? Did it reinforce an opinion or feeling that you already had? This is your Post-knowledge. The second part of your reflection should cover this.

3- At the end of your reflection you should Pose (ask) and answer three critical thinking questions. A critical thinking question is a question that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no.” Please refer to the Critical Thinking Cheat Sheet posted under Assignment Resources.

Post-Film Quizzes

Film quizzes are composed of 5-10 questions each and are a combination of true/false, written responses, and multiple choice questions. They are based solely on material from the film itself. Students can retake 1 of the 7 quizzes. All other quiz scores are final. For this reason, I suggest taking a quiz within 2 days of viewing the film so the content is fresh in your mind.

Research Assignments (Informative Essays)

Research assignments will focus on the people who contributed to the making of our films, or whose lives are featured in the films. Our weekly readings will provide a good starting point for most of your research. People approved for research are: Dolores Huerta (co-founder of the United Farm Workers/labor leader, plays herself in the film, Dolores!), Oscar Torres (screenwriter for Voces Inocentes), Saint (Archbishop) Oscar Romero (assassinated, his life is highlighted in Voces Inocentes) Orlando Toban (community leader who plays himself in Maria Full of Grace), Carlos Santana (musician and Executive Producer of Dolores!), Catalina Sandino Moreno (actress from Maria Full of Grace). Your research should be submitted as an informative essay, so your thesis will sound more like stating a fact than making an argument. Examples: “Dolores Huerta is a Latina icon,” “Saint Oscar Romero was a martyr.” I am flexible with due dates, but they must be submitted no later than August 15th, 2020. Each essay is worth 20 points. I will deduct 5 points if your paper has over 10 typos/grammatical errors. If plagiarism (this includes copying and pasting from websites without citing) is found, your assignment will receive an F grade. Please refer to the Components of a Good Essay posted under Assignment Resources for further assistance with your essays.
Class Participation

Class Participation points will be based on online activities, assignments, and the Moodle activity monitor, this feature allows me to see when students have logged on to the course. As long as you are checking Moodle (Mon-Fri) for updates and assignments you should be fine. If I see your last login listed as “never” or “4 days ago,” then you may be at risk for losing points.

SYLLABUS UPDATES:

The format of the course, including assignments and due dates, is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Meet your Instructor:

Natashia López-Gómez completed her Master’s degree in Education from Harvard University (1994) and her Bachelor of Arts in Chicano Studies at the University of California, Berkeley (1992). She is of Chicana (Mexican-American) heritage, and is the first in her family to graduate from college. Her commitment to social justice started in her hometown of Portland, Oregon in the 1980’s, where she spoke at demonstrations calling for the end to the United States funding of the right wing death squads in Central America. As a student at UC Berkeley, she worked at free after-school programs under the leadership of former Black Panther Party member, Ronnie Simms. She also studied under Carlos Muñoz Jr., one of the East L.A. 13 who was unjustly charged with conspiracy during the School Walkouts of 1968. She is a poet and has worked with renowned authors and Xicana icons Ana Castillo and Cherrie Moraga. Her activism and commitment to her community is reflected in the numerous positions she has held in both government and non-profit agencies throughout the bay area. She has worked as a health advocate for the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, as the program director for Hope House, a women’s residential drug treatment program, and as a parent mentor and advocate for families of children with special needs. She is published in several journals and anthologies including In Other Words; Literature by Latinas of the United States (1994). In 2009, the Women of Color in Action Network honored her as an outstanding mentor. She has been teaching at NDNU since 2006.

Student Resources:

Student Success Center

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Student Success Center (SSC) remains dedicated to supporting students’ academic success at NDNU, transitioning its services online. The SSC continues to provide online writing and subject tutoring. Please contact Laura Mizuha, Assistant Director of Writing at lmizuha@ndnu.edu for additional information in both areas.
The goal of the Student Success Center is to promote student learning and academic innovation. Professional staff members, academic advisors, and faculty members work together to promote a supportive educational environment, which now includes professional online subject and writing tutoring support.

**Disability Resource Center**

Students with disabilities, whether physical, learning, or psychological, who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Students who are experiencing conditions that are temporarily disabling (i.e. scheduled surgeries, hospitalizations, injuries) are strongly encouraged to contact the DRC. Our desire is to assist you with managing the impact of these circumstances.

Please meet with the DRC staff to verify your eligibility for any classroom accommodations and for academic assistance related to your disability. Accommodations are not provided retroactively. The Disability Resource Center is located at St Joseph Hall, 117. Please contact the DRC by email at DRC@ndnu.edu.

**Counseling Services**

The mission of Counseling Services is to promote and enhance the overall well being of students so that they may reach their potential for personal growth and academic success. If you are a currently enrolled student and would like to discuss your mental health needs, please feel free to email Counselingservices@ndnu.edu, Monday-Thursday from 9a-5pm.

**Academic Honesty**

NDNU’s core values include learning, integrity, and honesty, values we live out in all areas of our learning community. Academic honesty means you are able to demonstrate your own knowledge and skills and receive feedback on your learning that can help you improve. By taking responsibility for your own work and avoiding actions that could give you an unfair advantage over others, you are contributing to the NDNU learning community and developing professional skills and values that will serve you well into the future. Academic honesty is one of the most important values of a university community, and breaches of this trust have serious consequences. Please see the Student Handbook for a detailed discussion of Academic Conduct expectations.