NYU Buenos Aires
CORE Expressive Culture:
Contemporary Argentine Cinema
CORE-UA 9750 B01

Instructor Information

- Fernando Martín Peña
- Office / Anchorena 1314, 2nd floor
- Office hours / by appointment
- Email / TBC

Course Information

Aimed at fostering a lasting engagement with both film culture and Latin America, this course is an overview of Argentine cinema and culture from the 1950s to the present. It offers tools and guidance for discussing and writing about film and culture, and encourages a personal engagement with the topics and issues raised by the films and their contexts: debates about film as art, political weapon, and/or entertainment, complicity and resistance under conditions of political repression, filmic forms of remembrance and of activism, and the complex relationship between aesthetics and politics, among others.

Expressive Cultures is intended to introduce you to the study and appreciation of human artistic creation and to foster your ongoing engagement with the arts. Through critical engagement with primary cultural artifacts, it introduces you to formal methods of interpretation and to understanding the importance of expressive creation in particular social and historical contexts. As a part of the College Core Curriculum, it is designed to extend your education beyond the focused studies of your major, preparing you for your future life as a thoughtful individual and active member of society.

As such, we will favor an understanding of films within a larger cultural space in close connection with history and society, as well as an understanding of Argentine culture in a regional and global perspective.

We will look at the model of the “film studios” and its decline after the Second World War, followed by the rise of film festivals, film criticism, and an emphasis on filmmakers as “authors”—thus of films as individual artworks—as well as the rise of groups who made and/or distributed films more or less collectively to contribute to a social transformation. We will explore the political and aesthetic radicalization of film culture (and of culture more generally) during the 1960s and 70s—through works by Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, Fernando Birri, Leonardo Favio, Fernando Solanas, Hugo Santiago, and Raymudo Gleyzer, among others.
In the years following the military-civil coup of 1976, and the bloody political persecution that it unleashed, we will discuss the effects of violence and repression in filmmaking and film culture through forms of complicity and resistance, as well as contested memory works produced in the agitated “democratic spring” of the 1980s, such as those by Adolfo Aristarain, Luis Puenzo, and Eliseo Subiela.

Towards the end of the neoliberal 1990s, we will see the emergence of a New Argentine Cinema in the films of young filmmakers who devised new ways of making films and of engaging with social reality, memory, and politics: Adrián Caetano, Lucrecia Martel, Albertina Carri, Federico León, and Benjamín Ávila, among others.

- This course meets twice a week, in one 1.5-hour session and one 3-hour session, which includes the screening of a film. The class, as well as the readings, will be in English, and the films will have English subtitles.
- *Class*: Mondays & Wednesdays from 1:45 to 3:15pm.
- *Screening*: Wednesdays 3:30 to 5:00.

**Course Overview and Goals**

**Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:**

- Develop the students’ vocabulary and rhetorical skills to discuss film form and narrative, as well as their relationship to the social and artistic imaginaries that they fed from and fueled.
- Train their analytical skills in a dynamic and engaged classroom.
- Provide them with a solid knowledge of the major trends and events in Argentine cinema since the 1950s as well as a familiarity with the main debates and transformations in film culture in Latin America during the same period.
- Encourage an awareness of the conflicts and debates in a peripheral and dependent cultural space.

**Course Requirements**

**Class Participation & Weekly Postings**

You are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and come ready to discuss the day’s readings and films. Note that since this class meets only twice a week, students with more than two absences are at risk of automatic failure. You will write a weekly, one-paragraph critical commentary about the film to be discussed, to be posted in the “Forums” section on NYU Classes the night before the corresponding class.
In-class Film Presentation

You will introduce the discussion of one of the films and coordinate the beginning of the ensuing conversation.

Two Short Papers (4 pages each)

You will write two short papers on films of your choosing from among the ones required. These should be submitted in hard copy (unless otherwise noted) on Monday, September 9th (Paper #1) and Monday, September 23th (Paper #2). Detailed instructions will be posted on NYU Classes and discussed in class.

Take-home Midterm Exam (4 pages)

You will chose one or two topics/questions from a list distributed beforehand and elaborate on them.

Final Sit-in Exam

To be administered during exams week.

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Postings</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Film Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Short Papers (5 and 10% respectively)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Sit-in Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The grade of A marks extraordinary academic performance in all aspects of the course and is reserved for clearly superior work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The grade of B represents good work in all aspects of the course—enthusiastic and active participation, demonstrated improvement, and apparent effort.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The grade of C denotes satisfactory work—regular attendance, ordinary effort, a minimum of demonstrated improvement across the semester.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The grade of D marks poor work and effort and a need for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The grade of F indicates failure to complete the requirements for a course in a creditable manner. It marks a judgment about the quality and quantity of a student’s work and participation—not about the student—and is therefore in order whenever a student fails to complete course requirements, whatever his or her intentions or circumstances may be.</td>
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View Grades

Grades will be uploaded to NYU Classes Gradebook, sent to students by email, and finally submitted through Albert.

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week :: Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Main Film</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 :: 02/03 &amp; 05</td>
<td>From popular entertainment to high art: the decline of the studio model in the 1950s and the rise of the “auteurs”.</td>
<td>Leopoldo Torre Nilsson’s <em>La casa del angel</em> (1957)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 :: 02/10 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Art Cinema in the 1960s: a transnational circuit of auteurs and film festivals.</td>
<td>Leonardo Favio’s <em>Crónica de un niño solo</em> (1964)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 :: 02/14 &amp; 17</td>
<td>New Latin American Cinemas for a new world: the artistic and the political avant-gardes.</td>
<td>Fernando Solanas &amp; Octavio Getino’s <em>La hora de los hornos</em> (1968)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 :: 02/19 &amp; 02/26</td>
<td>Tradition and/or modernity around 1970: national culture and high art in an age of mass media.</td>
<td>Hugo Santiago and Jorge Luis Borges’ <em>Invasión</em> (1969)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>02/24:</strong> No class</td>
<td><strong>02/14:</strong> Make-up class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 :: 03/02 &amp; 03/04</td>
<td>Complicity and resistance during the military dictatorship (1976-83).</td>
<td>Adolfo Aristarain’s <em>Tiempo de revancha</em> (1982)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 :: 03/09 &amp; 03/11</td>
<td>Cinema and democracy during the 80s.</td>
<td><em>Luis Puenzo’s La historia oficial</em> (1985)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 :: 03/16 &amp; 18</td>
<td>Flash-forward. Second-generation memory works.</td>
<td>Albertina Carri’s <em>Los rubios</em> (2003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 :: 03/25 &amp; 04/06</td>
<td>The politics of allegory in post-dictatorship cinema.</td>
<td>Eliseo Subiela’s <em>Hombre mirando al sudeste</em> (1986)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>03/23:</strong> No class</td>
<td><strong>04/17:</strong> Make-up class</td>
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<td><strong>SEMESTER BREAK 03/30 - 04/03</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9 :: 04/08 &amp; 04/13</td>
<td>Young filmmakers and the rebirth of independent cinema in the 90s.</td>
<td>Caetano &amp; Stagnaro’s <em>Pizza, birra, faso</em> (1998)</td>
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Week 10 ::
04/15 & 04/17
Neoliberalism and cinema: The everyday experience of commodities.
Martín Rejtman’s *Silvia Prieto* (1998)

Week 11 ::
04/20 & 04/22
Contemporary cinema beyond the theater circuit: film, video, and contemporary art.
Federico León & Marcos Martínez’s *Estrellas* (2007, 64’)

Week 12 ::
04/27 & 04/29
New cinema and politics: the crisis of 2001 and the decline of the provincial bourgeoisie.
Lucrecia Martel’s *La ciénaga* (2001)

Week 13 ::
05/04 & 05/06
Genre, violence, and class conflicts in the cinema of the 2001 crisis.
Adrián Caetano’s *Un oso rojo* (2003)

Week 14 ::
05/11 & 05/13
Memory and politics during the Kirchner years (2003-2015)
Benjamín Avila’s *Infancia clandestina* (2011)

Week 15 ::
05/18
Final Exams Week
05/18: Final Exam

Tests and Quizzes
- #1 Short Paper (4 pages): 02/14
- #2 Short Paper (4 pages): 03/02
- Take-Home Midterm Exam: 03/18
- Final Exam: 05/13

Course Materials

Suggested Materials
- Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (9th ed.)

Main required and supplemental readings
For a detailed list of readings by date, check NYU Classes.
- Experimental shorts films by Narcisa Hirsch, among others.
- Godard, Jean-Luc & Fernando Solanas, “Godard by Solanas! Solanas by Godard!” (1969)
- Guest, Haden. Interview with Lucrecia Martel. BOMB Magazine (2009)
● Stam, Robert, “Hour of the Furnaces and the Two Avant Gardes”, Millenium 7/9 (1980/81)
● Williams, Raymond. “Culture is ordinary” (1958)

Resources
● Access your course materials: NYU Classes (nyu.edu/its/classes)
● Databases, journal articles, and more: Bobst Library (library.nyu.edu)
● Assistance with strengthening your writing: NYU Writing Center (nyu.mywconline.com)
● Obtain 24/7 technology assistance: IT Help Desk (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness
● NYU’s Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a strict policy regarding course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted.
● Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
● Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academic Programs within one week of your return to class.
● A doctor’s note excusing your absence is mandatory.
● The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam
• Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said examination via email to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs.

• Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your instructors prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your instructor, please contact the Assistant Director for Academic Programs.

• If students have more than four unexcused absences, they will fail the course.

• Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. **Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.**

• Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

• NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.

• Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

• Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.

• Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Use of Electronic Devices**

The use of phones and iPods in class is forbidden. Computers will be allowed for specific class activities, or by request for specific tasks.

**Exams and Submission of work**

• Final Exam dates cannot be changed under any circumstance.
• Mid term exam dates will be scheduled with each instructor and it must be before the break.
• Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorization, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).
• Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the instructor.
Final essays must be submitted to the instructor in print and electronic copy. If the student is not in Buenos Aires, he/she must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 - (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.

Late Assignment
You are expected to submit all of your work in a timely manner. If an external situation makes this impossible, you should let your instructor know before the deadline so he can tell you how to proceed.

Plagiarism Policy
- Academic Integrity is intimately related to the teaching and learning process. When writing research papers, you need to keep in mind that plagiarism includes the use of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It also includes presenting and/or paraphrasing discourse or ideas from a published work (in print or on internet) without quotation marks and clear without acknowledgment of the original source.
- For formatting in your papers, refer to MLA guidelines.
- On matters regarding academic integrity, refer to the section “Academic Standards and Discipline” in the College of Arts and Science Bulletin (click here) and to “Statement on Academic Integrity” in NYU Expository Writing Program: Policies and Procedures (click here).
- All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.
- It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

Disability Disclosure Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Your instructor
Fernando Martín Peña is a film critic and researcher. In 1994 he created, alongside Octavio Fabiano, ‘Filmoteca Buenos Aires’, a private entity dedicated to film preservation and circulation. He was one of the founders of ‘Asociación de Apoyo al Patrimonio Audiovisual’, which rescued nearly 300 argentine films that were on the risk of getting lost. He was also one
of the promoters of the instrumentation of Law 25.119, sanctioned in 1999, which had the mission to create a national cinemateque. Since 2002, Peña is responsible for the cinema area of MALBA (Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires) and between 2004 and 2007 he was the director of Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente (Bafici). He’s also a regular collaborator of Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata.

As a researcher, he recovered many films that were considered lost or incomplete. In 1997 he put together a copy of ‘Los traidores’ (1973), from Raymundo Gleyzer -one of the key Argentine directors of the past century-, and in 2008 he found in Museo del Cine a copy in 16mm of the world renowned film ‘Metropolis’, which included almost 26 minutes considered lost since its premiere in 1927.

Since December 2006 he hosts the film tv show ‘Filmoteca, temas de cine’ that airs in midnight public argentine television.