



CIEE Seville, Spain

Course title:	Digital and Visual Culture in Contemporary Spain
Course code:	COMM 3004 SCMJ / HISP 3001 SCMJ / NMDS 3001 SCMJ
Programs offering course:	Advanced Liberal Arts, Business and Society, Communications, New Media and Journalism Spanish, Liberal Arts
Language of instruction:	Spanish
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Fall 2023

Course Description

This course explores the main historical, cultural and identity issues of contemporary Spain (from the 1930s of the twentieth century until today) through the study and analysis of visual media, with special emphasis on photography and cinema. It examines media representations in terms of "cultural memory". Together with the exploration of a number of historical periods of the recent history of Spain - including the Civil War, the Franco dictatorship, or the transition to democracy - the topics covered over the course will familiarize students with leading figures of visual arts in contemporary Spain (such as photographers, filmmakers, writers, and media artists), with the debate on media representation and cultural memory, and with the concept of post-photography, eventually relating visual and digital culture in the context of postmodernity in Spain.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Discern the complex relationship between visual representations and contemporary Spanish identity
- Explore the main historical, cultural and identity issues through the study and analysis of symbolic events and iconic images of contemporary Spain
- Understand the notion of culture industry, and relate it to the concept of cultural memory in a (new) media age
- Relate current social and cultural debates in contemporary Spain to its historical roots in the twentieth century
- Understand the work of representation and to investigate different ways of seeing through media such as paintings, photography and cinema
- Become acquainted with leading figures of visual arts of contemporary Spain such as photographers, filmmakers, writers, and other contemporary media artists
- Understand the new media through the concept of post-photography, and to relate visual and digital culture
- Gain visual and media skills, as well as analytical and critical skills
- Understand ideological and political dimensions of visuality and digital media
- Exert visual critical analysis in a more and more visual-oriented society, and thus become more critical individuals

Course Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required for this course. Some previous knowledge on Spanish contemporary history is recommended (not compulsory).

Methods of Instruction

Classes will consist of lectures, films, guest lecturers (professional photographers, artists), fieldtrips (museums and centers of arts), and class discussions. Students will be encouraged to use Canvas, where the instructor will post slides, lecture notes, journal articles, assignment instructions, announcements and additional resources such as films or other audiovisual material. From a cultural approach and through the critical study of a number of visual culture concepts —representation, myth, ideology, appropriation, gaze, power, cultural memory, consumer society — students will gain a clearer understanding of Spanish cultural identity.

Linguistic resource center: The students are encouraged to use the writing center to receive help with their assignments and to study for exams.

Assessment and Final Grade

2.	Canvas ePortfolio	30%
2.	Exams (mid-term and final)	30%
3.	Oral Presentation	10%
4.	Final Paper	10%
5.	Class Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Canvas ePortfolio

Each student is expected to create and keep up to date an ePortfolio on Canvas. Students will be asked to develop this portfolio over the course with the assigned projects: (1) cultural values, (2) I selfie therefore I am, (3) expectations versus reality, (4) meta-photography, and (5) appropriation. Canvas ePortfolios are made of sections and pages. The list of sections is along the left side of the window. Each section can have multiple pages. Each assigned project will be published as a section and will include as many pages as needed. Finally, students are also expected to write a self-evaluation of their work over the semester and submit it with the portfolio.

Exams (mid-term and final)

Two examinations will be given (midterm and final), which will cover the concepts in the course and test conceptual and critical-thinking skills. Both exams will consist of short-answer, essay and/or cultural analysis questions.

Oral Presentation

Students are required to prepare a 10-minute oral presentation (in pairs or small groups) analyzing a Spanish comic book they will be assigned. Students are expected to understand how comic books are playing a significant role in the representation of the Spanish issue around cultural and historical memory.

Final Paper

Students will be required to write a five-page cultural analysis of ONE of the three films that we will see in class. This paper is to be typed, double-spaced, using black 11-point Arial font. Your paper should be clear and concise using proper concepts, correct spelling, and appropriate attribution for all sources. All writing is to follow the American Psychological Association (APA) Style for citations.

Class Participation

In-class discussions will be encouraged at all sessions. Class participation will therefore be graded according to the students' previous work and reflections about the provided material. Active participation means not only attendance (being there ≠ participation) but discussion with relevant basis (text-based and not just random personal experience and background), asking and answering questions in class, engaging in class discussions and conversations with classmates, questioning information presented and discussed. Students are also expected to actively participate in in-class exercises and to do some homework. Participation points will be assigned based on the following criteria: (1) frequency of participation, (2) quality of comments, and (3) listening Skills.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Course presentation

Goals of the course, assessment, requirements, and summary of contents

Class: 1.2 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts

What are we talking about when we talk about culture?

Reading: Spencer-Oatey. (2012). What is culture? A compilation of quotations.

Week 2

Class: 2.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts

Representation. Images as ideology. Image icons.

Reading: Sturken (2009). "Practices of looking: images, power, and politics"

Visual project 1 due (cultural values)

Class: 2.2 Fieldtrip: Caixaforum Sevilla (Arte y mito. Los dioses del Prado)

Art and Myth. The Gods in the Prado is an exhibition organized by the Museo Nacional del Prado and Obra Social "la Caixa".

Readings: Art and Myth Gods of the Prado brochure

Week 3

Class: 3.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts

Contemporary mythologies. The visual self.

Readings: Sturken (2009). "Practices of looking: images, power, and politics"

Class: 3.2 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts

The gaze and the exotic.

Readings: Sturken (2009). "Spectatorship, power, and knowledge"

Visual project 2 due (*I selfie, therefore I am*)

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts

The gaze and the tourist. Boring postcards. Non-places.

Readings: Urry (2001). Globalising the Tourist Gaze

Week 5

Class: 5.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts

Appropriation: how we negotiate the meaning of images

Guest lecturer: Caleb Simoes

Visual project 3 due (expectations versus reality)

Class: 5.2 Ways of seeing Spain: photography and truth

Introduction to Spanish contemporary history

The myth of photographic truth

Reading: Chislett, William (2013) pages 32-42

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Mid-term exam

Class: 6.2 Ways of seeing Spain: photography and truth

Guest Lecturer: Antonio Pérez. Photography and Meta-Photography

Visual project 4 due (appropriation)

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Cinematic representations of Spain

The Franco regime

Reading: Chislett, William (2013) Chapter 2: The Franco Regime, 1939–1975

Screening: The Spirit of the Beehive (1st part)

Visual project 5 due (meta-photography)

Class: 7.2 Cinematic representations of Spain

Reading: Fiddian, R., "El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive (Víctor Erice, 1973): To Kill a Mockingbird as neglected intertext,

Screening: The Spirit of the Beehive (2nd part)

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Cinematic representations of Spain

Reading: Smith, P. J. El laberinto del fauno/ Pan's labyrinth (Guillermo del Toro, 2006): Spanish horror

Screening: Pan's labyrinth (1st part)

Class: 8.2 Cinematic representations of Spain

Screening: Pan's labyrinth (2nd part)

Week 9

Class: 9.1 Cinematic representations of Spain

Reading: The Transition to Democracy and the Socialist Era (1975–1996)

Screening: Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown (1st part)

Class: 9.2 Cinematic representations of Spain

Reading: Comedy and Nationalism

Screening: Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown (2nd part)

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Comics and the reconstruction of the Spanish collective memory

Reading: 'I had not dared to remember': Trauma and Historical Memory in Recent Spanish Comics

Class: 10.2 Comics and the reconstruction of the Spanish collective memory

The pact of forgetting and the Law of Historical memory

Readings: Chislett, William (2013). 'What was the Law of Historical Memory?'

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Comics and the reconstruction of the Spanish collective memory

Oral presentations

Class: 11.2 Final exam review

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Final exam

Class: 12.2 Wrap-up discussion and farewell

Course Materials

Readings

- Álvarez Junco, J. & Shubert, A. (2018) The history of modern Spain. Chronologies, themes, individuals London, NY: Bloomsbury academics
- Berger, J. (1972) Ways of Seeing, London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Chislett, William (2013) Spain. What everyone needs to know. London: Oxford University Press
- Fontcuberta, J. (2016) El beso de Judas, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili.
- Fontcuberta, J. (2016) La furia de las imágenes, Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg.
- Gies, David (ed.) (1999) The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture. Cambridge: CUP.
- Hooper, John (2006) The New Spaniards. (2nd edition). London: Penguin Book, 2006.
- Mirzoeff, N. (2009) An introduction to Visual Culture. London: Routledge
- Mirzoeff, N. (2013) The Visual Culture Reader (3rd edition) London: Routledge
- Mirzoeff, N. (2015) How to see the world. London: A Pelican Introduction
- Orti, P. (2012) The A to Z of Spanish Culture London: Unusual connections Ltd
- Radcliff, Pamela Beth (2017) Modern Spain, 1808 to the present. NJ: Wiley Blackwell. Hoboken
- Ross, Ch.; Richardson, B.; Sangrador-Vegas, B. (eds.) (2016) Contemporary Spain. London: Routledge
- Sontag, S. (1977) On photography, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Sontag, S. (2003) Regarding the pain of the others, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012) What is culture? A compilation of quotations. GlobalPAD Core Concepts. Available at https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills/global_pad_-_what_is_culture.pdf
- Sturken, M (2009) Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture, Oxford University Press
- Urry, J. (2001) 'Globalising the Tourist Gaze'. UK: Department of Sociology, Lancaster University available at <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/urry-globalising-the-tourist-gaze.pdf>