

21G.735

Advanced Topics in Hispanic Literature & Film

Topic for Fall, 1999: The Films of Luis Buñuel

**SYLLABUS**

Mondays = 11:00-12:30

Wednesdays = 11:00-1:30

Professor: Elizabeth Garrels

Students view, in class, one feature-length or, at most, one feature-length and one short film per week by Spanish film director Luis Buñuel (1900-1983), that is, thirteen out of Buñuel's total production of thirty-two films. The subject includes two hours per week of discussion dedicated to the films and related texts, including film criticism, the director's autobiography Mi último suspiro (orig. publ. in French, in 1982, as Mon dernier soupir), and the novel Tristana, by 19th c. Spanish writer Benito Pérez Galdós, that inspired Buñuel's film of the same title, one of the director's eighteen films based on literary texts. The subject considers the thirteen films chronologically, from Buñuel's early silent surrealist classics of 1929 and 1930 to his last film, "Cet Obscur objet du désir" ("Ese oscuro objeto del deseo," 1977).

**Class discussion conducted entirely in Spanish; advanced reading knowledge of both Spanish and English required.**

Assigned Readings

1. Luis Buñuel. Mi último suspiro (1982). Plaza y Janes.\*
2. Gwynne Edwards. The Discreet Art of Luis Buñuel: A Reading of His Films (1982). Marion Boyars.\*
3. Peter W. Evans. The Films of Luis Buñuel: Subjectivity and Desire (1995). Oxford UP.\*
4. Benito Pérez Galdós. Tristana (1892). Emc.\*
5. Linda Williams. Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film (1981). U.Cal.P. **On reserve only.**
6. Selected articles by Sigmund Freud. Ask for the indicated volume of The Standard Edition of The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud. **On reserve only.**
7. Luis Buñuel, "Land Without Bread" (Lecture in Spanish, in spite of the title, delivered by Buñuel in 1940. Rpt. in Nickel Odeon: Revista trimestral de cine, #13, winter 1998, pp. 65-68. **Photocopy of lecture on reserve only.**
8. Peter Brooks, from Ch. 1, section entitled "The Uses of Melodrama," pp. 11-20, from Ch. 2, section entitled "Structures of The Manichaeon," pp. 28-36, The Melodramatic Imagination:

- Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess (1976). Columbia UP, 1985. **On reserve only.**
9. Mary Ann Doane, Chapter 3, "The Moving Image: Pathos and the Maternal," The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s (1987), pp. 70-95. **On reserve only.**
10. Michael Wood, "Buñuel in Mexico," in John King, Ana M. López, Manuel Alvarado, eds. Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas. London: British Film Institute, 1993. pp. 40-51. **On reserve only.**
11. Marsha Kinder, Ch. 6: "Exile and Ideological Reinscription: The Unique Case of Luis Buñuel," Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain. U.Cal.P., 1993, pp. 278-338. **On reserve only.**

#### Recommended Readings

1. Various entries in Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth, eds., The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism. The Johns Hopkins UP, 1994.
2. Paul Sandro, Diversions of Pleasure: Luis Buñuel and the Crises of Desire. Ohio State UP, 1987.

All films will be viewed first in class on Wednesdays. Students will need to review many if not all the films, and can do this, after the in-class screening. When requesting individual films, always identify the film by its LLARC call number. These numbers are indicated in this syllabus.

#### Calendar of Assignments

1. Wed., 9/8/99 - Introduction to subject.  
 -Lecture on Surrealism and the friendship of Luis Buñuel, Salvador Dalí, and Federico García Lorca in the 1920s.  
 -View slides of Surrealist paintings.  
 -Review terminology useful in discussing Buñuel's films.  
 -View "Un Chien andalou" (Paris, 1929, 24 minutes), by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. (LLARC # SP 144)
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2. Mon., 9/13/99 - Discuss "Un Chien andalou."

Read: Edwards, "Preface,"  
"Introduction," and Chapter 1  
pp. 9-60.  
-Williams, "Introduction," xiii-xvii,  
Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 3-105.

3. Wed., 9/15/99 - View "L'Age d'or" (Paris, 1930, 60 minutes). (# FR 249)

-Read: Evans, "Introduction."  
-Buñuel, Chapters 1-7.  
-Ovid, Book 1: "The Creation," "The Four Ages," Metamorphoses (5 A.D.), translated from the Latin by Rolfe Humphries, lines 1-162 (photocopy).

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4. Mon., 9/20/99 - Discuss "L'Age d'or."

Read: Edwards, Chapter 2, pp. 63-86.  
-Williams, Chapter 3, pp. 106-50.  
-Buñuel, Chapters 8-11.  
-Freud, Section II of "The 'Uncanny'" (1919), The Standard Edition of The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVII, pp. 226-33. (On reserve)

5. Wed., 9/22/99 - View "Las Hurdes" (English title: "Land Without Bread") (Spain, 1932, 27 minutes) (#SP 144), and "Los olvidados" (English title: "The Young and the Damned") (Mexico, 1950, 88 minutes). (#SP 116)

Read: Buñuel, Chapters 12-18.

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6. Mon., 9/27/99 - Discuss "Las Hurdes" and "Los olvidados"

Read: Edwards, Chapter 3.  
-Evans, Chapter 2, first pages up to Section 1, and all of Section 3.  
-Luis Buñuel, "Land Without Bread" (Lecture in Spanish, in spite of title, delivered by Buñuel in New York City on March 18, 1940, to introduce a screening of the English language version of "Las Hurdes." Rpt. in Nickel Odeon: Revista, trimestral de cine, #13, winter 1998, pp. 65-68. On reserve.)

7. Wed., 9/29/99 - View "Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie" (English title = "The

Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie")  
(France/Spain/Italy, 1972, 105 minutes).  
(# FR 185)

Read: Buñuel, Chapters 19-21.

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8. Mon., 10/4/99 - Discuss "Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie"

Read: Edwards. Chapter 9.  
-Evans, Chapter 1.

9. Wed., 10/6/99 - **Oral reports:** Each student chooses a short scene (max. 4 mins.) from either "Los olvidados" or "Le Charme Discret," makes a video copy of it, shows it to the class, and discusses the scene in terms of 1) its filmic construction and 2) its relevance with regard to the film's narrative as a whole.

**Also due today:** Informal hand written blue book with reading notes and critical response to Buñuel's autobiography Mi último suspiro.

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Mon., 10/11 - Holiday. No class.

10. Wed., 10/13 - View "Susana" (Mexico, 1951, 82 minutes).  
(# SP 163)

Read: Freud, "Family Romances" (1909),  
The Standard Edition, Vol. IX, 236-41.

(On reserve)

-Selections from Peter Brooks, The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess (1976). From Ch. 1, section entitled "The Uses of Melodrama," pp. 11-20; from Ch.

2, section entitled "Structures of The Manichaeian," pp. 28-36 (On reserve)

-Start reading Galdós's late 19th-century novel Tristana (1892).

**By today, students must e-mail the instructor the name of the film they will discuss in their 10 pp. paper due on Wed., Dec. 8.**

The 10-page paper is to be a monograph focused on a single film by Buñuel. Students can choose among the films corresponding to classes #10 ("Susana") through and including #25 ("Tristana"). To get some quick information re. these eight films, check out [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) on the Web. Specifically, go to <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ts/browse-video>. In the "Search by Actor, Title, Director" box, write "Luis Buñuel" and click Go! This page gives you access to information on all eight films you

can choose from for your papers. Click the desired film title and explore the options. Among other things, you should be able to get reviews, plot summaries, and the Maltin Summary (from Leonard Maltin's Movie & Video Guide).

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11. Mon., 10/18 - Discuss "Susana."

Read: Evans, Chapter 2, Section 1.  
- John Berger, Chapter 3 of Ways of Seeing (1972), pp. 45-64. (On reserve)  
-Continue reading Galdós, Tristana.

12. Wed., 10/20 - View "Una mujer sin amor" (Mexico, 1951, 85 minutes). (SP 181)

Read: Mary Ann Doane, Chapter 3, "The Moving Image: Pathos and the Maternal," The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s (1987), pp. 70-95. (On reserve)

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13. Mon., 10/25 - Discuss "Una mujer sin amor."

Read: Evans, Chapter 2, Section 2.  
-Continue reading Galdós, Tristana.  
-Michael Wood, "Buñuel in Mexico," in John King, Ana M. López, Manuel Alvarado, eds. Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas. London: British Film Institute, 1993. pp. 40-51. (On reserve)

14. Wed., 10/27 - View "Ensayo de un crimen" (English title: "The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz") (Mexico, 1955, 91 minutes). (SP 137)

-Read: E. Ann Kaplan, "Is the Gaze Male?," Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality (1983), ed. Snitow, Stannell, Thompson, pp. 309-27. (On reserve)

**By today, students should have seen their chosen film for their 10 pp. paper due 12/8/99, and sent the instructor by e-mail a paragraph in Spanish that defines the topic of their paper.** The paper should discuss a particular aspect or theme of the film. It is to be a critical/analytical paper, not a description of the plot and not an overview of the film's history (production, history, etc.).

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15. Mon., 11/1 - Discuss "Ensayo de un crimen."

Read: Evans, Chapter 3, up to and including Section 1.

-Finish reading Galdós, Tristana.

16. Wed., 11/3 - View "Viridiana" (Spain/Mexico, 1961, 90 minutes). (SP 008)

**Pass in today:** Informal hand written blue book of reading notes and critical response to Galdós's novel Tristana.

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**During Weeks 10 and 11 (11/8-11/17),** students are invited to pass in rough drafts or outlines of their 10 pp. paper, or of any part of it. This is optional, and is not considered work for extra credit. No draft will be accepted after class on 11/17. Drafts passed in on time will be read and commented on by the instructor and returned to students on Mon., 11/29.

17. Mon., 11/8 - Discuss "Viridiana."

Read: Edwards, Chapter 5.

-Freud, "Fetishism" (1927), The Standard Edition, Vol. XXI, pp. 149-57. (On reserve)

-....., "Female Sexuality" (1931), The Standard Edition, Vol. XXI, pp. 223-43. (On reserve).

18. Wed., 11/10 - View "El ángel exterminador" (Mexico, 1962, 95 minutes). (SP 115)

-Read: Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919, the entire article), The Standard Edition, Vol. XVII, pp. 218-52. (On reserve)

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19. Mon., 11/15 - Discuss "El ángel exterminador."

Read: Edwards, Chapter 6.

- Marsha Kinder, Ch. 6: "Exile and Ideological Reinscription: The Unique Case of Luis Buñuel," Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain. U.Cal.P., 1993, pp. 278-338. (On reserve)

20. Wed., 11/17 - View "Belle de Jour" (France, 1966, 100 minutes). (FR 248)

Read: Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism" (1927), The Standard Edition, Vol. XIX, pp. 157-70. (On reserve)

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21. Mon., 11/22 - Discuss "Belle de Jour."

Read: Edwards, Chapter 7.  
- Evans, Chapter 4, up to Section 1, and Section 2.

22. Wed., 11/24 - View "Cet Obscur objet du désir" (France, 1977, 103 minutes). (FR 247)

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23. Mon., 11/29 - Discuss "Cet Obscur objet du désir."

Read: Evans, Chapter 3, Section 3; Conclusion.  
- Williams, Chapter 4, pp. 151-54 and pp. 185-209; Chapter 5.

24. Wed., 12/1 - View "Tristana" (Spain/France/Italy, 1970, 105 minutes). (SP 152)

-Discuss Galdós's novel Tristana.

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25. Mon., 12/6 - Discuss "Tristana."

Read: Edwards, Chapter 8.  
-Freud, "Contribution to the Psychology of Love, III: The Taboo of Virginity" (1917), The Standard Edition, Vol. XI, pp. 192-208.

26. Wed., 12/8 - **Oral reports.** Each student gives a brief oral presentation based on her or his 10-page paper.

**Also due today:** 10-page double-spaced type written paper (or 250 words per page). Topics chosen earlier in the semester. See deadlines for 10/13, 10/27, 11/8-11/17.

#### **DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE:**

1. Attendance\* and quantity and quality of active participation in class discussions = 30%

\*Unexcused absences at more than two classes will negatively affect the final grade.

2. Oral report on 10/6/99 = 15%
  3. Blue book on Mi último suspiro = 10%
  4. Blue book on novel Tristana = 10%
  5. Oral report on 10 pp. paper = 10%
  6. 10 pp. paper = 25%
- 
- total = 100%

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Fall 2013

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