

**Course title:** Cinematic Creativity in Spain: Authorship, Industry, Politics

**Language of instruction:** English

**Professor:** Pol Capdevila, Sasa Markus

Professor's contact and office hours: [pol.capdevila@upf.edu](mailto:pol.capdevila@upf.edu) ,  
sasa.markus@upf.edu Monday 10 – 11 AM.

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credit:** 6 ECTS credits

**Course prerequisites:** there are no prerequisites for this course

**Language requirements:** Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent : Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish)

**Course focus and approach:**

The course explores the notions of creativity and authorship through historic and contemporary examples from Spanish cinematography, focusing on their aesthetic, industrial and political dimension. The approach is multidisciplinary and includes, amongst others, film theory and aesthetics, philosophy, sociology, economy, and theories of collaborative creativity

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**Course description:**

Is film a fruit of collaborative creative effort or does it reflect the sensibility of a single author? Who deserves more credit: the director, the writer, the star?

A variety of controversies related to filmic creation are explored in examples from Spanish cinema. Creativity in film industry is studied through CIFESA studios (1932-1961). French auteurs theory, favoring the film-director as the principal creator, is presented through the works of Camus and Berlanga. Criticism of auteur's importance is implicit in postmodern examples (Almodovar, Medem). Political controversies involve creativity under dictatorship, cultural politics of Spanish democracy and women's contributions. Contemporary discussions tackle innovative approaches to realism (Sorogoyen, Lacuesta), appropriation of filmic creativity by digital media and recent theories on film as collaborative art (Sellors, 2007, Simonton, 2011). Students will have an opportunity to do creative tasks in form of course assignments.

**Learning objectives:**

To understand a specific type of cinematographic creativity, its theory and practice as well as its political, psychological, economic, social and cultural dimension

To acquire knowledge of cinema in the Spanish state: historical development and contemporary qualities

To get to know the basis of film theory, to present a variety of ideas about authorship and diverse theories of collective creativity

To acquire experience of filmic creativity through class assignments

**Course workload:**

The course workload includes: lectures, screenings of films, readings, tutorials, guests and field trips related to course contents, writing papers and class discussion. Final exercises include creative tasks, like making a brief screenplays or films.

**Teaching methodology:**

The course is mostly structured in lecture classes, while conversations with film professionals and field trips to filming sites in Barcelona, are also part of the course.

Lectures will start with the theoretical introduction to the class subject, followed by screenings of selected excerpts from different films and a class discussion.

Readings, provided by the professors will be used as a support for class discussion.

Tutorials for creative assignments will be provided by professors.

**Assessment criteria:**

**25% Mid-term assignment:** argumentative paper: Students will choose between different models and ideas about cinematographic creativity and argue which of them could be considered relevant in explaining one film of their choice.

**30% Term assignment:** Students can choose between a) writing a short script for a Spanish film or making a brief film with their phone (creative model) and b) writing a short essay on one of the topics of the course (theoretical model)

**25% Group project:** Students will be asked to divide in groups and design a dossier for a production of a Spanish or Catalan film. Dossier should contain an idea for the plot, type of funding, determine production style and creative personal (director, stars). Applying the knowledge acquired in class they should explain why the project should be considered as relevant for production in contemporary Spain and do a presentation in front of the class. The presentation will be in class but it can be conducted on line if necessary.

**20% Class participation.** Students are invited to participate in class debate, it could be conducted on-line if necessary.

**BaPIS absence policy**

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student’s final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE (“NO PRESENTADO”) for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy **does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences**. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Only absences for medical reasons will be considered justified absences. The student is deemed responsible to provide the necessary documentation. Other emergency situations will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Director of the BaPIS.

The Instructor, the Academic Director and the Study Abroad Office should be informed by email without any delay.

**Classroom norms:**

- Students will be asked not to use lap tops or mobile phones during the film screenings in class, if held in a classroom.

**Weekly schedule:**

**WEEK 1**

**Cinema: A Creative Machine?**

**Session 1.**

Introduction to the course contents and main focus. Presentation of the Syllabus, requirements and method of assessment.

**Session 2.**

The beginnings of cinema: is the 'artificial eye' creative? Formation of filmic language. Development of industry and the star system. Gestalt: early film theories and the psychology of cinematographic creation. Examples from Spanish silent cinema, authors Benito Perojo, Florian Ray and others.

**WEEK 2**

Troubles in the Dream Factory: Arguments on Co-creation, Authorship and Copyright in Studio System Surroundings. The Case of CIFESA (1932-1961)

**Session 1.**

Cinema: between collective creation and individual authorship. Talent and serial art-production: labor division in Studio Systems. Development of new artistic professions. Creative disputes: building the copyright. Who authors the film: producer, director, stars? Film director: artist or craftsman? The status of stars in Studio Systems.

**Session 2.**

Founding of CIFESA: The Spanish Hollywood. Contracts between CIFESA and Columbia pictures. Starting Spanish production: Sister San Sulpicio (La hermana San Sulpicio, Florian Ray, 1934). CIFESA stars: Imperio Argentina, Rafael Durán. Organization within the studio and the relationship with the state. Main productions of the 40ties: The Man Who Wanted to Kill Himself (El hombre que se quiso matar, Rafael Gil, 1942). The end of CIFESA.

**Readings:**

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Illuminations, edited by Hannah Arendt. Schocken Books, 1969, pp. 217-252.

Pacouret, Jerome. 'Conflicts of Authorship and the Autonomization of Cinema'. Biens symboliques, n° 4, 2019 <https://www.biens-symboliques.net/342?lang=en#page-header>

**WEEK 3**

Film Director as a Star? Auteur's Theory and Modern Spanish Cinema

**Session 1.**

The roll of the Author in modern art and in modern cinema. Characteristics of cinematographic modernity in Spain and worldwide. The view on Film director as an auteur, the principal creator of film's artistic dimension. The rise of 'New Spanish cinema'.

**Session 2.**

Case studies: works of Mario Camus, Miguel Picazo, Juan Antonio Bardem and Carlos Saura.  
The circumstance of Luis Buñuel.

**Readings:**

Bazin, Andre. 'De la politique des auteurs', Cahiers du Cinéma no. 70, April 1957, pp. 9—11  
<http://www.newwavefilm.com/about/la-politique-des-auteurs-bazin.shtml>

Sarris, Andrew. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962". Film Theory and Criticism, edited by Mast & Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 650 – 665.

**WEEK 4**

Talent under Repression: Creative Ways to Elude Franco's Censorship

**Session 1.**

Mechanisms and levels of censorship in Franco's Spain.

Berlanga's and Erice's strategies in avoiding censorship. Case studies of The Executioner (El Verdugo, Luis García Berlanga, 1963) and The Spirit of the Beehive (El espíritu de la colmena, Victor Erice, 1973). The state's influence on film's final cut: censor as the co-author?

**Session 2.**

Censorship in the realm of distribution: Spanish versions of Frankenstein (James Whale, 1931, USA) and Mogambo (John Ford, 1953). Dubbing of foreign productions as a form of state-based control and as a creative intervention. Dub-actors as local stars.

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**WEEK 5**

Geniuses of Plagiarism: Postmodern Authorships in Spanish Cinema

**Session 1.**

Postmodern notions on authorship in art and as applied to cinema. Parody, pastiche, plagiarism and other derivative art-forms as expressive vehicles for postmodern auteurs. Re-inscription of the notion of modern authorship in postmodern times.

**Session 2.**

Case studies: the works of Pedro Almodóvar, Julio Medem, Alex de la Iglesia

**Readings:**

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." Image/Music/Text. Fontana, 1977. pp. 142-148.

Hutcheon, Linda. A Theory of Parody. The Teachings of Twentieth--Century Art Forms. University of Illinois, Chicago, 2000. pp. 1--10.

**WEEK 6**

A Creative State? Innovation in Cinema Cultural Politics During and After the Spanish Transition. Production in autonomous communities.

**Session 1.**

Spanish state as a creative agent: diverse mechanisms of support for national cinematography. Private producers and public support to Spanish cinema. La ley Miro and the system of state subventions in Spain. Goya's awards.

**Session 2.**

De – centered creativity. Production system and autonomous communities: how the production system works? The case of Catalonia. Isona Pasola, Agusti Villaronga, Cesc Gay.

**Readings:**

Kinder, Marsha. Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain. University of California Press, 1993. pp. 8-15.

**WEEK 7**

Authoring True Stories: Contemporary Realism and Spanish Cinema

**Session 1.**

Originality and authorship in the context of cinema 'based on true events'. Film director as an intermediary between reality and spectatorship: a new paradigm?

**Session 2.**

Case studies: the films of Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Isaki Lacuesta, Carla Simón, Mar Coll

**Readings:**

Wheeler, Duncan and Fernando Canet. (Re)viewing Creative, Critical and Commercial Practices in Contemporary Spanish Cinema. Intellect, 2014. pp. 7–34.

**WEEK 8**

Authorship and gender in Spanish cinema

**Session 1.**

Is cinema a masculine profession? Does Authorship have a gender? Situation in Spain.

**Session 2.**

Female directors in the history of Spanish cinema: Ana Mariscal, Pilar Miró, Margarita Alexandre, Josefina Molina, Cecilia Bartolomé.

## WEEK 9

Collaborative Creativity – Individual Merit: is Auteur’s Theory Fair? Contemporary Views on Cinema as Collective Art.

### Session 1.

Contemporary ideas on collective authorship in films. Can we change the director-star paradigm? Screenwriters (Jorge Guerricaechevarría), editors (José Salcedo), music writers (Roque Baños) and other creatives in Spanish cinema.

### Session 2.

Challenging the traditional conception of authorship and film production in Spain: presenting the work of the ‘Authorless Cinema Collective’. Spectatorship as a creative force: the films of Santiago Segura.

### Readings:

Sellers, Paul. “Collective Authorship in Film.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 65, no. 3, Summer, 2007, pp. 263-271.

Aranzuba, Asier, et al. “The Collaborative Practices of the ‘Colectivo sin Autor’ (Authorless Cinema Collective).” *Community Filmmaking: Diversity, Practices and Places*, edited by Sarita Malik, et al. Routledge, 2017, pp. 110-126.

## WEEK 10

Further than a Star System: Cinematographic Creativity and other Media

### Session 1.

Authorship, Creativity and Copyright patterns in Spanish cinema and how they influenced or were transferred to television and digital media.

### Session 2.

Alternative platforms for film distribution: the case of #LittleSecretFilm. Spanish film stars and directors on TV screens. Netflix in Spain. The case of Filmin.

## WEEK 11

A Creative Experience

**Session 1 and 2:** Presentation, debate and analysis of student's group projects

Last revision: June 2022.

**Required readings:**

**Aranzubia, Asier**, et al. "The Collaborative Practices of the 'Colectivo sin Autor' (Authorless Cinema Collective)." *Community Filmmaking: Diversity, Practices and Places*, edited by Sarita Malik, et al. Routledge, 2017, pp. 110-126.

**Barthes, Roland**. "The Death of the Author." *Image/Music/Text*. Fontana, 1977. pp. 142-148.

**Bazin, Andre**. 'De la politique des auteurs', *Cahiers du Cinéma* no. 70, April 1957, pp. 9—11

**Benjamin, Walter**. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt. Schocken Books, 1969, pp. 217-252.

<https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/benjamin.pdf>

**Hutcheon, Linda**. *A Theory of Parody. The Teachings of Twentieth--Century Art Forms*. University of Illinois, Chicago, 2000. pp. 1--10.

**Kinder, Marsha**. *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. University of California Press, 1993. pp. 8-15.

**Pacouret, Jerome**. "Conflicts of Authorship and the Autonomization of Cinema". *Biens symboliques*, n° 4, 2019 <https://www.biens-symboliques.net/342?lang=en#page-header>

**Sarris, Andrew**. "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962". *Film Theory and Criticism*, edited by Mast & Cohen, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 650 – 665.

**Sellors, Paul**. "Collective Authorship in Film." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 65, no. 3, Summer, 2007, pp. 263-271.

[https://is.muni.cz/el/phil/podzim2018/FAVBKalt5/um/C.\\_Paul\\_Sellors\\_-\\_Collective\\_Authorship\\_in\\_Film.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/el/phil/podzim2018/FAVBKalt5/um/C._Paul_Sellors_-_Collective_Authorship_in_Film.pdf)

**Wheeler, Duncan and Fernando Canet**. *(Re)viewing Creative, Critical and Commercial Practices in Contemporary Spanish Cinema*. Intellect, 2014. pp. 7–34.



**Recommended bibliography:**

**Aaron, Michele.** Spectatorship: The Power of Looking on. Wallflower Press, 2007.

**Bazin, Andre.** What is Cinema? University of California Press, 1967.

**Campbell, Neil.** 'Learning from Almería'. The Rizomatic West: Representing the American West in Transnational, Global, Mechanical Age. University of Nebraska, 2008, pp. 113-119.

**Cerdan, Josetxo et. al.** "Censorship, Film Studios and Production Companies." A Companion to Spanish Cinema. Edited by Labanyi, Jo and Tatjana Pavlovic. John Wiley, 2013.

**Davies, Ann.** Spain on Screen. Developments in Contemporary Spanish Cinema. Palgrave – Macmillan, 2011.

**Ewans, Peter William.** Spanish Cinema: The Auteurist Tradition. Oxford, 1999.

**Howkins, John.** The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas. Penguin, 2001.

**Kerrigan, Susan.** "Filmmaking as Creative Practice: Assessing Creative Magnitude and Scale." Global Media Journal, Vol. 13, no. 1, 2019,  
<https://www.hca.westernsydney.edu.au/gmjau/?p=2941> Accessed February 26th 2020.

**Lipovetsky, Gilles.** Hypermodern Times. Grasset & Jasquelle, 2005.

**Mayne, Judith.** Cinema and Spectatorship. Routledge, 1993.

**Mira, Alberto.** Historical Dictionary of Spanish Cinema. Rowman & Littlefield, 2020.

**Nadal-Melsió, Sara.** "The Invisible Tradition: Avant-Garde Catalan Cinema under Late Francoism." Hispanic Review, vol. 78, no 4, Autumn 2010, pp. 465.468.

**Simonton, Dean.** Great Flicks: Scientific Studies of Cinematic Creativity and Aesthetics. Oxford, 2011.

-- "**Group Artistic Creativity: Creative Clusters and Cinematic Success in Feature Films.**" Journal of Applied Social Psychology. Vol. 34, no. 7, July 2004, pp. 1494-1520.

**Smith, Paul Julian.** Spanish Lessons: Cinema and Television in Contemporary Spain. Berghahn, 2017.

**Stone, Rob.** Spanish Cinema. Pearson, 2002.

**Torben, Grodal,** et al. Visual Authorship: Creativity and Intentionality in Media. Northern Lights, 2004.

**Whittaker, Tom.** The Films of Elías Querejeta: A Producer of Landscapes. University of Wales Press, 2011.

**Wollen, Peter.** Signs and Meaning in the Cinema. Secker and Warburg, 1972.

**Zunzunegui Díez, Santos and Jenaro Talens.** Modes of Representation in Spanish Cinema, University of Minnesota Press, 1998.