

**Course Title:** Filming from the Margins: Gender, Class Equality and Minority Groups in Contemporary Catalan Cinema

**Language of instruction:** English

**Professor:** Eva Pujadas Capdevila, Saša Markuš Končurat

**Professor's contact and office hours:** 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:**

This course examines Catalan cinematography through the lenses of film theory and social sciences, blending cultural studies, gender studies, social conflict theories, postcolonial perspectives, and media representation philosophies.

**Course description:**

The Catalan audiovisual sector is making significant strides while navigating marginalization and actively shaping its unique identity. However, Spanish state's cultural politics undermine its distinctiveness. Additionally, Catalan-language productions struggle in a national market dominated by Spanish-language content and face intense competition from global blockbusters. Despite these obstacles, Catalan cinema is gaining both quality and visibility on national and international stages.

This course explores how Catalan cinema carves out its distinctiveness, focusing on the representation of women, social inequality, minorities, and sustainability. By examining the intersection of these issues, the course delves into the complexities of contemporary Catalan social struggles, both on and off screen.

**Keywords:** Regional Cinematography, Feminism, Equity, Identity, TV fiction, Media

**Learning objectives:**

- 1) To gain knowledge about the Catalan cinematography and culture, its legal and commercial frame, as well as its marginal status;
- 2) To develop nuanced understanding of diversity and plurality within the Catalan and Spanish culture and its relationship to audiovisual sector;
- 3) To understand the social and political impact of the media representation of women, disadvantaged and minority groups, to foster critical thinking, promote cultural awareness and enhance media literacy;
- 4) To learn how to create adequate, inclusive audiovisual representation when it comes to gender and minority issues.

**Course workload:**

The course is divided into lectures, screenings, readings, discussions, group presentations and field trips, conversations with guest speakers. Students should be prepared to actively participate in discussions/analysis and to creatively approach the problem of on-screen minority representation through the group assignment.

**Teaching methodology:**

Lectures, films screening and analysis of specific examples, class debate, readings, field trips, guest speaker - a Catalan filmmaker, creative work in groups.

**Assessment criteria:**

- 1) Multiple answers test about the Catalan cinema, its definitions, Spanish, Catalan and European Union's legal frame related to audiovisual productions (25%);
- 2) Group assignment - Creative proposal: to choose one minority group within Catalan society and to convey the example for its respectful and accurate screen representation (25%);
- 3) Paper: analysis of a minority representation in one Catalan film (25%)
- 4) Class participation and debate (25%).

### **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:

<b>Absences</b>	<b>Penalization</b>
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 make a distinction between justified and unjustified absences. All absences—whether due to common short-term illnesses or personal reasons—are counted toward the total amount and cannot be excused. Therefore, students are responsible for managing all their absences.

Only in cases of longer absences—such as hospitalization, prolonged illness, traumatic events, or other exceptional situations—will absences be considered for exceptions with appropriate documentation. The Academic Director will review these cases on an individual basis.

Students must inform the Instructor and the International Programs Office promptly via email if serious circumstances arise.

### **Classroom norms:**

- Students should close their computers during the screenings of films

### **Weekly schedule:**

WEEK 1

#### **About Catalan cinema: identity criteria**

Session 1

Syllabus, assessment and readings.

The position of Catalonia within Spanish State. Identity of Catalan cinema: Is it a regional or national sector? Is Catalan cinema work in Catalan or a work produced in Catalonia, regardless of the language. Affirming the criteria based on cultural components.

## Session 2

Spanish state's legal frame regarding national and autonomous/regional cinematographic production: the position of Catalan cinema. Challenges of transnational filmmaking: works co-produced with other states/regions. European Union's legal frame about national/regional co-productions in audiovisual sector.

## WEEK 2

**Building the autonomous self-representation**

## Session 1

Catalan identity reflected in filmic examples. The controversy of *La teta i la lluna* (*The Tit and the Moon*, Bigas Luna, 1994). Contemporary local stories, for local audiences: analysis of *A la Ciutat* (*In the City*, Cesc Gay, 2003), *Tres dies amb la família* (*Three Days with the Family*, Mar Coll, 2009). Historicizing Catalan struggle: *Pa negre* (*Black Bread*, Agustí Villaronga, 2010), *La mort de Guillem* (*The Death of Guillem*, Carlos Marques Marcet, 2020)

## Session 1

Position of cinema in Catalan language within the frame of Spanish state: screening and analysis of *V.O.S.* (Cesc Gay, 2009).

## WEEK 3

**Catalan audiovisuals on global ground**

## Session 1

Catalan cinema within the frame of global audiovisual market. The trajectories of Carla Simón, Albert Serra, J. A. Bayona, Juane Collet-Serra. The case of *REC* (Jaume Balagueró, Paco Plaza, 2007).

## Session 2

Catalan TV series as global success: *Polseres vermelles* (*Red Bracelets*, 2011-2013) and *Merlí* (2015-2018).

## WEEK 4

**Women as agents (directors, producers) in Catalan cinema**

## Session 1

Configuring the cinematographic language in Catalonia: Montserrat Casals i Baqué (Elena Jordi), 1822 - 1945. Catalan women as filmmakers during the dictatorship: Helena Lumberras and Mercè Conesa. Isona Passola i Vidal: Producer's struggle for Catalan-speaking films since 1992. Analysis of her trajectory and productions.

## Session 2

Isabele Coixet: Creative ways of reaffirming the Catalan culture in trans-national cinematographic productions *La vida secreta de las palabras* (*The Secret Life of Words*, 2005), *Mapa de los sonidos de Tokio* (*Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*, 2009), *La librería* (*The Bookshop*, 2017). New generation of Catalan female directors: the films of Carla Simón, Neus Ballús, Mar Coll, Roser Aguilar y Elena Martín.

## WEEK 5

**Women as subjects/objects of representation in Catalan cinema**

## Session 1

Stereotyped, sexualized and placed on the global market: the case of *Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona* (Woody Allen, 2008). Catalan actresses in Hollywood and in the global context: the case of Carmen Amaya.

## Session 2

Exploring female subjectivity and sexuality in Catalan context. Screening and analysis of *Creatura* (*Creature*, Marta Gimeno, 2023)

## WEEK 6

## Session 1

Multiple answers test

## Session 2

GUEST SPEAKER

## WEEK 7

**Class, cultural diversity and race in Catalan cinema**

## Session 1

Working class views: *Numax Presenta...* (*Numax Presents...* 1980) and *Vint anys no són res* (*Twenty Years Means Nothing*, 2005) by Joaquim Jordà. On capitalism, humans and depredators from marginal perspective: analysis of *Petit Indi* (*Little Indian*, Marc Recha, 2009). Working class neighborhoods and women: *Yo soy la Juani* (*I am Juani*, Bigas Luna, 2006).

## Session 2

Focusing on plurality within the Catalan culture: *El amante bilingüe* (*The bilingual Lover*, Vicente Aranda, 1993). *Los tarrantos* (Francisco Rovira Beleta, 1993). Contemporary immigration topics, racial issues and classist stereotypes from female perspective: *Sis dies corrents* (*Six Ordinary Days*, Neus Ballús, 2021)

## WEEK 8

**Cinematographic approaches to globalization and intersection of social problems**

## Session 1

Catalans and global, multicultural society: analysis of *Truman* (Cesc Gay, 2015) and *Julias Ist* (*Julia is*, Marta Gimeno, 2017). Albert Serra's *Pacifiction* (2022): race and post-colonialism in global context.

## Session 2

Class, race and gender intersection: screening and analysis of *Suro* (Cork, Miquel Guerrea, 2022)

## WEEK 9

## Session 1

Group assignment - presentations. Creative proposal: to choose one minority group within Catalan society and to convey the example for its respectful and accurate screen representation.

## Session 2

## FIELD TRIP

## WEEK 10

**Sexual minorities**

## Session 1

Sexual minorities in Catalan context after Spanish transition. The unique perspectives of Ventura Pons, analysis of *Ocaña* (1978). *Cambio de Sexo* (*Sex Change*, Vicente Aranda, 1977). LGBTQIA+ characters in contemporary Catalan audiovisual narratives.

## Session 2

Lesbian love, polyamory and family issues in *Terra ferma* (*Firm Ground*, Carlos Marqués-Marcet, 2017). Adolescents, gayness and TV series *Merlí* (2015-2018). Self-denial of lesbian tendencies and social stigma: *A la ciutat* (*In the City*, Cesc Gay, 2003).

## WEEK 11

**Sustainability issues**

## Session 1

Social struggles in Catalan rural areas: *Alcarràs* (Carla Simon, 2022). Catalan history and countryside: *Estols* (*Flocks*, Xavier Moreno, 2022) Legal controversies about filming the suffering of animals: *Pa negre* (*Black Bread*, Agustí Villaronga, 2010).

## Session 2

Sustainable cinema: examples from the works of Marc Recha.

**Last revision: March 2025**

**Required readings:**

Grant Allum, Stefanie. *The New Catalan Cinema: Regional/National Film Production in a Globalized Context*. Pro-Quest, 2020, pp. 17-58.

Jones, Dilys, Perriam, Chris. "Changing Identity in Small or Minority Nations: Three Recent Catalan Films". *Bulletin of Spanish Visual Studies*, Volume III, Number 1, 2019, pp. 67-93.

Mulvey, Laura: "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". *Screen*, Volume 16, Issue 3, Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18

Prieto Souto, Xose. "Margins and Absences: Women in Spanish Minor Cinemas". *A New Gaze. Women Creators of Film and Television in Democratic Spain*, edited by Cascajos Virino, Concepción, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2015, pp. 115-126.

Roos, Steven. "Beyond the Screen: History, Class and the Movies". *The Hidden Foundation: Cinema and the Question of Class*, University of Minnesota Press, edited by James David E., Berg, Rick, London, 1996, pp. 26-55.

**Recommended bibliography:**

Cheung, Ruby, Fleming, H.D. *Cinemas, Identities and Beyond*, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2009.

Heasmondhalgh, David. *The Cultural Industries*, SAGE, 2013.

Hjort, Mette, Mackenzie, Scott. (ed.) *Cinema and Nation*, Routledge, 2004.

D' Lugo, Marvin. "Catalan Cinema: Historical Experience and Cinematic Practice". *Otherness and the Media: The Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged*, edited by Hamid Naficy, and Teshome H Gabriel, Routledge, 2017, pp. 145 -160.

Epps, Brad. "Echoes and Traces: Catalan Cinema, or Cinema in Catalonia". A *Companion to Spanish Cinema*, edited by Jo Labanyi and Tatjana Pavlovic, Blackwell, 2013, pp. 50-80.

Dawson, Leanne (edited by). "The Other: Gender, Sexuality and Ethnicity in European Cinema and Beyond". *Studies in European Cinema*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2015, pp. 151-222.

Lené Hole, Kristin, Jelača, Dijana, Kaplan, E. Ann, Petro, Patrice (ed.). *The Routledge Companion to Cinema and Gender*, Routledge, 2017, pp. 1-25.

Ramanathan, Geetha: *Feminist Auteurs: Reading Women's Films*, Wallflower, 2006.