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Film, Image & Revolution in Cuba

Course Description: Using archival footage, documentaries, feature films, shorts and photographs as well as traditional readings and primary historical sources, this class examines how the role of images plays a central role in the consolidation of Cuba's revolutionary state, the endurance of one-party rule as well as the everyday perception and consciousness of citizens. Until recently, study of the Revolution has mostly focused on top-level political players in the Cuban and US governments: this an approach leaves the majority of Cubans in the role of by-standers to their own history and reduces the fascinating social history after 1959 to political calculations alone. This class examines the origins and experience of revolution "from within". Covering 1959-2019 primarily, we explain how a process of democratization transformed Cuba into a Soviet-supported Communist state and then, from 1991-present, a paradoxically Communist Party-led government dependent on capitalism, tourism and foreign investment. Highlights of the class include the messianic cult to Fidel Castro, Cuba's radical programs that "rehabilitated" prostitutes and peasants, its enforcement of ideological discipline, homophobic policies, gender policies and repression of black consciousness.

Methods of the Class & Why Film Serves the Study of Cuban History:

This class does not offer a history of Cuban film. Rather, we use films, photography and art in dialogue with readings and lectures to analyze how images of "revolution" and perceptions of Cuban identity allowed for the consolidation of a one-party state since 1959. Led from 1959 to 2006 by Fidel Castro and subsequently his brother Raúl, the Cuban government has managed to survive 60 years of US hostility, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and repeated generational challenges from within. Images and their impact

on Cubans' sense of what was possible to achieve clearly accounted for the legitimacy of the Cuban government and its small cadre of leaders at the height of its power and popularity from 1959-1979. During these decades, the material promise of generalized prosperity under Communism failed to meet expectations or even needs; yet during this time, the image of a heroic, nationally united Cuba whose government faced (allegedly) no internal opposition helped construct citizens' perceptions of reality, history and Cuba's place in the world.

However, while Cuba's government film industry surely built and rebuilt state-authored narratives about Cuba, film remained one of the few venues in which visuality and the necessities of credible story-telling allowed for critical indictments of the Revolution to be made. Ironically, though, the boundaries of freedom that Cuban filmmakers enjoyed and often pressed to expand served the national security interests of the Cuban state in two ways. On the one hand, international defenders of the Revolution could cite Cuban film as *evidence* that the freedom to criticize, protest and effect the state applied to all. And on the other hand, the Cuban state *benefitted* from the popularity of Cuban films among Cubans, many (perhaps most) of whom saw and believed that their government (like its film industry) might be more responsive to their demands than it actually was.

In the wake of monumental change in Soviet Union as well as the ultimate collapse of its aid and ideology from 1989-1991, Cubans underwent an unprecedented collective shift of consciousness and perspective. Subsequently, the Cuban government's desperate need to generate revenue through the adoption of capitalist reforms did not end Communist Party rule but *it did* create the possibility for independent thought, self-employment and a new (less state-controlled) cultural space.

From the 1990s to the present, filmmakers, other artists and average citizens contributed directly to the growth of public outrage and opposition to the government: *no longer could the government contain, let alone control, how Cubans saw their country, their past or the world in the same way.* Thus, since 1989, a time Fidel Castro labeled "A Special Period in a time of peace", image-making and struggles over images of Cuba in the international arena—from those of daily life in Cuba to those about Cuba's revolutionary past—have become a primary pre-occupation of government agencies and citizens. In Cuba from 1959 to 2019, images and films have been the building-blocks of historical narratives as well as the material of individual and national identity. By studying them, we will study how Cubans within and outside of Cuba resisted and, in some cases, subverted government control to force changes, negotiation, greater freedom or quite simply, the course of history itself.

Course Policies, Grading and Student Resources

Course Delivery: This class will meet twice a week in a large group setting with Professor Guerra leading a presentation that engages the class in periodic thought and discussion of material. Attendance is required at every class session and participation is a key part of your grade (see "Attendance" in the Policies section below, and "Participation" in the "Assignments, Requirements, and Expectations" section. Prof. Guerra will grade all assignments.

- **A Note on Discussions, Assigned Readings and Films:** Dr. Guerra will often **"warm up" the discussion** by having students write down an idea, question, or one-line reaction to the reading assigned for that day and collect the answers. Sometimes she will organize discussion around these student-generated contributions. If necessary to check on or ensure that students are completing the reading and viewing assignments, Dr. Guerra reserves the right to **administer pop quizzes**.
 - When you are assigned to read a section of a book or a whole article, **you must bring the book or article in print form to class.**

- When you are required to have seen a film prior to class, **you must see the film prior to class.**
- Unless otherwise noted, **all films are available through Vimeo** with a link and password only provided to members of the class the first week of class.
- **Books are required for purchase. Scanned** articles and portions of books will be **posted** to Canvas.
- ***Books required for purchase:***
 1. Lillian Guerra, Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption & Resistance, 1959-1971 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
 2. Anna Veltfort, Goodbye, My Havana: The Life & Times of a Gringa in Revolutionary Cuba (Redwood Press, 2019).
 3. Laura Zoë Humphreys, Fidel Between the Lines: Paranoia and Ambivalence in Late Socialist Cuban Cinema (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).
 4. Monika Gosin, The Racial Politics of Division: Interethnic Struggles for Legitimacy in Multicultural Miami (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019).

Turning in assignments: Students are also required to **provide all assignments in hard copy** form by the date and time they are due, to the place noted below in each case.

Academic Honesty: *UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge:* “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

- **The Honor Code** (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.
- **Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course.** Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Making Up Work: Papers turned in late on the day due drop 1/3 of a grade (from A to A-). Papers turned in a day after the due date will be subject to a full grade penalty (from an A to a B) for each 24-hour period it is late.

Use of laptops & digital devices: All cell phones must be turned OFF at the beginning of class. **Laptops may only be used to take notes or when prompted, to access research needs on-line. Internet websurfing, texting, checking of email, or other tasks unrelated to note-taking during lecture, discussion or other classroom activities is not permitted. Dr. Guerra will confiscate the cell phone or laptop of any student found engaging in these activities during class** and s/he may be asked to leave the classroom. *A second violation will result in disciplinary sanction that includes the deduction of 5 points from the student's final grade for the class.*

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Class Meetings: M 12:50-2:45 & W 12:50-1:40

Office: Keene-Flint 218
Class Location: FAC 127

Students with disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to Professor Guerra when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resource Center through their website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Counseling and Wellness Center: Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing Studio: The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Lectures in this course are designed to explain and contextualize the history we are studying; at times, lectures will focus on explaining and contextualizing the methods for gathering sources and interpreting them. All lectures will be interactive; some will be socratic.

Taking notes is not only a requirement of learning in history classes, it is a requirement for becoming a skilled historian:

- You will not do well in the class if you merely listen and do not take notes.
- You are required to use the information in lectures in writing your papers and to connect that information to reading assignments and analyses of films.

Class Demeanor: Students are expected to arrive to class on time, stay the full class period, and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be kept to a minimum.

Grading Scale

A 94-100%	A- 90-93%	
B+ 87-89%;	B 84-86%	B- 80-83%
C+ 77-79%	C 74-76%	C- 70-73%
D+ 68-69%	D 66-67%	D- 64-65% F >64%

Assignments, Requirements & Expectations

Class Requirements:

Attendance	10%
Participation	20%
Three Short Essays	30%
Group Presentation	5%
Individual Component of Presentation	10%
Final Exam	25%
_____	100%

Attendance (10%) is required at every class meeting; each class meeting is worth 3 points Requirements for attendance conform to university policies. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in

the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation.

Participation (20%): *All assigned reading for particular class time is required in order for individual learning and the class's overall success. Luckily, these are all great books! Participation in discussion is required of each student.* Students are expected to come prepared for each class, to engage of Dr. Guerra and others' ideas, to contribute comments and generally play an active role in generating or assessing knowledge. The readings assigned for this class, films for analysis and after-hours class meeting at UF's Special and Area Studies Collections at Library East are designed to be intellectually exciting, useful and provocative. *In the event that students fail to read for discussion, Dr. Guerra may administer pop quizzes in order to ascertain who has completed their reading and enable a fair assessment of each student's work.*

Participation in this class is defined and based on the following three elements:

- **active listening and willingness to respond** to comments, both from the instructor and/or class peers
- **vocal contributions to class discussions** of the assigned readings on days designated as such in the schedule. **Students must make specific references to the book, article or film we are discussing** for two reasons: first, in order to demonstrate that they have completed the work and second, because the study of history depends on close analysis of texts.
 - Failure to do the reading or to watch an assigned film will be apparent in the quality of the contribution: you should not try to get away with commenting on a book or article that you have not read as it will be obvious and you will receive fewer points that day as a result.
- Dr. Guerra will assign a maximum of **3 points per "discussion"** of the readings or films assigned below in the Course Schedule. Points will be assigned **according to these criteria:**
 - **3 points: sustained engagement, clear evidence of having completed reading or reviewed materials assigned for discussion**
 - **2 points:** limited contribution, abstract or general reference to reading or materials assigned for discussion that shows the student has not completed the assignment or did not engage it carefully
 - **1 point:** limited contribution [including limitations created by late arrival to class] that shows that the student did very little of the assigned reading/viewing and is being careless
 - **0 points:** silences

Three Essays (30%): Students will submit three short essays, due 1/23, 2/14 and 3/13. Specific instructions and essay questions apply to each case and are given in the Course Schedule below. All essays must meet the criteria explained below and should use the either the parenthetical form of citation or the footnote form, according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

- **Note on Writing:** For students unfamiliar with how to write and organize an essay, this course highly recommends that you buy this guide: Mary Lynn Rampolla, A Pocket Guide to Writing History. Written by an expert in liberal arts training, the book will not only help you write better essays and achieve better grades in this class but in all your classes with a writing component at UF.

Group presentations (5%) and individual component essay (10%): In the last weeks of the course, students will choose to join one of five groups, each of which will be assigned to analyze a film and lead the class in discussion of it in response to the discussion questions provided. [See the course schedule below] To complete the group presentation, group members will:

- sign up for one of five group options in class **on the Wednesday following Spring Break**

- need to meet to discuss their analysis of the film(s) assigned and/or view them together (this is highly recommended).
- **create a 10-to15-minute oral presentation** that uses scenes or evidence from the film to answer the assigned questions and warm up the class for general discussion. **Additional research** to contextualize the reception of the film, its makers and its impact is also required, although the choice of how much of the presentation to spend on evidence from the film or outside research is up to the group.
- **stimulate the class** to continue the discussion with a q&a
- **write an individual 500-word essay** that responds to the questions posed. This essay will be printed and handed into Dr. Guerra at the start of the class.

Final Examination (25%): There will be an in-class examination administered at the time the college designates for this course's final exam. Prof. Guerra will provide a **Final Exam Study Sheet** that will help prepare students and **provide the exam essay question options** so that students can choose the question they will answer, prepare their response and **bring in a one-page, typed or handwritten outline** of their answer. The exam will take place when and where the college decides. **The exam will have two sections:**

- *The first section is an objective section in which students will be asked to identify 5 out of 8 historical terms pertaining to the history Cuban Revolution. These terms should be well-known to students. For example, we spend nearly three weeks on the period and impact of the "Ten Million Ton Harvest": this could be a fair term that students might be asked to identify on the exam.*
- *The second section will require students to respond in essay form to one of three questions in blue books. The questions will be provided in advance in the Final Exam Study Sheet on the last day of class. Students must provide their own blue books. There is no word limit for the exam. Students are encouraged to cite examples directly from the texts but cannot bring any notes other than those on the one-page outline of their essay.*

Course Schedule

UNIT ONE

Fidel Castro, Anti-Imperialism, the War against Batista and the Role of the United States

Note: Remember that all Mondays are double class periods.

M 1/06 Images & Imaginaries of the Cuban Revolution

Period 1. Lecture. Introduction: Syllabus, Expectations & Key Questions of the Course

Period 2. Discussion. Why does Cuba matter?

W 1/08 Ideas Workshop & Mini-Lecture: Rubrics of Identity: Race, Class, Gender, Anti-Imperialism, Nationalism & Revolution, 1868-2020

Discussion of reading: Lillian Guerra, Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption & Resistance, 1959-1971 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), pp. 1-21; 31-36 [required book]; and Lisa B. Y. Calvente and Guadalupe García, "Image in Revolution: Articulating the Visual Arts and Becoming Cuban" in Imprints of Revolution, edited by Calvente and García (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 65-86. [Available as scanned document on Canvas]

Questions for discussion: 1. The introduction of Visions of Power argues that the book is an effort to overturn and interrogate "grand narratives" that traditionally explain the Cuban Revolution. What are these grand narratives? Why do they need to be overturned?

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2. How do García and Calvente explain the impact and role of images in the creation and maintenance of a stable revolutionary state in Cuba? How did imagery make Cubans “Cuban” under the Revolution?

M 1/13 Re-making Revolutionary Cuba: How Nationalism Became Communism, Part 1

Period 1. Lecture. From Batista to Batista: How the Revolution of 1933 Became the Revolution of 1959

Period 2. Discussion of reading: “The Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution (1901”); Fidel Castro, “History Will Absolve Me”; and “Program Manifesto of the 26th of July Movement” in The Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society, edited by Philip Brenner, et al (Grove Press, 1989), 30-41. [Available as scanned reading on Canvas]

Questions for discussion: On a number of levels, Fidel Castro’s movement appealed to Cubans’ historical consciousness, especially in the speech he wrote as a political prisoner (“History Will Absolve Me”). What are the arguments Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement make? On what images do they rely to build a unifying, new national narrative of history and a collective redemption yet to come?

W 1/15 Discussion of film: “The Forgotten Revolution” directed by Glenn Gebhard (USA, 2015) [Watch before class on Vimeo]

Questions for discussion: Why is this film titled “the forgotten revolution”? What is forgotten and why?

NOTE: FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN HARD COPY BY 4 PM ON THURSDAY 1/23 TO HISTORY DEPARTMENT SECRETARY (MELISSA HALE), BASEMENT OF KEENE-FLINT, MAIN OFFICE. See instructions on assignment below.

M 01/20 MLK Day. NO CLASS.

W 01/22 NO CLASS. Professor Guerra has curated the art exhibit *Archives of Consciousness: Six Cuban Artists*, opening at the Fairfield University Museum of Art in Connecticut.

INSTRUCTIONS & MATERIALS FOR FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT, DUE THURSDAY 1/23 BY 4 PM: Lillian Guerra, Heroes, Martyrs and Political Messiahs in Revolutionary Cuba, 1946-1958 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), Chapters 5 & 6, pp. 196-278. [Available as a scanned reading on Canvas]

- **Instructions:** Respond to the following prompt and its questions in essay form. You must have a clear argument in your thesis statement and cannot simply rely on a descriptive thesis. You must underline your thesis. Your essay should be at least 4 pages or 600+ words in length, double-spaced and typed in 12-point font. Only printed copies will be accepted.
- **Prompt:** Both Glenn Gebhard’s film “The Forgotten Revolution” and Guerra’s historical account of the war against the Batista dictatorship in Heroes, Martyrs and Political Messiahs rest on a similar argument. Gebhard and Guerra contend that the revolutionaries achieved a *moral* victory over the regime rather than a tactical, military defeat of Batista. *How did images play a role in this process? What images of Cuba and Batista did the revolutionaries attack and what images of Cuba and Cubans did they promote in order to gain support for the war?*

M 1/27 Radicalization, Stand-Offs with the US and the Spectacle of Mass Support, 1959-60

Period 1. Lecture. David vs. Goliath: Fidel’s “Greek Democracy” & the Olive Green Revolution

Period 2. In-class viewing and discussion of film. “Fidel” directed by Adriana Bosch (USA, 2000) [Available on Vimeo]

W 1/29 Discussion. Guerra, Visions of Power in Cuba, Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 75-134. [required book]

Questions for discussion: The Cuban government did not adopt Communism—either as the basis of its economic policies or as the basis of an alliance with the Soviet bloc against the United States—until the fall of 1960 through May of 1961. However, as Guerra shows, Cuba did begin to adopt a “with us or against” political culture long before then, as early as the fall of 1959. These two chapters cover precisely the process of those months, from July 1959 through May of 1960. *Looking carefully at that period as*

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Guerra does, what factors would you argue are the most responsible for the radicalization of the Revolution and the creation of Cuba's two-sided, political culture of siege?

UNIT TWO

Turning the World Upside-Down, Building the Grassroots Dictatorship: The Revolution's Pivotal First Decade (1961-1971)

M 2/03 The "New Man", Class Warfare and the Consolidation of a Communist Nation-State

Period 1. Lecture. Everyday Life in a Do-or-Die World: Patriots vs. Traitors in the Cuban Cold War

Period 2. Discussion of reading and short film: Guerra, *Visions of Power in Cuba*, Chapters 4 & 5, pp. 135-197 [required book]; AND "Maestra" directed by Catherine Murphy (2012). [Watch before class by streaming through UF Library at <https://ufl.kanopy.com/video/maestra-0> ; if watching from off-campus, follow instructions on the library website to download a VPN / Cisco system software that will allow for the same degree of access]

Questions for discussion: 1. Guerra's chapters point out the contradictions between the image and the reality of Cuba's liberation process from 1961 to the mid-1960s. What are those contradictions? *Did* the image matter more than the reality of the revolutionary experience? (If so, to what end?)
2. How does Murphy's *Maestra* portray the 1961 Literacy Campaign? Are Guerra and Murphy's portrayals at odds with one another?

W 2/05 Discussion of film: "Memories of Underdevelopment" directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Cuba, 1967) [Watch before class on Vimeo]

Questions for discussion: This movie was widely considered a break-out film for Cuba's government film industry (known as ICAIC, founded in March 1959, as discussed in *Visions of Power*). It also immediately gained international traction for the Revolution's claims of opening up—rather than shutting down—cultural freedom and artistic expression in Cuba. Today, *Memories of Underdevelopment* remains iconic of a time when, in fact, Cuba's youngest generation of creative thinkers and artists challenged the political expectations of *both* those of the Communist leadership and those of anti-Communist (mostly American) naysayers. *Indeed, ICAIC's filmmakers saw the film as promoting revolutionary values. How does it do this?*

M 2/10 Testing the Limits of Freedom: Sexuality, Race and Gender in the New Man (Part I)

Period 1. Ideas Workshop and Lecture. From "PM" to *Negrismo*: Race, Black Consciousness & the Problem of Unintended Dissidence among Revolutionary Youth, 1961-1968 ["PM" is available on Vimeo]

Period 2. Discussion of film: "Death of a Bureaucrat" directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Cuba, 1966) [Watch before class on Vimeo]

Questions for discussion: This film is a study in the absurdity of Cuba's massively expanded bureaucracy. Once again, Gutiérrez Alea seemingly gave voice to voiceless citizens and got away with it: both the Communist Youth and the Communist Party-led state found similar complaints, when lodged elsewhere in the public or private sphere, intolerable and even counterrevolutionary. *What are the critiques that this film launches against the state? Why do you think they were officially acceptable in the revolutionary context of the mid-1960s?*

W 2/12 Discussion of reading: Rachel Hynson, "Count, Capture and Re-educate: The Campaign to Rehabilitate Cuba's Female Sex Workers, 1959-1966," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24: 1 (January 2015), 125-153; Lillian Guerra, "Gender Policing, Homosexuality and the New Patriarchy of the Cuban Revolution, 1965-1970," *Social History* 35: 3 (August 2010), 268-289; Denise F. Blum, *Cuban Youth and Revolutionary Values: Educating the New Socialist Citizen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), pp. 41-71. [Available as uploaded files or scanned document in Canvas]

Questions for discussion: Why did the revolutionary state identify homosexuals and sex workers as national security threats? Did their elimination ensure the triumph of “the New Man”?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT, DUE FRIDAY 2/14 TO PROF. GUERRA. Please slip under her office door.

- **Instructions:** Respond to the following prompt and its questions in essay form. You must have a clear argument in your thesis statement and cannot simply rely on a descriptive thesis. You must underline your thesis. Your essay should be at least 5-6 pages or 700-900+ words in length, double-spaced and typed in 12-point font. Only printed copies will be accepted.
- **Prompt:** As Professor Guerra argued in her lecture on Agrarian Reform, unanimity behind the Revolution’s leader, Fidel Castro, soon replaced unity as precondition for inclusion as a revolutionary citizen. Yet intrinsic to the successful consolidation of the revolutionary state under Fidel Castro was the belief that the participation in the Revolution was redemptive, rehabilitative, even religiously purifying. The majority of Cubans, at least until 1968, found sufficient evidence of this in either the image of change or the reality of change that they complied and celebrated their inclusion in the Revolution defined by Fidel. Using the assigned readings from Unit Two and one or more films, explain how the Revolution “turned the world upside down” for supporters and empowered them to believe its promises would be fulfilled. *Who (young people, blacks, workers, women, peasants, etc.) most supported the Revolution in your view and why? How do the archival or fictional films we have seen reveal evidence of this?*

M 2/17 Testing the Limits of Freedom: Sexuality, Race and Gender in the New Man (Part II)

Period 1. Lecture. *Revolutionary Offensive, the Ten Million Ton Harvest & “El Caso Padilla”*: 1968-1971

Period 2. Ideas workshop and in-class film viewing of archival films made by David C. Stone in 1969, Cuban Revolution Collection, Yale University Manuscripts & Archives. Clips edited, subtitled by Guerra. [Available for consultation upon request]

W 2/19 Discussion of film: “Compañeras y Compañeros” directed by David C. Stone (USA, 1971). [Watch before class on Vimeo]

Questions for discussion: Made and financed by both the Weather Underground and the Cuban state, Stone’s film “takes a side” in the Cold War and breaks with the norms of traditional documentary films by refusing a pretense of objectivity. Thus, it makes an argument about the Cuban Revolution. *What is that argument? Is it convincing? Why or why not?*

M 2/24 Turning Points: The Ten Million Ton Harvest and the Sovietization of Cuba

Periods 1-2. In-class viewing and discussion of films: “Fidel” directed by Saul Landau (USA/Cuba, 1969) and “Despegue a las 18 [Take-off at 18:00]” directed by Santiago Alvarez (Cuba, 1969).

W 2/26 Discussion of reading: Guerra, Visions of Power in Cuba, Chapters 9-10, pp. 290-352 [required book].

Questions for discussion: Today, most scholars of Cuba and most Cubans agree that the 1970 *Zafra de los Diez Millones* set Cuba back economically by more than three decades. Its political effects were so vast that discussing them remains largely taboo on the island. In these chapters, Guerra contends that in the *Zafra* acquired its importance because at no other point in the Revolution’s first decade did image matter more than reality: the failure of reality to match the *Zafra*’s inflated image of Communism’s potential precipitated an unprecedented political and ideological crisis. *What do you think the lessons of the Zafra were?*

FEB 29TH TO MAR 8TH SPRING BREAK. READING & FILM ASSIGNED FOR BREAK: Anna Veltfort, Goodbye, My Havana: The Life & Times of a Gringa in Revolutionary Cuba (Redwood Press,

2019), ALL [required book]; and “Conducta Impropia” directed by Nestor Almendros and Orlando Jiménez (France, 1984) [Watch before class on Vimeo].

UNIT THREE Sovietization, Gender Struggles & the Mariel Boatlift, 1972-1989

M 3/09 Memory, History and the Arts and Crafts of Resistance

Period 1. Discussion of reading and film: Veltfort, Goodbye, My Havana [required book] and “Conducta Impropia” [Watch before class on Vimeo].

Questions for discussion: 1. Unlike most memoirs, Veltfort has created a graphic novel in order to bring to life her experiences as a revolutionary and unintended dissident in Cuba. *How does her use of graphic art provide a sense of experience that word-based, traditional forms of memoir and story-telling do not?* 2. The film “Conducta Impropia” links the repression of homosexuality to a generalized system of censoring and policing knowledge of Cuban reality, arguing that both are essential to maintaining the Cuban state. What aspects of this film most surprised you? Are there aspects of Cuban reality that it deliberately left out? How does Veltfort’s memoir contribute to or contradict its portrayals?

Period 2. Lecture. Women, Education, Sexuality & Culture in the Soviet Age, 1972-1980

W 3/11 Discussion of film: “Portrait of Teresa” directed by Humberto Solás (Cuba, 1979)

Questions for discussion: Unlike many of his ICAIC counterparts, Solás became known for making films that were not only critical but much more contemplative of life under the Revolution. *How does this film depict daily life for women in 1970s Cuba? Is the “state” a character in this film or is it absent? What is the image of Cuba that this film imparts? Is it a different image than that of the movies by Gutiérrez Alea that we have seen?*

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT, DUE FRIDAY 3/13 BY 4 PM TO PROF. GUERRA. Please slip under her office door.

- **Instructions:** Respond to the following prompt and its questions in essay form. You must have a clear argument in your thesis statement and cannot simply rely on a descriptive thesis. You must underline your thesis. Your essay should be at least 5-6 pages or 700-900+ words in length, double-spaced and typed in 12-point font. Only printed copies will be accepted.
- **Prompt:** The period between the 1968-1979 included key turning points in the history of the Revolution. Among these, few surpass the process and failure of the 1970 Zafra as well as the integration of Cuba as a formal part of the Soviet bloc beginning in 1972. Between 2/17 and 3/11, we explored primarily the experiences that the first generation of young people raised after 1959 endured. Using the readings, lectures and films assigned between these dates, answer the following question: *Certain central features defined life for young Cubans in the Revolution’s second decade, yet one could be a “revolutionary” in ways that defied the rigid meaning that the Cuban state imposed. Who among the real-life figures (such as Anna Veltfort) and characters depicted in the assigned materials best illustrate efforts to self-define and therefore defy what it meant to be a “revolutionary”?*

M 3/16 “We are happy here”: Spectacles of Identity in Havana & Miami during the Mariel Crisis

Period 1. Lecture. *Marielitos*, Cuban Exiles & Revolutionaries: States of Siege, Sites of Trauma

Period 2. Discussion of film: “Beyond the Sea” directed by Lisandro Pérez Rey (USA, 2003) [Watch before class at: <https://www.lisandroperezrey.com/cuba-trilogy>]

W 3/18 Discussion of reading: Monika Gosin, The Racial Politics of Division: Interethnic Struggles for Legitimacy in Multicultural Miami (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 33-90. [required book]

UNIT FOUR

The Special Period and Cuba's Permanent State of National Crisis, 1989-2016

M 3/23 From "The Era of the Fat Cows" to "The Special Period", 1980s-Early 1990s

Period 1. Lecture. *La Lucha*: The Collapse of State Legitimacy & the Negotiation of Communism

Period 2. Discussion of film: "Alicia in Wondertown" directed by Daniel Díaz Torres (Cuba, 1991)

[Watch before class on Vimeo] **Discussion led by Group 1. 500-word essay in hard copy due in class from each member in response to the questions below.**

Questions for discussion: Censored almost immediately upon completion, the film's allegories are multiple and rich readings of how most Cubans might well have understood their lives in the late Soviet era. *What are these allegories? What images are the most memorable and symbolic? What do they explain?*

W 3/25 Discussion of reading: Laura Zoë Humphreys, Fidel Between the Lines: Paranoia and Ambivalence in Late Socialist Cuban Cinema (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), Chapter 3, pp. 90-126. [required book]

Questions for discussion: Humphreys characterizes Cuba's late socialist policy toward filmmaking as "repressive toleration". *What limits did Alice in Wondertown defy? Is Humphreys' term useful?*

M 3/30 Creating Cuba Outside the State, Reclaiming the Nation in the Self (Part I)

Period 1. Lecture. Culture, Art & Economy: Sites of a New National Imaginary, 1991-Today

Period 2. Discussion of film: "Strawberry and Chocolate" directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea (Cuba, 1993) [Watch before class on Vimeo] **Discussion led by Group 2. 500-word essay in hard copy due in class from each member in response to the questions below.**

Questions for discussion: Critically and internationally acclaimed, this film was also the first Cuban movie to receive an Oscar nomination for picture of the year. Considered a radical, frontal attack on the state's myths and historic taboos against discussing its own repression (of gays, writers, etc.), the film also represented a turning point: afterward, the Cuban government began a process of coopting—rather than condemning—the past, in part because this film's revelations and truths had become (by 1993) hard to deny. Indeed, some would argue that it could not be made in Cuba today. *What makes this film radical? Does it also conform to the limits of criticism that past movies by Gutiérrez Alea (such as "Memories of Underdevelopment" and "Death of a Bureaucrat") uphold?*

W 4/01 Discussion of reading and short films: Humphreys, Fidel Between the Lines, Chapters 1-2, pp. 27-89 and "Monte Rouge" directed by Eduardo del Llano (Cuba, 2007) [Watch before class on Vimeo]

M 4/06 Creating Cuba Outside the State, Reclaiming the Nation in the Self (Part II)

Period 1. Lecture. Blackness, Slavery and Obama: A New Transnational Imaginary, 1997-2016

Note: Subtitled music videos by Escuadrón Patriota used in class can be consulted on Canvas.

Period 2. Discussion of films: "Barrio Cuba" directed by Humberto Solás (Cuba, 2005) [Watch before class on Vimeo] and "Buscándote Havana" directed by Alina Rodríguez (Cuba, Colombia 2007) [Watch before class at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2-lvT0ORnw>]

Discussion led by Group 3. 500-word essay in hard copy due in class from each member in response to the questions below.

Questions for discussion: Both of these films depict the massive phenomenon of illegal migration within Cuba's borders, mostly to Havana, by residents of Oriente, Cuba's poorest province. Havana residents hatefully mock them as "*palestinos*" [Palestinians]. Yet while "Barrio Cuba" was made by ICAIC and distributed, the student-made documentary "Buscándote Havana" was banned. *How differently do these*

Prof. Lillian Guerra
Class Meetings: M 12:50-2:45 & W 12:50-1:40

Office: Keene-Flint 218
Class Location: FAC 127

films reflect the “otherness” of Palestinos? How does “Barrio Cuba” attempt to link the marginality of all its characters from revolutionary society and redeem them in the end?

W 4/08 Discussion of reading: Gosin, The Racial Politics of Division, Chapters 4-5, pp. 122-192.

Questions for discussion: How—and to what extent—did existing racist ideologies about African Americans apply to Cuban *balseros* and other Cuban immigrants of the Special Period to today? What pressures do Cuban immigrants face that impair their ability to *choose* an identity in the United States? What makes some immigrants “worthy” of citizenship and inclusion in Miami and others not?

UNIT FIVE

Cuba Today and Tomorrow

M 4/13 From Fidel to Raúl to...Miguel Díaz-Canel? The Return of the National Security-Theatre State
Period 1. Lecture. Donald Trump, Cuba’s 2019 Cuban Constitution & the Other Cuban Diasporas
Period 2. Discussion of the film: “Conducta” directed by Ernesto Daranas (Cuba, 2014) [Watch before class on Vimeo] **Discussion led by Group 4. 500-word essay in hard copy due in class from each member in response to the questions below.**

Questions for Discussion: This film clearly reveals a Cuba that until recently, the Cuban state wanted to deny. *Is there an argument about the legitimacy of the Revolution apparent in the film? Does the film separate the state from “the Revolution”?* What is the argument it makes?

W 4/15 Discussion of short film: “Camionero” directed by Luis Najmías (Cuba, 2013) [Watch before on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1YrItXHA2E>] **Discussion led by Group 5. 500-word essay in hard copy due in class from each member in response to the questions below.**

Questions for Discussion: In 2009, the Cuban government ended the use of “country schools”, a staple of the Soviet Age of the 1970s and 80s, ostensibly meant to develop “a communist personality in every child”. This short, independent film indicts their purposes and their impact in often horrifying ways. Like most independently made Cuban films, it is censored and taboo in Cuba. *What is the role of the audience of this film? Having now seen many Cuban films both censored and officially sponsored, what do you think its purpose is? This film, like virtually all the films we watched, was not intended for commercial gain. How does that effect its content? Does the fact that this film and other films are not commercial make them different from Hollywood films?*

M 4/20 Alternative and Hidden Images of Cuba Today and Tomorrow

Period 1. Lecture. The Death of Fidel Castro: Images & Legacies of the Real & Imagined Revolution

Period 2. Discussion of reading and film: Humphreys, Fidel Between the Lines, Chapter 4, pp. 127-165 and “Juan of the Dead” directed by Alejandro Bruges (Cuba, 2010) [Watch before class on Vimeo]

W 4/22 Ideas Workshop: Lessons from Cuba

FINAL EXAM WILL BE ADMINISTERED ON THE DAY ASSIGNED BY THE COLLEGE.