



## CIEE Seville, Spain

<b>Course name:</b>	Digital and Visual Culture in Contemporary Spain
<b>Course number:</b>	COMM 3004 SCMJ/ HISP 3001 SCMJ/NMDS 3001 SCMJ
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Liberal Arts, Advanced Liberal Arts, Business and Society and Communications, New Media and Journalism – Spanish Programs
<b>Language of Instruction:</b>	Spanish
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2019

### Course Description

This course explores the main historical, cultural and identity issues of contemporary Spain (from the 30s 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.

### Course and Learning Objectives

The main goal of the course is to investigate the complex relationship between visual representations and contemporary Spanish identity. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to help students become acquainted with the importance of visual critical analysis in a more and more visual-oriented society, and thus become more critical individuals. Through this course students will:

- 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.



### **Course Prerequisites**

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

### **Methods of Instructions**

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.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

The final grade will be based upon the following criteria:

1.	Class participation:	20%
2.	Canvas ePortfolio:	30%
3.	Exams (mid-term and final):	30%
4.	Oral presentation:	10%
5.	Final paper:	10%

### **Course Requirements**

#### **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.

#### **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**



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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are not allowed to miss class for unjustified reasons. For each unexcused absence, the participation portion of the grade will be lowered. Hence, it will be very difficult to receive a 100 in the class. Please keep this in mind. If a student misses class twice without a valid excuse (a note from a physician in the event of an illness), then the professor will automatically lower the final grade by 5 points (on a 100-point scale) for each class missed thereafter. Students with 6 or more absences will fail the course.

Students should arrive to class on time. Arriving more than 15 minutes late for a class will count as an unexcused absence. Please note that an excused absence is one that is accompanied by a doctor's note: signed stamped and dated. Travelling and/or travel delays are not considered valid reasons for missing class.

\* Notes from a physician will only be valid and admitted by the Program Manager if the doctor confirms that the visit could not have been arranged at another time, or that the student was too ill to attend class that day.

**Academic honesty:** Students are expected to act in accordance with their university and CIEE's standards of conduct concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Use of online translators for work in Spanish will result in an automatic failure.

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

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1**

- 1.1 Course presentation  
Goals of the course, assessment, requirements, and summary of contents
- 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

- 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)
- 2.2 Fieldtrip: Caixaforum Sevilla (*Arte y mito. Los dioses del Prado*)  
*Art and Myth. The Gods in the Prado* is an exhibition organised by the Museo Nacional del Prado and Obra Social "la Caixa". It offers a wide-ranging vision of classical mythology and its representation in paintings, sculptures and objects from the mid-1st century BC to the late 18th century.  
Readings: *Art and Myth Gods of the Prado* brochure  
List any due dates for exams, papers, etc.

## Week 3

- 2.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts  
Contemporary mythologies. The visual self.  
Readings: Sturken (2009). "Practices of looking: images, power, and politics"
- 2.2 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

- 2.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts  
The gaze and the tourist. Boring postcards. Non-places.  
Readings: Urry (2001). *Globalising the Tourist Gaze*

## Week 5

- 2.1 Understanding Visual Culture: core concepts  
Appropriation: how we negotiate the meaning of images  
Guest lecturer: Caleb Simoes  
Visual project 3 due (expectations versus reality)
- 2.2 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

- 2.1 Mid-term exam
- 2.2 Ways of seeing Spain: photography and truth  
Guest Lecturer: Antonio Pérez. *Photography and Meta-Photography*  
Visual project 4 due (appropriation)

## Week 7



- 2.1 Cinematic representations of Spain  
The Franco regime  
Reading: Chislett, William (2013) Chapter 2: The Franco Regime, 1939—1975  
Screening: The Spirit of the Beehive (1<sup>st</sup> part)  
Visual project 5 due (meta-photography)
- 2.2 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 (2<sup>nd</sup> part)

#### **Week 8**

- 2.1 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 (1<sup>st</sup> part)
- 2.2 Cinematic representations of Spain  
Screening: Pan's labyrinth (2<sup>nd</sup> part)

#### **Week 9**

- 2.1 Cinematic representations of Spain  
Reading: The Transition to Democracy and the Socialist Era (1975—1996)  
Screening: Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown (1<sup>st</sup> part)
- 2.2 Cinematic representations of Spain  
Reading: Comedy and Nationalism  
Screening: Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown (2<sup>nd</sup> part)

#### **Week 10**

- 2.1 Comics and the reconstruction of the Spanish collective memory  
Reading: 'I had not dared to remember': Trauma and Historical Memory in Recent Spanish Comics
- 2.2 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**

- 2.1 Comics and the reconstruction of the Spanish collective memory  
Oral presentations
- 2.2 Final exam review

#### **Week 12**

- 2.1 Final exam
- 2.2 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). Londo: Penguin Book, 2006.
- Mirzoeff, N. (2009) *An introduction to Visual Culture*. London: Routledge
- Mirzoeff, N. (2013) *The Visual Culture Reader (3<sup>rd</sup> 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](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>