

T 3:30-5:50, Ford Classroom, Swem Media Center
 Instructors: Ann Marie Stock, amstoc@wm.edu; M. Troy Davis, mtdavi@wm.edu
 Office Hours (Stock) W 1:30-4:30 & by appointment (Washington 216)

CUBAN DOCUMENTARY: NEW MEDIA PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

"In this country, where there are difficulties distributing gasoline and buying powdered milk, the fact that films are made is a miracle. Every day I'm more convinced that the existence of a film industry in Cuba is a miracle."

Esteban Insausti

"All great deeds and all great thoughts have a ridiculous beginning. Great works are often born on a street corner or in a restaurant's revolving door."

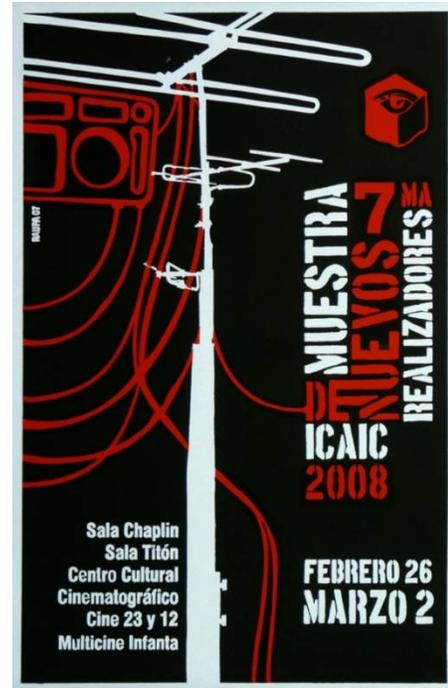
Albert Camus

"I have always preferred the reflection of life to life itself."

Francois Truffaut

"...even after I have returned home [from Cuba]—and the place has disappeared entirely from view...it haunts me like a distant rumba."

Pico Iyer



Overview

A grant from the College's QEP/Mellon initiative has supported the creation of two New Media Workshops to be offered during the 2008-09 academic year. Both are designed to engage students in exploring dramatic changes in Cuba's audiovisual sphere while experimenting with innovative learning approaches. In the first, during fall 2008, students collaborated with the instructors to prepare three volumes of subtitled documentaries for the Cuban Cinema Classics series as well as a documentary about the experience. In the second, during spring 2009, students will help create an original documentary on filmmaking in Cuba today. At the same time, workshop participants will compile a comprehensive web/print subject guide to Cuban cinema, subtitle Cuban films, and disseminate the group's collective findings in various ways. These workshops are designed to help students move beyond analyzing cultural texts so as to actually engage in artistic production and act as cultural agents.

Objectives

- Collaborate in a research experience that provokes discovery and promotes the dissemination of new knowledge;
- Gain an understanding of Cuba's revolutionary film tradition—particularly recent developments—and explore in-depth the work of at least one filmmaker;
- Become adept at working with new media production technologies in the Swem Media Center, developing skills in at least two of the following areas: translating, subtitling, preparing and conducting interviews, web design, filming, and editing;
- Advance information literacy skills and library research skills;
- Enhance ability to work independently and to structure individual inquiry and research;
- Contribute to designing, implementing and assessing the collaborative research experience.

Approach and Expectations

The workshop format of this course relies on the full participation of students. Instructors will present material, particularly in the first couple weeks of the semester, and as new concepts and activities are introduced; students will then be responsible for managing and directing their individual and team projects. Enrollment in this course pre-supposes self-motivation and a commitment to full participation in all class sessions, events, and group activities.

Materials

- Required Texts

On Location in Cuba: Street Filmmaking during Times of Transition by Ann Marie Stock (copy provided at no cost in April; chapters on Blackboard for reference during semester)

"Cine y revolución cubana: luces y sombras," Vol. 59 of *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, June 2008, edited by N. Berthier (for readers of Spanish) OR *Cuban Cinema* by Michael Chanan (for readers of English)

- Additional readings, resources and materials available over Blackboard and LibGuide, and on reserve

Assignments and Evaluation

- 20% Individual project/responsibilities, to be determined in consultation with instructors and based on New Media Production Workshop needs (e.g. filming interview, transcribing interviews, translating scripts, creating subtitles, presenting course projects in public forum, editing)
- 20% Contributions to collaboratively-built resource guide on Cuban film and new media
- 20% Written reflections, 7 essays of 4-5 pages each
- 20% Final Portfolio demonstrating independent inquiry and synthesizing learning experience (due no later than Weds. 6 May at 2:00 but earlier submission encouraged)
- 20% Attendance at and active participation in class discussions and corollary events

Topics and Activities

1. Fade In: Overview of the course
2. Dolly Back: Collective Expertise on New Media Production, Cuban Culture and Island Filmmaking
3. Close-Up: Interviews with Filmmakers
4. Zoom Out: Swem Library Resources and Information Literacy
5. Pan: New Media Production Practices
6. Tracking: Dissemination and Reflection



Schedule of Topics and Activities

This schedule is intended as a general guide to activities, readings and assignments during the semester. It will be modified and updated in order to take advantage of new opportunities and integrate materials and information shared by workshop participants.

- T 27 Jan Introduction to Workshop
 Read "Subtleties of Subtitles" in *Ideation*
<http://www.wm.edu/news/ideation/winter0809/cuban-film-stock-davis-1112.php>;
 Screen student documentary
- Discussion on "Ways of Seeing" (John Berger)
 "No vemos las cosas como son sino como somos" ("We don't see things the way they are but rather the way we are")
 Screen *Yo soy Cuba / I Am Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964), part 1
 Read "Coppola" and at least one scholarly essay on *Yo soy Cuba / I Am Cuba* essay
 Screen entire film before next class (on reserve)

Portfolio entry #1: Before the next class, write some reflections (4-5 pages, typed double-spaced) on how you approach film. Have you had film courses or formal training? If so, in what ways has this structured your viewing? What do you tend to notice? What do you find off-putting? Do you think more about narrative or form? Why do you think this is so? Have you filmed or edited or subtitled or worked with film in some other way? Has this influenced you? What else seems significant?

Working in pairs, watch several Cuban films. Choose from shorts on the Blackboard site (look under "videos") such as the following: *Ociel del Toa / Ociel of the Toa River Region*, *En un barrio viejo / In An Old Barrio*, *Como construir una casa / How to Build a House* (Guillén Landrián), *Una isla para Miguel / An Island for Miguel*, *En la otra isla / On the Other Island*, *Iré a Santiago / I Will Go to Santiago* (Sara Gómez), *Ciclón* (Santiago Alvarez), *Las manos y el ángel / The Hands and the Angel (Insausti)*. Or select other films from Swem's collection. Identify a clip and with your partner prepare to share with the class, along with your personal observations and reflections. You may use the questions above as a point of departure.

- T 3 Feb Reflections by Taurin Barrera on recent trip to Cuba
 Ways of Seeing / Perspectives on Viewing
 Bring segment of the Cuban film to class. With your partner, share this and guide the discussion.

Portfolio entry #2: Before the next class, build on Portfolio entry #1. How does your perspective—your "way of seeing"—inform your reading or reception of a particular Cuban film, your "way of seeing"? Feel free to write about the film you presented, or about a film someone else discussed. Either way, be sure to watch it again.

- T 10 Feb Close-up #1: Gilberto Martínez Gómez
 Read Chapter 2 ("Antecedents") in *On Location in Cuba*
 Visit www.afrocuba.web.
 In-class screening of *Nosotros y el Jazz / The Jazz in Us*
 LibGuide #1: Gloria Rolando & Gilberto Martínez Gómez
 In-class discussion of formulating interview questions and preparing to film interview on Saturday.

Portfolio entry #3: Before Gilberto's visit on Sat. 14 Feb., consider what kind of information you'd like to glean from him—about being a camera operator, about working in Cuba, about collaborating with the director Gloria Rolando, about founding his own production company. As a model, read the interview with Humberto Solás in *Film Quarterly*. Post your thoughts and/or questions to the course Blog. Each student should make at least one contribution but feel free to participate more. Identify and read at least one other interview and add to Libguide.

Sa 14 Feb Filming in Cuba and the U.S.: A Conversation with Gilberto Martínez Gómez, 11:00am-1:30pm, Ford Classroom (lunch provided)

Portfolio entry #4: Reflect on the interview with Gilberto. Locate him within either a national or auteur framework. Consult Higson and López for the former, and Kilborn and Eitzen for the latter. What thoughts did this guest provoke about present-day Cuba, filmmaking, migration, some other topic? Did this experience stretch you in some way? If so, how?

Portfolio entry #5: We are going to devote part of the next class to generating ideas for the filming the instructors will do in Cuba. Having read part of *On Location*, including at least one portrait of a Street Filmmaker, what do you think a viewing audience needs to know? What kinds of images need to be compiled in order to make a compelling documentary? Your thoughts will help structure the treatment to be used while filming in Cuba.

T 17 Feb Preparing to film in Cuba: Treatment and Video Carta (video letter)
Read "Preface," "Introduction" and "Television Serrana" in *On Location in Cuba*. Also read at least one "close up" with filmmaker—Juan Carlos Cremata, Pavel Giroud or Esteban Insausti.

Th 19 Feb Screening of *Madagascar* (Fernando Pérez, 1994), Tucker 120, 7p.m.
Read "Imagining the Future in Revolutionary Cuba: An Interview with Fernando Pérez" (*Film Quarterly*) before the screening.

T 24 Feb Muestra Nacional de Nuevos Realizadores / National Exhibit of New Filmmakers
<http://www.cubacine.cu/muestrajoven/index.html> (no scheduled class)
Read remaining "close ups" with filmmakers in *On Location*.

Portfolio entry # 6: Follow the dialogue developing on our workshop blog. What do you notice about the research process, about the steps involved in making a documentary film? Share any ideas and reflections that seem significant, particularly thoughts that contribute to our collective documentary project and the workshop. Also note questions that might have come up along the way.

T 3 March Muestra Nacional de Nuevos Realizadores / National Exhibit of New Filmmakers
Connecting with Cuban filmmakers from Havana, if possible

T 10 March Spring Break; no class

T 17 March Festival Report: Muestra Nacional de Nuevos Realizadores / National Exhibit of New Filmmakers; visit Muestra web site; read "Montage" in *On Location Cucarachas rojas / Red Cockroaches* (Miguel Coyula, 2003) (Kimball Theater, 10pm)

Sa 21 March 10:30am - Interview with Coyula; Workshop participants will meet in Ford Classroom to participate in filming interview

12:30pm [optional] – Meet at Kimball Theater to serve as extra in *Memories of Development*

1-4 pm - *Memorias del subdesarrollo / Memories of Underdevelopment* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1968), *Memories of Development* (Miguel Coyula, work in progress)

5-7pm - Filmmakers' roundtable (including Coyula), Sadler Center Auditorium

Portfolio Entry #7 – : Reflect on one of the films/events you attend this weekend related to this course (*Red Cockroaches*, *Memorias of Underdevelopment*, *Memories of Development*, roundtable). Provide a description (what took place or what was the film about) as well as your impressions (what stood out, what was perplexing) and analysis of connections (in what ways does or doesn't this fit

with what we've covered this far and what you know of Cuban film and audiovisual culture?). Read at least two essays on Auteur theory and think about the extent to which that paradigm is useful in understanding Coyula—and where it falls short.

For Tuesday: Choose one film that could be useful as a model for our documentary on Cuba's "Street Filmmakers." Isolate a clip and present it to the class. Explain and analyze how you think this might help us envision the "look" or "feel" or "approach" for our project.

T 24 March	Muestra / Exhibit and follow-up Read Young, "Between the Market and a Hard Place"
W-F 25-27 March	Conferences with instructor/s regarding final projects
Sa 28 March	"Never Finished: Exploring, Envisioning, and Re-defining the Creative and Scholarly Process," conference at Longwood University in Farmville, VA; Jessica Boten, Todd Corillo, Steven Linett
T 31 March	Final Project workshop Group 1: Curating Exhibit of Photos by Gustavo Pérez Group 2: Creating Documentary on Karel Ducases and Alina Rodríguez for presentation in NY at Havana Film Festival Group 3: Cuban Filmmaking web-print resource guide Group 4: Creating Video carta for Esteban Insausti/Angélica Salvador Group 5: Producing Festival Report for Cuba's Street Filmmakers
T 7 April	Video carta / Video letter Screen <i>Existen</i> (Esteban Insausti) and participate in filming video letter to record impressions and reactions of Workshop participants for filmmaker and editor seeking feedback
T 14 April	Work on final projects this week. No scheduled class meeting, but instructors available for consultation in Ford Classroom
T 21 April	Work on final projects this week. No scheduled class meeting, but Troy available for consultation in Ford Classroom. Professor Stock is presenting Cuban documentaries (and student work) at Havana Film Festival in New York http://www.hffny.com/2009/home/index.php
T 28 April	Wrap up, preparation for final showcase, Havana Film Festival report, course evaluation
W 29 April	7-9pm (arrive by 6:45), New Media Workshop Showcase, Botetourt Gallery
W 6 May	2pm - Scheduled Final; all work must be submitted by this time