Universidad de Chile Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades
Centro de Lenguas y Culturas del Mundo
Año 2023  Segundo semestre

Nombre del Curso: American (U.S.) Culture Through Literature and Film
[Cultura estadounidense a través de literatura y cine]

Modalidad:  Curso Completo: 24 horas  8 sesiones de 2 horas cronológicas) / dos meses

Requisito de ingreso:  Nivel de Inglés (B1), dirigido a todo estudiante mayor de 18 años y al público general.

Docente o equipo docente: Prof. Anthony Rauld Cabero

Presentación (máximo 5a 6 líneas):
This course offers an overview of US history and culture by looking at examples of films and literature. It seeks to give students a sense of how the United States came into being, and how it changed over time. By extension, it also seeks to explore why aspects of U.S. society are in crisis. The course invites participants to analyze and discuss different films and literary texts (that students must read and/or watch prior to each session) which serve to contextualize and illustrate different cultural/historical epochs of the United States, from the colonial era to the (post) Trump era, as well as key cultural and political themes and topics.

Objetivo: (máximo 5 o 6 líneas):
The main objective of this course is for students to gain a general overview of US culture and history, using literature and film as windows into particular cultural epochs, historical figures, themes, issues and events across space and
time, and to develop their capacity to engage intelligently and critically with cinema and literary works of art produced by artists, activists, and intellectuals from several generations. In the process of exploring and articulating US themes and issues—participating actively in the analysis and in the discussion of films and literature—students will also improve their communication skills in the English language.

Programa:

Unit 1: The Birth of the United States

We review some of the early colonial history surrounding the first successful English colonial settlement (Jamestown) as well as the Puritan settlements of Massachusetts in the 17th century. Students also explore the major themes and contradictions surrounding the American Revolution and the establishment of the U.S. Republic. Additionally, we consider westward expansion, the dispossession and colonization of American Indians, as well as the institution of slavery. The films and texts considered in this unit include: The Crucible (directed by Nicholas Hytner/play by Arthur Miller), the short story My Kinsman, Major Molineux (written by Nathaniel Hawthorne), and the slave narrative of Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.

Unit 2: The Rise of Industrial United States

Students will learn the basic context of the Civil War (1861-1865), and analyze the cultural (and political) friction between North and South more generally. Students also explore U.S. industrialization and capitalism, the labor movement (and progressive and populist movements), as well as the growth of anti-communist sentiment. We also briefly discuss the basic elements of the Great Depression, during the 1930's, as well as the political and economic response to this crisis: The New Deal (and the liberal consensus that would be consolidated). This unit also explores the project to develop the atomic bomb (and its significance) and life in the middle-class suburbs of the postwar 1950's, where we analyze gender roles, middle-class
morality, and the normalization of consumer culture. The films and texts considered in this unit include: The short-story *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (Ambrose Bierce), *There Will Be Blood* (directed by Paul Thomas Anderson), *Oil!* (written by Upton Sinclair), *The Day After Trinity* (directed by Jon Else), and *Revolutionary Road* (directed by Sam Mendes and written by Richard Yates).

*Unit 3: The 1960's and 1970's: An Inflection Point*

We examine the story behind the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, the Civil Rights Movement in Oakland and in San Francisco, as well as the Anti-Vietnam War Movement. We also explore the context of 1970’s America, a new era of pessimism, anxiety, and cynicism with U.S. citizens losing faith in their political institutions, while conservative groups and big business rallied together to confront the "threat of democracy". The films considered in this unit include: *Berkeley in the Sixties* (directed by Mark Kitchell), *Born on the Fourth of July* (the film directed by Oliver Stone, as well as the book written by Ron Kovic, which inspired the film), *I Am Not Your Negro* (directed by Raoul Peck), *Jaws* (directed by Steven Spielberg), *Missing* (directed by Costa-Gavras) and *Capricorn One* (directed by Peter Hyams).

*Unit 4: Recent History and Contemporary U.S.*

In these sessions, we explore the United States in the 1980's, a period characterized by the radical restructuring of the economy and the neo-conservatism ushered in by Ronald Reagan. We also cover the 1990's and the Clinton era (globalization and the rise of "progressive neoliberalism"), the attacks of September 11th, 2001 (and the aftermath: the "war on terror" and the Bush Doctrine), and the digital revolution (along with its cultural, political and social ramifications). Additionally, this unit examines the electoral triumph of Donald Trump, which ushered in a new "post-truth" era in the United States, and the social movements that have arisen to challenge the stripping away of key social institutions and social rights. The films and texts
considered in this unit include: *Wall Street* (directed by Oliver Stone), The War Room (directed by D.A. Pennebaker), *Control Room* (directed by Jehane Noujaim), *Citizen Four* (directed by Laura Poitras), and *Fahrenheit 11/9* (directed by Michael Moore).

**Bibliografía**

**Texts**

**Bierce, Ambrose.** *An Occurrence at Own Creek Bridge.* San Francisco Examiner: July 13, 1890.


**Hawthorne, Nathaniel.** *My Kinsman, Major Molineux* [in *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales*]. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1852.


**Films**

**The Crucible.** Dir. Nicholas Hytner. 20th Century Fox, 1996. Motion Picture Film.


**Revolutionary Road.** Dir. Sam Mendes. BBC Films, 2008. Motion Picture Film.

**Born on the Fourth of July.** Dir. Oliver Stone. Universal Pictures, 1989. Motion Picture Film.


**Capricorn One.** Dir. Peter Hyams. Warner Brothers, 1978. Motion Picture Film.

**Missing.** Dir. Costa-Gavras. Universal Pictures, 1982. Motion Picture Film.

**Jaws.** Dir. Steven Spielberg. Universal Pictures, 1975. Motion Picture Film.


**Citizen Four.** Dir. Laura Poitras. Radius-TWC, 2014. Documentary Film.


Informaciones y contacto