

Cinema, memory and the Nation in post-dictatorial Southern Cone of America

Through this project I will develop a unit on cinema from the Southern Cone of America for MC366, Romancing the Nation: Film, History and Nation. Its objective is to use cinema as a medium to discuss the concept of memory and its role in the (re)construction of nations that have been under military dictatorships and that have suffered massive human rights violations. Memory, collective memory, and memory studies have developed since the second half of the 20th century as an interdisciplinary field that has its roots mainly on history, sociology and anthropology. Post-dictatorship cinema in the Southern Cone (defined as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) has centered on presenting an interpretation of the countries recent past; even before historians have come to grips with this past (with few exceptions). Other social scientists (mainly political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists) have engaged with this past trying to reconfigure the social spaces that were 'disturbed' by the military governments. Among others, the question that arises is what is the role of cinema in representing memories and its influence in the (re)construction of states. Another possible question is which is the importance of recuperating or maintaining memory for the societies that have suffered human rights abuses? From an instructional perspective, relevant questions are: What is the relationship between history and memory? How do we teach memory and its intersections with the social sciences and humanities? And, what is the use of cinema as a medium to teach memory?

Following the objective mentioned above, in this project I will develop a unit of a course from present an interdisciplinary framework to analyze the process of national (re)construction in the countries of the Southern Cone of America. I will utilize theories and concepts developed mainly by historians, sociologists and political scientists to integrate the different analyses onto an examination that is centered in the object of study and not in the discipline. Using movies as cultural artifacts I will evaluate a representation of reality that is directly influenced by time (historical and personal) and ideology and which itself can be read from an interdisciplinary perspective. A possible evaluation of the section would be an essay that answers, from the perspective of the students some of these questions. An analysis of this unit will be presented in a roundtable at the 2010 MPSA Annual National Conference and ideally an article to be submitted to *Teaching Sociology* during Fall of 2010.