Critical Approaches to Films from Spain
Spanish 940:211 (Fall 2021)
Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, Rutgers University-Newark

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Office Hours (Zoom): Friday 1-2 p.m. 
Class Meeting (Conklin 238): Wednesday 1-2:20 p.m. 
Course Site: https://canvas.rutgers.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the rich history of twentieth and twenty-first century Spanish cinema, at the same time that it provides an introduction to critical approaches to cinema, culture, and history. Films to be screened include An Andalusian Dog (Luis Buñuel, 1929), The Spirit of the Beehive (Victor Erice, 1973), The Butterfly’s Tongue (José Luis Cuerda, 1999), Pan’s Labyrinth (Guillermo del Toro, 2006), Bad Education (Pedro Almodóvar, 2004), and Take My Eyes (Iciar Bollaín, 2004), among others. All films will be streamed online, with English subtitles.

THIS COURSE IS TAUGHT IN ENGLISH AND MEETS THE CORE CURRICULUM OTHER LIBERAL ARTS REQUIREMENT. This course also counts toward the Spanish major and minor, provided written work is completed in Spanish.

Critical Approaches

What are Critical approaches? Critical approaches to film, as well as literature, culture, and visual arts, entail to discern how or why a particular work is constructed and what its social and cultural implications are. Understanding critical perspectives will help students to see and appreciate films, literature, culture, and visual arts as creations with complex and multidimensional meanings. Thus, reading film and cultural criticism will inspire students to reread, rethink, and respond. Among the critical approaches we will engage with are historical, Marxist, biographical, feminist, gender and psychological.1

COURSE DELIVERY AND FORMAT

This course will be taught partially online. Each week, we will watch a film and discuss it. We will have one on-campus session each week (Wednesdays, 1-2:20 p.m., Conklin 238). Students will be responsible for screening the film before class and completing weekly assignments online (asynchronously) by required due dates. At the beginning of each on-campus session, the professor will offer a brief introductory lecture to contextualize the film and introduce key critical approaches for its analysis. During the remainder of the session, we will discuss and analyze the film. Any changes to the course schedule will be communicated on the course website and by email.

Please note the importance of adhering to the university’s Community Safety Practices for COVID-19 when on campus. In particular, please note that, as per university policy, masks are required for all on-campus class sessions.2

1 For more information, see https://sites.google.com/site/estesinversos/Home/uesc---universidade-estadual-de-santa-cruz/anglophone-literature/critical-approaches-to-literature
2 For a complete list of practices, see https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/health-and-safety/community-safety-practices/.
OFFICE HOURS
Office hours will be held on Zoom on Fridays, 1-2 p.m. (Please see Canvas for the Zoom link.) If you are not able to attend these office hours, please email the professor to make an appointment: el431@newark.rutgers.edu

IMPORTANT DATES
This course begins on September 1, 2021 and ends on December 13, 2021. There will be one on-campus session each week, on Wednesdays, 1-2:20 p.m. Students are expected to screen films and complete required readings and homework assignments by assigned deadlines each week, in preparation for class discussion. *If you cannot attend a session, or if you need more time to complete an assignment, please let me know as soon as possible.*

*Any changes to the course schedule will be communicated on the course website and by email.*

REQUIRED READINGS / SCREENINGS
The following text is *required* and can be rented online through Amazon or purchased at the Bookstore:

Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience: An Introduction.*

All other readings can be found on Canvas: canvas.rutgers.edu.

All films will be available for streaming online.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS
In the online environment, there is always a possibility of technical issues (e.g., lost connection, hardware or software failure). Many of these can be resolved relatively quickly, but if you wait to the last minute before due dates, the chance of these glitches affecting your success are greatly increased. Please plan appropriately. If a problem occurs, it is essential you take immediate action to resolve the problem. Technical questions should be directed to the Student Help Desk at:

help@newark.rutgers.edu
973-353-5083
Hill Hall 109
http://ncs.newark.rutgers.edu/hd

ONLINE COURSE SITE
This course can be accessed through Canvas: https://canvas.rutgers.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course is designed to help students develop the critical reading, writing, and oral skills they need in order to succeed in their university studies. Course Objectives include:

1. **Effective reading and screening:** We will discuss and practice effective reading and screening strategies for meaning and informed analysis (to find “main arguments” or identify evidence, for example; and to employ the critical language of film studies in our analysis of films).
2. **Effective Written and Oral Communication**: This course will help students to improve their ability to express themselves clearly on paper, and in their public speech. It will provide students with the opportunity to practice revising their written work in order to improve the organization and presentation of their ideas. In writing and in public speech, students will work toward being able to use evidence appropriately in order to deal with and apply complex ideas accurately.

3. **Critical Thinking**: This course will teach students how to approach interpretative challenges by providing them with a range of intellectual resources that will allow them to respond critically to these challenges. Among these intellectual resources are the sociocultural background, the historical context, and the knowledge of critical concepts related to the films under study. These intellectual resources will foster a climate of critical inquiry.

4. **An Understanding of Intercultural Relations**: This course will teach students to understand and appreciate the past and present interrelationships among diverse social, cultural, and ethnic groups.

5. **Self-Assessment**: Students will work on becoming conscious of the strengths and learning skills they already have, and will set goals for improving these skills. At various points during the semester, students will evaluate their progress by reviewing the work they have completed to date.

**COURSE POLICIES**

Students are expected to screen films and complete required readings and homework assignments each week (asynchronously), by dates listed on Syllabus; and to log into the course at least three times per week to ensure they do not miss pertinent postings, messages, or announcements. They are expected to attend on-campus and synchronous class sessions and meetings, as listed on the Syllabus; and to let the professor know as soon as possible if they are not able to do so.

**LATE SUBMISSIONS**

Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments are due at the time and date listed in the syllabus. If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, please inform the professor prior to the date the work is due. Late work will result in points taken off, a lowering of the assignment grade, and/or an “F,” depending on the assignment.

**EVALUATION**

**Homework & Participation (20%)**
Students will complete short homework assignments each week, which will be designed as building blocks for longer assignments. Students will also be expected to participate actively in both asynchronous and in-class discussions.

**Presentations (20%)**
Students will make a final presentation to the class, on a Spanish film of their choice that we would not otherwise have the opportunity to discuss in class.

**Short Essays (30%)**
Students will write two short essays (5 pp. each) in which they will critically address a topic identified by the professor in relation to one of the films studied. For their essays, students will revise and expand their
work on homework assignments, taking into consideration the professor’s comments and suggestions for improvement.

**Exams (30%)**
There will be two exams, designed to assess students’ understanding of material covered in the course.

**GRADING**
All grades will be posted to Canvas. The final average will determine the final grade, with letter grades corresponding to the following levels of achievement (as stated in the college-wide policy determined by the University’s Faculty Senate):

- **A** 90-100 achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- **B** 80-87 (88-89 B+) achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- **C** 70-77 (78-79 C+) achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
- **D** 60-69 achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
- **F/N** 0-59 represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either:
  1. completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit; or
  2. was not completed and there was not agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (incomplete).

**GRADING RESPONSE TIME**
Assignments should be graded within one week of the due date. Assignments that are lengthy may take longer to grade.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Communication Policy**

- **Course announcements.** Announcements will be posted on Canvas and e-mailed to students. You are responsible for providing the instructor with a current e-mail address that you check regularly, and for reading all announcements posted by the instructor. You should log into our course and your e-mail at least three times per week to check for new announcements and/or messages.
- **Course-related questions.** Please post course-related questions to the Questions and Answers Discussion Board on Canvas. Asking course-related questions in this way allows other participants with the same question to benefit from the responses. For this reason, please make sure you review this forum prior to posting a question; it may have already been asked and answered in previous posts.
- **Personal and/or confidential matters.** For personal and/or confidential matters, please e-mail the instructor at el431@newark.rutgers.edu. For course-related questions, please use the Questions and Answers Discussion Board within the course. Except for weekends and holidays, the instructor typically will respond to email messages within 24 business hours.
Netiquette

“Netiquette” is network etiquette, the dos and don’ts of online communication. When posting to our discussion board or communicating with others in our class, please remain courteous. Below are the guidelines we will follow in this course (adapted from http://www.indiana.edu/~icy/netiquette.html#rules):

1. Make your messages easier to read by making your paragraphs short and to the point.
2. Use normal capitalization. TYPING IN ALL CAPS IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING ON THE INTERNET. Messages in all lowercase letters can be difficult to read.
3. Avoid using slang and abbreviations because they can lead to misinterpretation. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism. When being humorous, use emoticons to express humor. (tilt your head to the left to see the emoticon smile) :-) 
4. Never give your userID or password to another person. System administrators that need to access your account for maintenance or to correct problems will have full privileges to your account.
5. Respect the fact that the class list is a closed discussion; do not forward mail from your classmates to others without their permission.
6. Be professional and courteous. In an online forum or newsgroup, debate is welcome, but be tactful in responding to others. Remember that there's a person (or a whole class) at the receiving end of your post.
7. Keep your questions and comments relevant to the focus of the discussion group. Information intended for an individual or small group of individuals should be emailed to those people directly.
8. If you are responding to a message from someone else, briefly summarize her or his post.
9. When posting a question to the discussion group, request that responses be directed to you personally. Post a summary or answer to your question to the group.
10. If you quote a previous post (by using the reply function for example), quote only enough to make your own point.
11. Include your signature at the bottom of Email messages when communicating with people who may not know you personally or broadcasting to a dynamic group of subscribers.
12. Be respectful of other points of view. Remember that these discussions are “public” and meant for constructive exchanges. Treat the others on the list as you would want them to treat you.
13. If you want to get in touch with only one person in the class, send a message to that individual's e-mail address, not to the entire discussion list.
14. When replying to a message posted to a discussion group, check the address to be certain it's going to the intended location (person or group). It can be very embarrassing if they reply incorrectly and post a personal message to the entire discussion group that was intended for an individual.
15. Think and proofread before you submit!

Time Commitment

To be successful in this course, you will need to commit to an estimated average of 9 hours of coursework per week for the fifteen-week semester. (Some weeks will require more time, some less.) This is the same amount of time that you would need to commit to in a traditional, face-to-face three-credit class.

Dropping the Course

In order to withdraw from a course, it is not sufficient to stop posting assignments or contributing to discussion. In accord with university policy, students wishing to withdraw from a course must do so formally through the Registrar’s office. It is the student’s responsibility to complete all forms. If this is
not done, the instructor must assign a grade of F at the end of the semester.

**Required technological skills**

- Ability to utilize Canvas

**Required equipment / materials**

- Computer, Internet access, webcam with microphone OR headphones with microphone
- Software that can save a file in the format of Microsoft Word or PDF

**Academic Integrity**

Students at Rutgers University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. The consequences of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, are very serious. Rutgers’ academic integrity policy is at academicintegrity.rutgers.edu. When you submit an exam or assignment, you need to abide by the honor pledge of “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

Multimedia presentations about academic integrity may be found at the following links:

- [http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html](http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html)
- [http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064,-00.html](http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064,-00.html)

**Resources for Students**

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Students with Disabilities.** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations.** Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Counseling Services.** Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/.
• **Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries.** Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: [https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu](https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu).

• **Students who Are Pregnant.** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu).

• **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment.** Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). To submit an incident report: [tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm](http://tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm). To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does NOT have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu).

Additional resources available to students include the following:

• **Rutgers Learning Center** (tutoring services)
  Room 140, Bradley Hall
  (973) 353-5608
  [https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center](https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center)

• **Writing Center** (tutoring and writing workshops)
  Room 126, Conklin Hall
  (973) 353-5847
  nwc@rutgers.edu
  [https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center](https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center)
  Introduction: [http://www.youtube.com/embed/DaAYHC5aUHs?rel=0](http://www.youtube.com/embed/DaAYHC5aUHs?rel=0)

• **Rutgers University Libraries**
  Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email and chat. Information about the library can be found here: [http://libguides.rutgers.edu/intro](http://libguides.rutgers.edu/intro)
  Please review this 2-minute video about the library online resources:
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJvFVqjz8Dg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJvFVqjz8Dg)
CRITICAL APPROACHES TO FILMS FROM SPAIN
Course Schedule
(September 1, 2021 - December 13, 2021)

Please note: homework assignments will be due on Mondays, and on-campus class sessions will be held on Wednesdays, as listed here. Students should plan complete assigned reading from the textbook before completing the homework assignments, and to watch each week’s film before the synchronous session. All changes to Course Schedule will be posted to Canvas and communicated by email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Topic</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome!</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductions and Course Overview</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sept. 1-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-campus class session: Sept. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Seeing Spain on Screen</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Film: <em>An Andalusian Dog</em> (Luis Buñuel, 1929)</td>
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<td>Sept. 6-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading (Corrigan &amp; White): “The Foundations of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinematography” (pp. 76-81)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due (9/8): Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synchronous class session (online): Sept. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Spanish Civil War and Post-War</strong></td>
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<td>Film: <em>Viridiana</em> (Luis Buñuel, 1961)</td>
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<td>Sept. 13-19</td>
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<td>Reading (Corrigan &amp; White): “Framed and Focused:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elements of Cinematography” (pp. 84-97)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due (9/13): Homework #1</td>
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<td>On-campus class session: Sept. 15</td>
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<td><strong>The Devil’s Backbone</strong></td>
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<td>Film: <em>The Spirit of the Beehive</em> (Victor Erice, 1973)</td>
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<td>Sept. 20-26</td>
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<td>Reading (Corrigan &amp; White): “Points of View: Values</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Traditions of the Film Image” (pp. 97-107)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due (9/20): Homework #2</td>
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<td>On-campus class session: Sept. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film: <em>The Butterfly’s Tongue</em> (José Luis Cuerda, 1999)</td>
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<td>Sept. 27-Oct. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading (Corrigan &amp; White): “Writing an Analytical</td>
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<td>Film Essay” (pp. 476-79)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due (9/27): Short Essay #1 topic</td>
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<td>On-campus class session: Sept. 29</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Synchronous library orientation session (online): Oct. 6</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 4-10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3 Sept.: No classes held--Happy Labor Day! 8 Sept.: Change in designation of class days--Monday classes held. See https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/academic-calendar for full Calendar.

5 Sept.: Last day for students to drop a class without a “W” grade. 9 Sept.: Last day to add classes. See https://registrar.newark.rutgers.edu/office-registrar-fall-academic-calendar for full Calendar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 11-17</td>
<td>Due (10/11): Exam Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 18-24</td>
<td>Due (10/18): Homework #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>On-campus class session: Oct. 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 25-31</td>
<td>Due (10/25): Self-Reflection #1</td>
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<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>On-campus class session: Oct. 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 1-7</td>
<td>Due (11/1): Short Essay #2 topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 8-14</td>
<td>On-campus class session: Nov. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>Due (11/8): Short Essay #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 15-21</td>
<td>On-campus class session: Nov. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 22-28</td>
<td>Due (11/22): Exam #2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5 **25 Oct.:** Last day students may drop courses (“W” grade assigned).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Due (11/29): Presentations</th>
<th>Nov. 29-Dec. 5 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synchronous class session (online): Dec. 1</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Due (12/6): Self Reflection #2</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synchronous class session (online): Dec. 8</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Due (12/13): Comments on presentations</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>All late work must be handed in by today!</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6 29 Nov.: Change in designation of class days--Wednesday classes held.