

Hispanic Studies

Module descriptors for Inbound Students.

Name	Voicing Conflict in Latin America: Theatre and Performance as Social Practices
Code	SPU33064
Semester	1
ECTS credits	10
Pre-requisite	2 years university-level Spanish or B1 level of Spanish

Module Content

This module will engage with practical and theoretical questions of theatre and performance as social practices.

By focusing on various theatrical outputs and their reception, paying particular attention to history, politics, national identity, justice and collective memory, this module will showcase the importance played by theatre practitioners, performers and playwrights in Latin American in terms of validating stories from subaltern groups, including indigenous communities, in relation to power.

The Peruvian theatre ensemble Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, for example, has played a key role in this respect. It accompanied the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the Andes after the Peruvian Dirty War (1980-2000), a war which claimed the lives of some 70,000 people (most of them in Ayacucho) and led to the sterilisation of some 300,000 quechua speaking poor women, while Enrique Buenaventura and the TEC [Teatro Experimental de Cali], continued by Jacqueline Vidal, in Colombia, have been pioneers in collective efforts bringing attention to violence and the peace efforts in the region.

The module will explore theatre production at the intersection of history, human rights, law and politics in Latin America, and the relevance of the arts in challenging power structures and revisiting official histories as social constructs that can be (re)written through political aesthetics and activism to subvert hegemonic narratives.

At the same time, the module will also establish links through comparative and transnational representations of conflict, e.g. Argentinean representations of Peruvian author José Watanabe's version of Antigone.

In this light, we will also explore the Greek classics and contemporary reworkings to challenge the status quo, for example in the case of Electra by Cuban author Virgilio Piñera and the rather ubiquitous Antigone in theatre practice, translating experiences into aesthetic expressions.

The module will focus on a selection of key modern texts, theatre groups, playwrights and performers from a range of Latin American countries, including Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico to examine critically specific cultural industries, intermedial engagement, and their place in popular culture.

Additional documentation will be made available to students who may want to explore this further for future research involving more countries and cultural producers, in a comparative approach.

This module will offer students the research tools necessary to establish independent links as they explore further this region's rich cultural outputs, expanding beyond national borders and written forms of knowledge.

The module will give specific attention to cultural production and the State, engaging with social issues such as dictatorship and authoritarianism, revolution, discrimination, and various forms of violence, including state crimes, among others.

Aims

1. To broaden the knowledge of a vast region such as Latin America through specific national case studies focusing on the unifying theme of cultural production and conflict in the region.
2. To consider the relevance of theatre and performance as social practices and sites of cultural resistance in times of conflict in Latin America.
3. To enable students to analyse dramatic, theatrical and cultural production at the intersection of history, law, and politics in modern Latin America through a representative selection of texts that show the relevance and potential impact of literary and cultural production for social change.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module students will be able:

1. To understand the historical and socio-political setting informing the twentieth- and twenty-first century texts and contexts studied across a range of Latin American countries.
2. To identify specific conflicts and cultural responses in terms of theatre and performance in Latin America.
3. To discuss with confidence issues of state intervention, revolution, authoritarianism, dictatorship, discrimination, marginality, subjectivity and agency in various contexts in Latin America.
4. To examine critically theories and theatrical practices in relation to national and transnational contexts in Latin America.
5. To differentiate between opinions and facts, and argue effectively in ideologically charged debates concerning cultural politics in Latin America.
6. To analyse the effectiveness of theatre for healing, action, community building, and transforming experience into art.
7. To synthesize theoretical and critical debates and present convincing arguments, both orally and in writing, in relation to the corpus studied.

8. To critically appraise homogenizing practices across national boundaries to assess similarities and differences mediating power constructs in various Latin American countries.
9. To evaluate critically the theatrical production of Latin America to support and challenge established scholarship.

Assessment

- 1,500-word mid-term essay, 30%
- 2,000-2,500-word final essay, 70%
- Formative and ipsative assessment and feedback in tutorials.