

**Visualizing Cuba**  
**UGS 303** Difficult Dialogues First-Year Seminar Fall 2015

TTh 11:00-12:30 MEZ 1.212  
 Writing Component/Global Cultures Flags  
 Unique Number 61690

Prof. César A. Salgado  
 csld@austin.utexas.edu  
 Office Hrs: Th 12:30-3:30  
 BEN 3.140/CAL 217 (232-4517)

**Description:**

The only communist country in the Western Hemisphere, Cuba has exerted a great fascination among North Americans and the world in general. Because of the 54-year economic embargo and the political animosity of exile groups and Castro opponents, the images of Cuba available abroad tend to be overly polarized and stereotypical, painted either in bright color or in dark grey. Cuba has been thus visualized as a tropical paradise, a tyrannical dictatorship, a racially integrated island, a landscape of ruins, a socialist utopia, and a Caribbean gulag.

This course is meant to have you see Cuba, its history and affairs not as foreign pundits see it, but as Cuban and other artists have seen it by way of the country's unique visual culture and image politics. We will consider the esthetic, social, political, and economic dimensions of several examples of Cuban painting, photography, art installations, film, documentaries, urban design, monumental architecture and sculpture, performance, and fiction throughout its 56 years of Revolution and beyond, starting with the island's struggles for abolition, sovereignty, and independence in the nineteenth century. Although it will focus on artists and intellectuals in the island, it will also consider how much Cuban artists in exile contribute to this complex imagining. Theoretical debates about dissident vs. state-sponsored art, commitment vs. contestation, avant-garde abstraction vs. social realism, censorship, race, gender, and sexuality will be reviewed. Our focus will be on how writers, filmmakers, photographers, and visual artists in Cuba and its diaspora respond, contribute, or object to the global power of political and cultural icons before, during, and after the Cold War.

This course will help students understand better a neighboring country that has often been misrepresented and demonized because of a history fraught with political antagonism and intransigence. By studying some key pieces in Cuban art, film, and literature, students will understand how much overlap there is or not between Cuban and U.S. peoples, cultures, and historical processes. This is a course about interrogating positive and negative stereotypes and images about a former "enemy country" by using its print, visual, film, and media history and culture to explore alternative points-of-view.

**Requirements (with Writing Flag):**

**1. Three short analytical reviews on a Cuban art piece: 30%**

Each 3-4 page essay should focus on a different medium: a. pre-1902 print, photograph, painting, or cartoon; b. a work of Cuban avant-garde art; 3. film scene or script

## 2. One 12-15 page research paper: 35%

This is an open-topic research project on a state-sponsored or independent artist, artwork, film production, performance or exhibit in Cuba or abroad that would consider how different media forms inform or influence each other in Cuban expression. The steps for this assignment--selection of topic; search, consultation and summation of references; outline with main arguments; first draft and revisions; final submission--are scheduled throughout the second half of the course in accordance to the Information Literacy guidelines for Signature Courses.

For this paper you need to follow the following 5 steps:

- a. Propose an appropriate topic for approval by both the professor and the grader (5%)
- b. Put together a commented bibliography with 5 good sources as part of a research plan (5%)
- c. Provide an outline that sketches the main argument, identifies your method or strategy of analysis, summarizes the main sources, and begins analyzing the materials (See Point 3 below)
- d. Turn in a first draft with an introduction; a body of research findings, analysis, and argumentation; and a conclusion (5%)
- e. Turn in the final paper after incorporating revisions suggested by the instructor and the grader (20%)

## 3. Class presentation: 10 %

You will use your outline to make a 10 minute presentation of the project to your fellow students for constructive feedback.

## 4. Class attendance, participation, and presence in special tours, screenings, and talks: 25%

Students are expected to participate in class discussion. In some occasions the class will meet in other locales on campus to learn how to take advantages of unique **UT "Gems"** research resources. Towards the end of the course we'll visit the **Blanton Art Museum** to see its holdings of prints and paintings by noted contemporary Cuban artists. UGS students are encouraged and expected to attend one of the **University Lecture Series**, place and time to be announced. There will be visits in class by one or more guest speakers.

### Course Materials:

Many of the class sources are available free online to you through the UT Library System. Two books should be bought at the COOP or via Amazon. Other materials will be available as pdfs from our Canvas webpage or other sites on the Internet.

### **Works of scholarship available online at the UT Library Website:**

1. *Gale Cuba Encyclopedia*. Editors, Alan West-Durán, Victor Fowler-Calzada, Marel García Perez, Louis A. Perez Jr., César A. Salgado, María de los Angeles Torres
2. Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*
3. Louis Perez, *Cuba in the American Imagination*
4. Emilio Bejel, *Jose Martí: Images of Memory and Mourning*

### **Fiction and prose books available for purchase at the Co-op:**

1. Antonio José Ponte, *Tales from the Empire*
2. Yoani Sánchez, *Havana Real*

### **Films to be screened in class or seen on your own online or at the Fine Arts Library**

1. *The Eye of the Canary* (Fernando Pérez, 2012)
2. *Stories of the Cuban Revolution* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1960)
3. *I Am Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964)
4. *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1967)

5. *Che* (Steven Soderbergh, 2010)
6. *Improper Conduct* (Orlando Jiménez Leal and Nestor Almendros, 1984)
7. *Bitter Sugar* (León Ichaso, 1996)
8. *An Art of Making Ruins* (Florian Borchmeyer, 2007)
9. *Suite Havana* (Fernando Pérez, 2003)
10. *Juan of the Dead* (Alejandro Brugués, 2011)

## Class Schedule

### Week 1

Aug. 27: Visual Culture and Image Politics in Cuba: An Introduction

### Week 2 Cuban Landscape and Society in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Prints and Painting

Sept. 1 Vistas of Havana and plantation oversight in Serres, Miahle, and Laplante

Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*, p. 36-61 (**Canvas pdf**)

Narciso G. Menocal, "An Overriding Passion—The Quest for a National Identity in Painting," p. 186-197 (**Canvas pdf**)

*Gale Cuba* entries: "Havana: El Morro and La Cabaña"; "Havana: Atlantic Center of Shipping, Commerce, and Building" (**online**)

**Optional:** Nicholas Mirzoeff, "On Oversight. The Ordering of Slavery" (**Canvas pdf**)

Sept. 3 Racializing Cuba in the works of Víctor Patricio de Landaluce

Read: *Gale Cuba* entry: "Día de Reyes en la Habana (V. P. de Landaluce)" (**online**)

Jill Lane, "Smoking Habaneras" (**Canvas pdf**)

### Week 3 José Martí as Icon in Photography, Monuments, and Film

Sept. 8: José Martí, Cuba's "Apostle," in photography

Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*, p. 61-74 (**Canvas pdf**)

Emilio Bejel, *José Martí: Images of Memory and Mourning*, p. 1-2; Chapter 1, p. 17-43 (**Canvas pdf**)

*Gale Cuba* entries: "José Martí: Political Essays"; "José Martí: Exile in New York"

Sept. 10: José Martí in sculpture and film in Cuba and abroad

Read: Emilio Bejel, *José Martí: Images of Memory* [...], Chapter 2, p. 45-66 (**Canvas pdf**)

Film: Clips from *The Eye of the Canary* (*El ojo del canario*)

### Week 4 The Spanish American War: Media War in Pictures, Prints & Cartoons

Sept. 15 Concocting images of Cuba in U.S. "Yellow Journalism"

Read: Louis Perez, *Cuba in the American Imagination*, "Introduction," p. 1-11; "Chapter Two: Imagining Self Interest," p. 25-94 (**Canvas pdf**)

Sept 17 Ruling through images: Visualizing the new possessions after 1898

Read: Lanny Thompson, "Representation and Rule in the Imperial Archipelago" (**pdf**)

**3-4 page paper analyzing a print, photography, monument, or newspaper item due in class**

### Week 5 After 1898: The "Plattist" Republic, Art Deco, and the 1933 Revolution

Sept 22 Conrado Massaguer, Art Deco, and the "Dance of the Millions"

- Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*, p. 74-88 (**Canvas pdf**)  
 M. L. Lobo Montalvo & Z. Lapique Becali, "The Years of *Social*" (**Canvas pdf**)  
 Sept 24 Photography under dictatorship: Walker Evans and Constantino Arias  
 Read: *Gale Cuba* entries: "Visual Arts: Photography"; "Constantino Arias"; "The Machado Dictatorship Falls: August 1933" (**online**)  
 José Quiroga, "A Cuban Love Affair with The Image" (**Canvas pdf**)

### **Week 6 Visual Vanguard from 1933 to the Moncada Attack (1953)**

- Sept 29 The Avant-Garde in Cuban Painting during the 1930s & 1940s  
 Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*, p. 88-95 (**Canvas pdf**)  
 Narciso G. Menocal, "An Overriding Passion—The Quest for a National Identity in Painting," p. 197-219 (**Canvas pdf**)  
*Gale Cuba* entry: "Visual Arts: Republican Period" (**online**)  
 Oct 1 Vernacular Avant-Garde in Cuba during the 1940s and 1950s  
 Read: *Gale Cuba* entries: "Mario Carreño", "*La gitana tropical* (Víctor Manuel)", "*El triunfo de la rumba* (Eduardo Abela)", "*El rapto de las mulatas* (Carlos Enríquez)", "*Gallo amarillo* (Mariano Rodríguez)", "The Art of René Portocarrero", "The Still-Lives of Amelia Peláez", "*El triunfo de la rumba* (Eduardo Abela)", "*La Jungla* and the Artistic Development of Wifredo Lam)" (**online**)

### **Week 7 The Cuban Revolution as Global Spectacle**

- Oct 6 Fulgencio Batista vs. Fidel Castro on the World Stage (1953-1961)  
 Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*, p. 95-121 (**online source**)  
*Gale Cuba* entries: "The Politics and Death of Eduardo Chibás"; "The Cuban Revolution of 1959"; "History Will Absolve Me (Fidel Castro)"  
 Lillian Guerra, *Visions of Power in Cuba*, Intro. & Chap. 1, p. 1-74 (**Canvas pdf**)  
 Oct 8: Photographing and Filming the Cuban Revolution:  
 Read: *Gale Cuba* entries: "Film: 1959-1989"; "Raúl Corrales: Photographer of the Revolution" (**online source**);  
 Carlos Espinosa Dominguez, "The Mammoth that Wouldn't Die" (**Blkd pdf**)  
 Films: Clips from *Historias de la revolución*, first episode (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1960); *I Am Cuba*, first and second episodes (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964)

**3-4 page paper analyzing avant-garde visual artwork from Cuba due in class**

### **Week 8 Filming the Cuban Revolution (Continued)**

- Oct 13: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and ICAIC Film Adaptation in 1960s Cuba  
 Read: *Gale Cuba* entries: "*Memories of Underdevelopment* (Tomas Gutiérrez Alea)"; "*Bay of Pigs Invasion: 1961*"; "*Cuban Missile Crisis*"  
 Film: *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Tomas Gutiérrez Alea, 1967)  
 Oct 15 Discussion and analysis of *I am Cuba* and *Memories*.  
 Read: Edmundo Desnoes, script of *Memories of Underdevelopment* and essays and interviews about the film (**Canvas pdf**)

**Week 9 Ernesto "Che" Guevara as World Icon**

Oct 20 Che Guevara and Photographic Immortality

Read *Gale Cuba* entries on "Guerrillero Heroico (Korda)," "Che Guevara and the New Man," "Che Guevara, Social and Political Thought" **(online)**

Ernesto Guevara, "Socialism and Man in Cuba" **(Canvas pdf)**

J.P. Spicer-Escalante, "From Korda's Guerrillero Heroico to Global Brand: Ernesto 'Che' Guevara" **(Canvas pdf)**;

Oct 22 Che's Iconic Persistence in Contemporary Film

Film: Clips from Soderbergh's *Che, Part 1*

**Scheduling of meetings to discuss term paper research topic during office hours**

**Week 10 1970s vs. 1980s: The Grey Period, Glasnost, and the 1980s Art Explosion**

Oct 27 Intellectual and Sexual Persecution in Cuba During the "Grey Years" (1970s)

Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook* skim 130-143, read 143-154; *Gale Cuba* Entries: "Sexuality: The UMAP Camps," "Peruvian Embassy, Mariel Boatlift"; "Sexuality: Gay and Lesbian Representation in Cuban Art, Film, and Literature" **(online)**

Film: *Improper Conduct (Conducta Impropia)*

Oct 29 New Cuban Art takes off in the 1980s

Read: *Gale Cuba* entries "Visual Arts: Revolutionary Period"; "La anunciación (Antonia Eiriz)," "Esculturas Rupestres and Other Works by Ana Mendieta" **(online)**

**3-4 page paper analyzing a scene from a film**

**Week 11 Cuba's Special Period on Film and Page (1991-2006)**

Nov 3 Viewing the "Special Period" from Without: Exile Filmmaker León Ichaso

Read: Ted Henken, *Cuba: A Global Handbook*, 154-188 **(Canvas pdf)**

*Gale Cuba* Entries: "Film: Cuban Cinema of the Diaspora"; "Economy: Special Period"; "Sexuality: Jinetera and the Special Period"; "Rafter Crisis: 1994" **(online)**  
César A. Salgado, "Re-viewing *Bitter Sugar* Twenty Years After" **(online)**

Film: Clips from *Bitter Sugar* (León Ichaso, 1996)

Nov 5 Viewing ruins from within: Poet and Writer Antonio José Ponte

Read: Selected stories by Antonio José Ponte, *Tales from the Cuban Empire* **(Coop)**  
Lucia M. Suárez, "Ruin Memory - Havana Beyond the Revolution" **(Canvas pdf)**

Film: Clips from *An Art of Making Ruins*

**Comment bibliography of five sources due in class**

**Week 12 On Cuban Special Period Film, Photography, and Performance Art**

Nov 10 Fernando Pérez as Documentarian: Film and Photography in the Special Period

Read: *Gale Cuba* entries: "Suite Habana (Fernando Pérez)"; "Film: 1989-2010" **(online)**  
Ana Dopico, "Picturing Havana" **(Canvas pdf)**

Film: Clips from *Suite Habana* (Fernando Pérez, 2003).

Nov 12 Post-Soviet Performance Art in Cuba: Tania Bruguera and Manuel Mendive

Read: *Gale Cuba* entries on "Visual Arts: Special Period"; "Visual Arts: "Performing

Arts: Performance Art "; "The Works of Tania Bruguera"; "Afro-Cuban Spirituality (Manuel Mendive)" (**online source**)

**Week 13 Afro-Cuban Art under the Cuban Revolution**

Nov 19 *Queloides*: Afro-Cuban Art and Racial Discrimination in the Special Period

Read: *Gale Cuba* entries: "Palo Monte and Ancestral Spirits: The Art of José Bedia"; "La sentencia (Belkis Ayón)"; "Dreaming of an Island (Maria Magdalena Campos Pons)" (**online**)

Alejandro de la Fuente, "*Queloides*: Race and Racism in Cuban Contemporary Art"; Odette Casamayor-Cisneros, "Elusive Faces: Representations of Blacks & Blackness in Contemporary Cuban Art" (**Canvas pdf**)

**Nov 21 On class presentations of outlines for final papers**

**Week 14 Cuban Art in US University Museums**

Nov 25 **Special meeting at the Blanton Museum of Art to see Cuban Holdings**

**First draft of research paper due.**

**Week 15 Virtual Cuba: Blogging and Censoring Dissent in the Internet**

Dec 1 The Words and the Fame of Yoani Sánchez and Orlando Pardo Laso

Read: Yoani Sánchez, *Havana Real* (selections to be assigned)

Dec 2 **Course evaluations. Draft with comments returned.**

**Final Paper Due** on Friday Dec. 11 during special evening screening of Alejandro Brugués' *Juan of the Dead* (2011), exact place and time to be announced.

**Grading Policy:** This course will be graded on the Plus/Minus system. There is no written final exam for this course. Late assignments will be deducted by half a grade for each day past the due date.

**Laptop and Electronics Use Policy:** Classroom Laptop use is for taking notes and consulting material, images, and related to this course only. Other Electronic Devices (Cell phone, Blackberry, I-Phone, etc.) must be turned off during class. Any use of these devices will lead to dismissal marked as an absence for that day. **Class attendance policy.** You are expected to attend every meeting unless you have a medical emergency. Total class attendance is calculated as 10% of your grade.

**Plagiarism:** There will be no tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Failure to submit properly original work for assignments could lead to dismissal from the course and worse. For UT policy about plagiarism consult [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint\\_plagiarism.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php).

**Religious Holidays** – Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day. **Students with Disabilities:** The instructors will make himself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations for students with a disability. These students may be required to provide documentation from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Service for Students with Disabilities(471-6259). **Emergency Evacuation Policy:** Occupants of buildings at the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. For more policy details see: <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

**University Lecture Series.** For details about the Spring 2015 University Lecture Series consult <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls>