

Memoria Histórica:
A Film Module for Intermediate Spanish

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The purpose of this project was to design a three-day film module for intermediate Spanish on the Argentine film, *The Official Story* (1985), directed by Luis Puenzo. This module was piloted in seven sections of Spanish 4, evaluated, revised and expanded. The expanded version (back of handout) will serve as the basis for a redesigned unit on historical memory, as well as a future conversation course with the same thematic focus.



THREE-DAY MODULE: STRUCTURE & OBJECTIVES

DAY 1: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Objectives

- to research a topic related to Argentina's Dirty War
- to work cooperatively to create a presentation of a previously researched topic

Homework prep for this class: Students research assigned topics

In class: students prepare and present topics in small groups, large-group timeline activity

DAY 2: WHOLE FILM

Objectives

- to describe main characters
- to ask questions about plot and/or particular scenes
- to identify scenes with emotional impact

Homework prep for this class: Students watch entire film, complete worksheet activities

In class: Class discussion centers on describing main characters and student questions

DAY 3: CLOSELY WATCHED CLIPS

Objectives

- to analyze the use of cinematic symbolism
- to observe and identify emotional responses and the utterances that trigger responses
- to listen to a narrative and identify verbs used in present, preterit and imperfect
- to analyze the way in which cinematic devices (music, lighting, camera angles, juxtaposition of scenes) construct meaning

Homework prep for this class: Students watch "Gaby's bedroom" and "Conversation between Ana & Alicia (Parts 1 & 2)", complete worksheet activities

In class: Centers on small- and large-group discussion of worksheet activities

EXPANDED MODULE: STRUCTURE & OBJECTIVES

DAY 4: CLOSELY WATCHED CLIPS

Objectives

- to analyze the way in which a cinematic device (close-up) constructs historical meaning
- to problematize cultural understandings of history
- to identify allusions to class
- to analyze ways in which classroom scene may function symbolically

Homework prep for this class: Students watch: "First Day of Class", "A History Lesson", complete worksheet activities

In class: Class discussion centers on worksheet activities

Day 5: SPANISH CIVIL WAR & HISTORICAL MEMORY LAW

Objectives

- to read a summary of the Spanish Civil War and plot events on a timeline
- to identify vocabulary items related to the topic
- to identify emotions and desires
- to analyze the way language can be used as a tool for social change

Homework prep for this class: Students watch documentary, *Graves of Memory*, and complete worksheet activities

In class: Students sort Articles of Historical Memory Law into categories and speculate on how each category might change Spanish society

Day 6: DISCUSSION OF CLOSELY WATCHED CLIPS

Objectives

- to analyze the way in which historical meanings are created using cinematic devices
- to identify allusions to class
- to examine the socially constructed nature of identity
- to analyze the way in which language and irony function to soften or escalate tensions

Homework prep for this class: Students watch clip "A Family Gathering" (Parts 1 & 2) and complete worksheet activities

In class: Class discussion centers on worksheet activities

Day 7: STUDENTS REPRESENT SELECTED SCENES

Objectives

- to rewrite a dialog and represent a scene
- to practice pronunciation and diction
- to use space, body language and movement in conjunction with language to create meaning

Homework prep for this class: Students rewrite dialogs from a selected scene to represent in class

In class: Students work in groups to stage their scenes