

## WLPO 3020: Special Topics in Portuguese Studies – Lisbon in Film and Culture

Time: to be determined  
Classroom: to be determined

**Summer 2023** (dates to be determined)  
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### Course Description

Across the centuries, Lisbon has been a source of inspiration for writers and film directors, as well as a place of conflict, passion, drama. This course will study films (Portuguese and foreign) and cultural artifacts that tell the story of the capital city of Portugal from the Middle Ages to the present, reflecting on the society and its peoples. The films, the companion readings, and the field trips encompass, among others, the following themes: the reconquest of Moorish Lisbon in the Middle Ages; Portuguese expansion and empire, and Lisbon as global city in the 15th and 16th centuries; Fado and its importance in the national identity; the path from monarchy to democracy, focusing mainly on the Carnation Revolution of 1974. We will discuss the city in the classroom and go out and about to explore sites that are the setting for the films under consideration. Taught in English.

### Teaching and Learning Methods

Lecture and discussion; visiting lectures by Lisbon writers and scholars; student presentation portfolios on particular topics; walking tours and visits to several museums, monuments, and sites of interest, including São Jorge Castle, Alfama, Baixa, Praça do Comércio, Bairro Alto, Belém, Sintra, etc. Class will meet in classroom three days a week, 2-hour sessions, for two weeks. Field trips will take place every day of the week (free weekends for exploration). Students will have two extra weeks after the end of the two-week program for research and presentation of their portfolios on a theme to be discussed with the instructor.

### Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate

- a general knowledge of major films (fictional, fact-based, or documentary), and other cultural production by Portuguese artists on Lisbon;
- an ability to critically analyze different styles of writing and filming;
- a general understanding of the history of Lisbon (and Portugal);
- an understanding of the relationship between historiography, culture, and national identity;
- ability to articulate how cinema both reflects and helps shape culture, society and history;
- a depth of understanding sufficient to explore the cultural landscape of Lisbon on their own.

FILMS – available (with English subtitles when necessary) on blackboard (ensemble) to students before the trip

- Series *Perfect Storms*, episode 1, *God's Wrath*, about the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon (Smithsonian Chanel, 2015). Focus on inquisition and Lisbon as a busy trading post. Potential guest speaker to teach class on Pombal's architectonic renovations in Lisbon after the earthquake. Available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qtXI3WVGVA>
- *Casanova Variations* (2014). The greatest seducer in History is here on the spotlight, in a movie that mixes cinema and opera. Old and alone, Casanova (John Malkovich) meets with please a visit from a friend, reminding him with sorrow and enthusiasm his time of glory and passions, revealing at the same time his fear of death. This Portuguese, French, Austrian and German co-production, based on Giacomo Casanova memoirs, casts some Portuguese actors and lyrical singers. Entirely shot in Portugal with scenes in the São Carlos Theatre, Queluz Palace and the library of Ajuda National Palace. DVD needed.
- *Night Train to Lisbon* (2013). An unexpected journey is the departure point to discover Lisbon. In this film from Billie August, based on Pascal Mercier's novel, Professor Raimund Gregorius (Jeremy Irons) acquires, in dramatic circumstances, a train ticket to the Portuguese capital. Along the intricate journey started by the book keeping the ticket, Raimund unveils its mysteries, meeting Portuguese people and several Lisbon places, like Belém pier, Prazeres cemetery or Santa Apolónia station. Available on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiDnb9\\_DUKY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiDnb9_DUKY)
- *Capitães de Abril* (2000). Indispensable film to gain a true appreciation and understanding of Lisbon's Carnation Revolution. Filmed in 2000, it explores the days leading up to this historical movement in the 1970s when a military coup, led by Captain Fernando José Salgueiro Maia, ended the dictatorship and transformed Portugal into a thriving democracy. DVD needed.
- *Lisbon Story* (1994). Director Wim Wenders has chosen Lisbon not only as a place for filming but also for the script. In this movie, a cinema director is filming a story about Lisbon, to which he makes his friend Winter in charge of sound. When the director disappears with an unfinished work, Winter keeps its development, in love with the city and a singer, Teresa Salgueiro. DVD needed.
- *Amália* (2008). Amália Rodrigues was a fado singing legend in Portugal, this movie essentially being her biopic. It is a firm cinematic favorite among the Portuguese, as it captures the life, love and struggles of one of the country's beloved diva of the fado. Born and raised in Lisbon, Amália was a pioneer in fado music – nicknamed the “Queen of Fado” – going on to sell over 30 million records during her life. DVD needed.
- *Os Gatos Não Têm Vertigens* (2014). Set in the picturesque Alfama district of Lisbon, the film documents an unlikely friendship that develops between a 73-year old woman named Rosa and an 18-year old boy named Job (Jo in Portuguese), touching upon a broad range of social and political issues relevant to contemporary Portugal. DVD needed.

COMPANION READER – includes the following excerpts/chapters:

- Buck, Paul. “Part One: Arrivals.” *Lisbon – A Cultural and Literary Companion*. Interlink Books, 2002, pp. 1-35.
- Kieling, Camila Garcia. “How do You Spell ‘Freedom’? Narratives about the 25 April 1974 Revolution in the Brazilian Press.” In *Comunicação e Sociedade*, vol. 34, 2018, pp. 367-388.
- Mukherjee, Poulami Aich. “‘Carnations, Captains and Communism’: Introspecting The Democratic Revolution Of Portugal 1974.” In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 75, 2014, pp. 1027-1039.
- Roberts, Alison. “Lisbon’s Top 20” and “Lisbon Today.” *Time Out – Lisbon*. Time Out Digital Ltd., 2015, pp. 10-21,
- Saramago, José. “At the Gates of Lisbon” and “They Say It’s a Good Thing.” 1990. *Journey to Portugal*, translated by Amanda Hopkinson and Nick Caistor. Harcourt, 2000, pp. 325-348.

#### POTENTIAL VISITS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Welcome lunch/dinner
- Cinema Tour (1 day, related to the overall theme of the syllabus):
  - Portuguese Cinematheque – Museum of Cinema
  - Lisbon Movie Tour (I’m not sure if this is still available, the isn’t much information online) <https://www.visitportugal.com/en/content/lisbon-movie-tour>
- Ancient Lisbon (2 days, after watching and discussing the documentary *God’s Wrath*):
  - São Jorge Castle
  - National Tile Museum
  - National Museum of Ancient Art
  - Lisbon Cathedral
- The Age of Discoveries and the Salazar regime (1 day trip to Belém, after discussion on the role of Portuguese in the maritime expansion):
  - Belém Tower
  - Jerónimos Monastery
  - The Discoveries Monument
  - Belém custard tarts café
- The Royal Life Tours (2-3 days, after watching *Casanova Variations*):
  - São Carlos National Theater (is it possible to visit or to have a guided tour?) and other theaters in the Baixa;
  - National Palace and Gardens of Queluz Park
  - National Palace of Pena, Sintra
  - National Palace of Ajuda

- Fado Lisbon (2 days, after watching and discussing the film *Amália*):
  - Fado Museum
  - Amália Rodrigues House-Museum
  - National Pantheon
  - Hop on hop off 28 Tram circuit of traditional neighborhoods (Alfama as setting for *Os Gatos Não Têm Vertigens*)
  - Lunch or dinner in a fado house with fado singing (is it possible to organize this?)
  
- The Carnation Revolution Lisbon (1 day, after watching and discussing the film *Capitães de Abril* and *Night Train to Lisbon*)
  - Organized tour with a guide explaining the main events and where they took place (is it possible to organize this?)
  
- Sites students can explore on their own, on weekends:
  - Prazeres Cemetery (is it open to the general public?)
  - Baixa-Chiado
  - Santa Apolónia Station (after watching *Lisbon Story*)
  - Museum Calouste Gulbenkian
  - Oceanário
  - Parque das Nações
  
- Farewell lunch/dinner

The order of visits can be altered to better accommodate ticket clusters or other logistics issues. Some visits can be added or dropped according to suggestions.

Can some of these museums and monuments be visited for free on the weekends or when booked in advance in the context of learning? Some websites mention free visits for teachers and a group of students.

Lisboa Card (is it worth it, does it include any of the museums we are planning to visit?)