

SPAN 985: FROM COMMODITY FORM TO RUBBLE: COLOMBIAN CULTURAL PRODUCTION AFTER AND BEFORE THE END

This seminar examines Colombian cultural production from 1989 to the present by asking what the country's most powerful explanatory categories have made visible and what they have kept from view. For decades, "drugs" and "violence" have served as the default keys to Colombia, both at home and in the global market for its images, stories, and suffering. The course treats these categories as historical mediations rather than self-evident truths. It reads literature, film, comics, visual art, theater, popular festivals, and music alongside the state's own speech: slogans, laws, and country-branding campaigns. Organized in four periods, the seminar moves from the commodity form that organized the drug economy of the 1990s, through the affective tautologies of violence during the years of state denial of the armed conflict, to the acoustic politics of memory and repair after the Victims' Law and the 2016 peace accord. It ends with the rubble of the present, from which recent artists and writers try to imagine possible futures.

Theoretically, the course starts from the notion of mediation (Jameson, Kornbluh, Williams, Martín-Barbero). It puts this notion in dialogue with the paradigms that shaped the humanities in each period: material culture, affect and psychoanalytic theories of enjoyment, sound studies, and theories of history, ruin, and speculative fabulation. These frameworks are read critically, as symptoms of their moment as much as tools for analysis. Primary works include films by Víctor Gaviria, Luis Ospina, and Federico Atehortúa; fiction by Fernando Vallejo, Rafael Chaparro Madieto, Juan Cárdenas, and Laura Ortiz Gómez; graphic memory projects from Montes de María and Urabá; and the festivals of San Martín and Riosucio. The course also takes up the archival experiments of Frente Cumbiero, Ondatrópica, and Los Guaqueros.