

Dissertation Defense: François Mulot

Wednesday, August 13, 2014

2:00pm

BFC/A Seminar Room

COMMITTEE

Dr. Eileen Julien, Chair

French & Italian

Dr. Oana Panăiță

French & Italian

Dr. Brett Bowles

French & Italian

Dr. Angela Pao

Comparative Literature



If you would like to attend,
please contact the
Graduate Secretary, Casey Green,
at 812-855-1088
or fritgs@indiana.edu.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

“A Journey That Never Ends” - Undocumented Workers and Asylum Seekers in Films by Costa-Gavras, Nicolas Klotz, and Fernand Melgar

“A Journey That Never Ends” - Undocumented Workers and Asylum Seekers in Films by Costa-Gavras, Nicolas Klotz, and Fernand Melgar intends to fill a gap in the analysis of political films created by French-language filmmakers. Only a few critics have treated this important subject, but their theoretical works consider broad issues and lack in-depth analyses of relevant artistic works, which have a quite limited distribution in Europe and are barely available in the US. These works representing undocumented migrants and asylum seekers are significant because they capture how the state is being undermined by ongoing privatization, evident in the use of private companies to run detention centers, and by the militarization of daily life. These films capture a moment in history—2004 to 2011—when in France and Switzerland all political parties were shifting to the Right and when the ideas of the National Front and the UDC had never been so popular.

Undocumented migrants and asylum seekers have often been ignored or represented as a threat to national security and prosperity. However, as my analyses of Costa-Gavras’ *Eden à l’ouest*, Klotz’s *La Blessure*, and Melgar’s *Vol spécial* document, films focusing on migrants have the potential to shape our understanding of the encampment of Europe and offer an important examination of issues such as the unrelenting tension between workers and *sans-papiers*, police brutality during border crossing, housing and living conditions of the *sans-papiers*—issues that French-speaking cinema has very seldom dared to tackle. In addition to analyzing and contextualizing these three films both formally and thematically, I examine their contributions to or departures from a sub-genre of contemporary French cinema that could be termed “cinéma mythologique.”

