

## **(PALAS 444) Human Rights and Cultural Representations**

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Universidad de Belgrano  
Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies  
Course Syllabus 2018-1

### **Course information**

**M-W** 14.30-16.00  
Instruction in English

### **Contact information**

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### **Course description**

The cultural and human responses to the violence of genocide politics in the Holocaust will serve as an excellent start point to analyze political repression in Latin America (focus on Guatemala, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile). Central to the theoretical and critical corpus of the course, is the multidisciplinary work of scholars (e.g. Soshana Feldman, Cathy Caruth, Dominick La Capra, Astrid Erll, Jean Amery, Giorgio Agamben). This course discusses not only the impact of trauma, the legacy of memory and the role of the national states during dictatorships in these countries, but also how to make these experiences productive to reconstruct selves and societies. The corpus includes literature, testimonies, documentary and feature film, art, oral history, journalism, poem and popular music by such authors as French-Jewish Claude Lanzmann, Chilean film director Patricio Guzmán, Guatemalan writer Rigoberta Menchú, Uruguayan poets Mario Benedetti and Mauricio Rosencof and songs by Argentine composers and interpreters Luis Alberto Spinetta and Charly García.

### **Course requirements**

Following UB policies, students need a minimum of 75% of attendance to be in good standing for the final exam. Sliding the ID card is the only way to track attendance. Students are expected to do close readings, participate significantly in class and do one oral presentation.

Requirements also include a mid- term and final in-class exams. The exams will have essay format and students will be allowed to use class material in order to answer exam questions.

Any student caught plagiarizing will be given a "no credit" for all courses taken during the semester.

## **Evaluation policy**

**Participation: 10%**  
**Oral Presentation (1): 20%**  
**Mid Term Exam: 30%**  
**Final Exam: 40%**

Mid-Term and Final Exams are in-class evaluations: students may use notes, bibliography, internet searches, etc. They will be required to write essay-like questions demonstrating their ability to think creatively and critically. No previous literary or theoretical preparation is needed, just the will and courage to feel, think and relate the literary and visual texts discussed in class.

The mid-term exam will consist on a three essays like answers. Students will be able to choose among several questions.

The final exam will consist on a 4/5 page report on a topic of student's choice (conclusions to be presented orally in class) and a two questions in-class exam.

### **Week1: March 5-7**

Course presentation. Characteristics, expectations and goals for the class.  
Introduction to some critical and theoretical issues on memory and testimony

*The Angel of History*, Walter Benjamin.

### **Week 2: March 12-14**

The frame of the testimony - On the concept of languages and representation.  
Primary source: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoa* (Fragment-projection in class)

Paul Celan's *Todesfuge* (Fugue of death)

*Images in Spite of all. Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, Georges Didier-Huberman. (Chapter 1)

*Unclaimed Experience, Trauma, Narrative and History*. "The wound and the voice" (1-9)

### **Week 3: March 19-21**

**Introducing Latin America: blood and fire**

**GENERAL INFORMATION ON DECLASSIFIED ARCHIVES. USEFUL  
THROUGHOUT THE COURSE**

<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>

A brief history of the dictatorships in the Southern Cone. Uruguay: 1972, Chile: 1973, Argentina: 1976

*The Pinochet File*, Peter Kornbluh. (complete pdf provided)  
*The Condor Years*, John Dinges ( up to page 41)

Chile: Patricio Guzmán, *The Battle of Chile* (documentary, 1972-1979. Fragments)

### **Week 4: March 26-28**

Chile

Testimonial reading: Testimonial source: Arce, Luz. *Inferno, a Story of Terror and Survival* (pp.3-129)

In-class exhibition and debate: Patricio Guzmán, *Chile the Obstinate Memory* (documentary, 1997)

Assigned Reading: *Framing Ruins: Patricio Guzman's Post-Dictatorial Documentaries*, Juan Carlos Rodríguez (pdf)

### **Week 5: April 2: National Holiday**

#### **April 4**

Testimonial source: Arce, Luz. *Inferno, a Story of Terror and Survival* (pp.129-155)

### **Week 6: April 9-11**

Assigned reading: *The importance of historical memory: an interview with Patricio Guzmán* (pdf)

Patricio Guzmán, *Nostalgia for the Light* (documentary, 2010)

### **Week 7: April 16-18**

Uruguay: brief historical introduction.  
The particularities of human rights politics in Uruguay.

*The Letters that never came*, Mauricio Rosencof

### **Week 9: April 30: no-classes**

**May 2:** review for final exam

### **Week 10: May 7-9**

#### **May 7: Mid Term Exam**

Guatemala: brief historical introduction  
Guatemala: Johnson, Eric. *Murder and Violence in Latin America*, Chapter 6, "Genocide and State Terrorism in Guatemala, 1954-1996" (151-173)

Documentary: *When the mountains Tremble* (1983)

### **Week 11: May 14-16**

Background material (watch at home, come prepared)

Audiovisual Material:

1.- The Secret Genocide Funded by the USA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQI5MCBWtoo&t=222s&index=7&list=PLXhuzKsXJ9OSv50WcdLtMKt8e8SIpuRII>

2.- A Right to Justice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJCoK-0uKh0&t=50s&list=PLXhuzKsXJ9OSv50WcdLtMKt8e8SIpuRII&index=4>

Assigned reading:

1.- Rigoberta Menchú: *I, Rigoberta Menchú, an Indian Woman in Guatemala*. (pp.11-184)

2.- Confronting witnessing: the Stoll-Menchú controversy:

*Rigoberta Menchú*, Arias and Stoll. PMLA 123-126 (2002)

### **Week 12: May 21-23**

Argentina: historical introduction to Civilian Military Dictatorship (1976-1983)  
Human Rights Violations and state policies.

Argentina: 1976-1983) Images of disaster/ An unimagined catastrophe  
The conditions of a testimony: Pablo Díaz, survivor of the Night of the Pencils,  
September 16, 1976 (La Noche de los Lápices)

Assigned readings

1.- Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A lexicon of terror: Argentina and the legacies of torture*. Introduction (3-20),

2.- *The Politics of Memory: the human rights movement and the construction of democracy in Argentina*. Elizabeth Jelín

3.- *Human Rights after the dictatorship: lessons from Argentina*. Martín Abregú

### **Week 13: May 28-30**

Assigned reading:

Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A lexicon of terror: Argentina and the legacies of torture*. Chapter 1 (21-72),

*The official story*. Movie by Luis Puenzo. Oscar Winner 1985

### **Week 14: June 4-6**

The legacies of terror, the blood of memory. HIJOS: sons and daughters of the disappeared.

(Re) constructing identity(ies)

Andrés Habbeger. *Daily life stories*. (Documentary, 2006)

Or

Nicolás Prividera, *M* (Documentary, 2007)

### **Week 15: June 11-13**

### **FINAL EXAM IN CLASS**

**Remember: "Students holding a student visa will not be allowed to take the final exam until they clear the hold".**

### **SIGNATURE OF FINAL GRADE SHEET IS MANDATORY**

#### **Literary Sources**

Arce, Luz. *Inferno: A Story of Terror and Survival in Chile*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2004

Benedetti, Mario. *Witness*. (Selected Poems). White Pine Press, 2012

Menchú, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Verso, 2010.

Partnoy, Alicia. *Little School, Tales of Disappearance and Survival*. Cleis Press, 1998.

Rosencof, Mauricio. *The Letters that Never Came*. Texas Tech University, 2014.

Strejilevich, Nora. *About Survival and Inventory*. In norastrejilevich.com  
Zurita, Raúl. Purgatorio/Purgatory,

## Theoretical and Critical Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Zone Books: 2002

Améry, Jean. *At the Mind's Limits. Contemplation by a survivor on Auschwitz and its realities*. Indiana University Press. 1980.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, narrative and History*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. "Introduction: The wound and the voice" (1-9). "Unclaimed Experience: trauma and the possibility of history" (10-24). "Literature and the enactment of memory" (25-56). "Traumatic departures: survival and history in Freud" (57-72)

----- . *Trauma. Explorations in memory*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. "Trauma an experience. Introduction" (3-12). "Recapturing the past: Introduction" (151-157). "Notes on trauma and community" (183-199). "The obscenity of understanding. An Evening with Claude Lanzmann" (200-220)

Dávila, Jerry. *Dictatorship in South America (Viewpoints / Puntos de Vista)*. Willey Blackwell: 2013. (on reserve)

Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Images in Spite of All, four photographs from Auschwitz*. The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Dinges, John. *The Condor Years: how Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents*. The New Press, 2005.

Evangelista, Liria. *Voices of the Survivors: Testimony, Mourning and Memory in Post-Dictatorship Argentina*. Garland Publishing, new York, 1998.

Felman, Shoshana. *Testimony. Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis and history*. Routledge, 1992. "An event without a witness: truth, testimony and survival" (75-92), "The return of the voice: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah" (204-283) (on reserve)

Friedlander, Saul. "Trauma, memory and transference". En *Holocaust Remembrance, the Shapes of Memory*. Geoffrey Hartman, editor. Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994.

Johnson, Eric. *Murder and Violence in Latin America*. Willey-Blackwell, 2013.

Halperín Donghi, Tulio. *The Contemporary History of Latin America (Latin America in Translation)*. Duke University Press: 1993.

Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File, a declassified dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*, The New Press, 2nd. Edition, 2013.

La Capra, Dominick. *History, theory and trauma. Representing the Holocaust*. Cornell University Press, 1994. "Introduction" (1-18), "Canon, texts and contexts" (19-42), "Reflections on the historian's debate" (43-68), "Historicizing the Holocaust" (69-110)

Lowenthal, David. *The past is a foreign country* Introduction (XV-XXVI), Capítulo 5

Peters, Edward. *Torture*. New York, Blackwell, 1985.

Ros, Ana. *The Post-dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production* [Hardcover]. Palgrave Mac Millan: 2012.

Santner, Eric. *Stranded Objects. Memory, Mourning and Film in Postwar Germany*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: the Making and Unmaking of the World*. Cambridge, Oxford University Press, 1985.

Stoll, David. *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. Westview Press, expanded edition: 2007.