

## **PALAS 444- Human Rights and Cultural Representations**

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Universidad de Belgrano  
Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies  
Course Syllabus 2019-1

### **Course information**

#### **M-W**

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 two essay- 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 an essay-like question in-class exam.

**Week1:**

**Wednesday March 6**

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

**Week 2:**

**Monday March 11**

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

**Wednesday March 13**

Cultural artifacts of the Shoa

Jean Amery, *At the mind's limits: contemplations by a survivor on Auschwitz and its realities*. "At the mind's limits" (1-20)

*Memory in Culture* Chapter 6 "Literature as a Medium of cultural Memory" (144-172)

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

**Week 3:**

**Monday March 18**

Introducing Latin America: blood and fire

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

**Wednesday March 20**

*The Pinochet File*, Peter Kornbluh. (pp.9-49)  
*The Condor Years*, John Dinges (pp. 16-41)

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

## **Week 4:**

### **Monday March 25**

Chile

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

### **Wednesday March 27**

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

Video source (in class folder): Castillo, Carmen *La flaca Alejandra*, (Documentary, 1994, *The thin Alejandra*)

## **Week 5:**

### **Monday April 1**

Patricio Guzmán, *Chile the Obstinate Memory* (documentary, 1997)

### **Wednesday April 3**

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

## **Week 6:**

### **Monday April 8**

Discussion on Patricio Guzmán's documentaries- Closing remarks for Chile

### **Wednesday April 10**

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)

## **Week 8:**

### **Monday April 15**

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

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

**Wednesday April 17**

Discussion: "Bridging the Gap Between two Genocides", in Feierstein, Daniel. *Genocide as a Social Practice, reorganizing society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas* (pp. 1-11)

Alicia Partnoy. *The Little School, Tales of Disappearance and Survival* (up to page 42)

**Week 8:**

**Monday April 22**

Review for mid-term exam

**Wednesday April 24**

<b>IN CLASS MID-TERM EXAM</b>
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**Week 9:**

**Monday April 29**

Feierstein, Daniel, "Reshaping Social Relations through Genocide", in *Genocide as a Social Practice, reorganizing society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas* (pp. 104-131)

Feierstein, Daniel, "Explaining Genocidal Social Practices in Argentina", in *Genocide as a Social Practice, reorganizing society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas* (pp.131-161)

**Wednesday May 1**

**No classes – National Holiday**

**Week 10:**

**Monday May 6**

Feierstein, Daniel, "Towards a periodization of Genocide in Argentina", in *Genocide as a Social Practice, reorganizing society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas* (pp161-186)

Jelín, Elizabeth. "The Politics of Memory. The Human Rights Movement and the construction of democracy in Argentina."

### **Wednesday May 8**

Feierstein, Daniel, "Concentration Camp logic", in *Genocide as a Social Practice, reorganizing society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas* (pp186-205)

Audiovisual fragment (in class): *Utopia Hunters (Cazadores de Utopías*, Documentary, David Blaustein, 1996)

Audiovisual fragment (in class): *Montoneros, a story (Montoneros, una historia*, Documentary, Andrés Di Tella, 1994)

### **Week 11:**

#### **Monday May 13**

Feierstein, Daniel, "In conclusion, the uses of memory", in *Genocide as a Social Practice, reorganizing society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas* (pp 205-215)

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

(Re) constructing identity(ies)

#### **Wednesday May 15**

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

### **Week 12**

#### **Monday May 20**

Delgado, Andrés. *Memory and Truth in Human Rights*. (2013). Chapter 1 (pp.9-30)

The Kirchner years. State Policy for Truth, Memory and Justice. Trials.

## **Wednesday May 22**

Argentina and the neoliberal wave: “negationism” and hardships for the Truth, Memory and Justice Policy.

<https://www.pressreader.com>

## **Week 13**

### **Monday May 27**

**Uruguay, historical context of the dictatorship (1972-1985) – Human Right policies of the Uruguayan State-Human Rights Movements.**

Audiovisual: watch at home the movie *La noche de 12 años* (Alvaro Blechner, 2018. Based on the memoir written by Mauricio Rosencof and Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, political prisoners). This is a MANDATORY activity. The movie SHOULD AND WILL be discussed in class.

### **Wednesday May 29**

Uruguay: Mauricio Rosencof, *The Letters that never came* (novel)

Jean Amery, *At the mind's limits: contemplations by a survivor on Auschwitz and its realities*. "Resentments" (62-81)

## **Week 14:**

### **Monday June 3**

In class review for final exam

### **Wednesday June 5**

In Class Final Exam

## **Week 15:**

### **Monday 10**

**In class presentations of final reports – Closing remarks on the course**

### **Wednesday 12**

**SIGNATURE OF FINAL GRADE SHEET—MANDATORY**

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

### **Literary Sources**

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

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

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

### **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.

Feierstein, Daniel. *Genocide as a Social Practice. Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and the Military Juntas*. Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 2014.



- 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.