* **International Human Rights: Latin America**
* Thursday: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. Spring Semester 2022
* **G10:1045**
* Location: King Juan Carlos Center

53 Washington Square South, 4W

Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

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**Course Summary:**

* In this graduate seminar, students will study international human rights standards, topical case studies in Latin America, popular resistance and social movements in the Latin American human rights movement, the role of media and representation in reporting and promoting human rights, educational initiatives for human rights, and the many choices society has after collective violence.
* **Course Description:**

Latin America presents a fascinating area for the study of contemporary human rights.  Many countries are still considered “emerging democracies” after years of oppressive military rule.  Although these countries have a history of violating a broad range of human rights, the last few decades have brought about substantial constitutional, legislative, and institutional changes. These changes include governmental support of human rights groups to investigate and report their findings and new legal guarantees promoting freedom for political rights and freedom of speech and press.

These past few decades have also stood out as a period of reckoning and bearing witness of past atrocities.  In the wake of serious violence, Latin America countries continue to struggle with issues of justice, reconciliation, truth, remembering, and healing.  This course will study the many different choices Latin American countries have after collective violence with a special emphasis in the role that media plays in documenting, remembering, provoking, and educating.  Here we will also initiate a discussion on the politics and strategies of representation because how human rights information is transmitted and received in print, visual media, and via the Internet is crucial

today.

The first two weeks of the course will establish some of the guiding principals for the study of human rights.  The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related United Nations covenants are key cornerstones.  At stake here is the difference between so-called universal rights versus local, cultural conceptions of rights.  We will also discuss the different conceptual frameworks of human rights as well as the different generations of rights with special emphasis on how national human rights become transnational cases. We will also study the repertoire of choices society makes in response to violence.

* From this point, the course moves into topical case studies.  Each section will have a two-week block where we focus on a particular area.  Generally, the first week will examine “what happened” and the second week will convey how the region remembers and tries to reconcile this memory.  Both weeks will cover strategies such as investigative journalism and human rights reports, oral history projects, tribunals and truth commissions, documentary film and photojournalism projects, transformative media arts and poetic witnessing projects, trans-media platforms and interactive webdocs, participatory media projects, media packaging for social transformation and human rights and peace education.
* The course is set up as a seminar with student groups leading the discussion and presenting related media projects.  Each student will be part of a small team responsible for a two-week block of their choosing. The following outline covers the common readings and main screenings. What the outline does not cover is the varied presentations by the students. This format allows students to help shape the content of the course and to present complimentary media projects not suggested in the syllabus.  Students also can choose to make a media project for their final.  Students in the past have made short films, documentary photo projects, human rights education platforms, podcasts and even poetic media arts projects.  These choices, including text-based final projects, will be discussed in class and students will be shown previous examples.
* **COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS:**
* **Jan. 27: Introduction to Human Rights in Latin America:**
* Workshop: A Perfect Summer Day

Handout: The CRC (UN Convention of the Rights of the Child)

* In-class screening: *From the Ikpeng Children to the World*. Video nas Aldeias
* **Feb 3: The Crystallization of Human Rights.**
* Handout: Lynette Holloway. “Young, Restless, and Homeless on the Piers.” The New York Times. July 18, 1998

Presentation of Human Rights Educational Platforms

<https://disappearingelephants.com/>

https://disappearingice.com/

<https://disappearingtrees.wixsite.com/project>

In class screening: *Aldeia Maracana*. 2015. Dario De Dominicis. <https://vimeo.com/44355660>

* **Feb 10: The Generative Themes of Human Rights.**

Martha Minow: 1998. *Between Vengeance & Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence.* Boston: Beacon Press.

* Workshop: *The Conceptual Themes of Human Rights*.
* Handout: *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,*
* Web Site: We will also view and discuss the web site: *The Peoples Decade for Human Rights Education*. <http://www.pdhre.org>

Website review: https://www.nakem-narratives.org/

* Screening: *The Facility*. Seth Wessler. 2021.

https://fieldofvision.org/the-facility

**Feb 17: Torture and Politics of Memory (Block 1)**

* Jacobo Timerman. 2002. (1981) *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
* Visual Presentation: Marcelo Brodsky’s *Buena Memoria* and the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo’s *The Identity Project*.
* Partial Screening: *La Hora de los Hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces)*. 1968. Dir. Fernando Solanas. Cinesur.

**Feb. 24: The Archives of Torture (Block 1)**

* Lawrence Weschler. 1990. *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers*. University of Chicago Press.
* Screening: *Brazil: A Report on Torture*. 1973. Haskel Wexler. Cinema Guild.

**March 3: State Violence in Central America (Block 2)**

* Mark Danner. 1994. *The Massacre at El Mozote*. Vintage Books.
* Screening: *Pictures From a Revolution: A Memoir of the Nicaraguan Conflict*. 1992. Dir. Susan Meiselas, Richard Rogers, & Alfred Guzzetti. Kino Video.
* **March 10:**  **Migration and Genocide (Block 2)**
* Oscar Martinez. 2014. *The Beast: Riding the rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail*. Verso.
* Screening: Granito: How to Nail a Dictator. 2011. Dir. By Pamela Yates. Skylight Pictures.

Website Review: <https://www.whoisdayanicristal.com/>

* **March 17: Spring Break**
* **March 24: Colombia & The Legacy of Kidnappings (Block 3)**
* Gabriel Garcia Marquez: *News of a Kidnapping*. 1996. New York: Penguin.

Screening: *Plan Colombia*. 2002. Dir: Gerard Ungerman. Cinema Libre Studios.

* **March 31: Colombia and Human Rights Violations (Block 3)**
* Garry Leech. *Beyond Bogota: Diary of a Drug War Journalist in Colombia*. 2009. Beacon Press.

Partial Screening: *The Two Escobars*. 2010. Dir. Jeff & Michael Zimbalist. ESPN 30 for 30.

* **April 7:**  **Chile and the battle for the Streets** **(Block 4)**
* Camilo Trumper. *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics and the Struggle for the Street in Chile*. 2016. University of California Press.
* Screening: *Chile Obstinate Memory*. 1997. Patricio Guzman. Kino.
* **April 14:**  **Memory and Chile. (Block 4)**
* Steve J. Stern. *Remembering Pinochet’s Chile*. Duke University Press.
* Screening: *Nostalgia for the Light*. 1997. Patricio Guzman. Icarus Films.
* **April 21:**  **Burning the Amazon. (Block 5)**
* Andrew Revkin. 1990. *The Burning Season: The Murder of Chico Mendes and the Fight for the Amazon Rain Forest.*  Island Press.
* **April 28: Environmental and Indigenous Rights in the Amazon. (Block 5)**

*The Amazon: What Everyone Needs to Know*. 2020. Mark Plotkin. Oxford University Press.

* **May 5: Truth, and Reconciliation** / **Final Papers/Projects Due**
* Screening: *State of Fear*. 2005. Dir by Pamela Yates. New Day Films.
* **Required Books:**

Martha Minow: 1998. *Between Vengeance & Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence.* Boston: Beacon Press.

* Jacobo Timerman. 2002. (1981) *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
* Lawrence Weschler. 1990. *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers*. U. Chicago Press.
* Mark Danner. 1994. *The Massacre at El Mozote*. Vintage Books.
* Oscar Martinez. 2014. *The Beast: Riding the rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail*. Verso.
* Gabriel Garcia Marquez: *News of a Kidnapping*. 1996. New York: Penguin.
* Garry Leech. *Beyond Bogota: Diary of a Drug War Journalist in Colombia*. 2009. Beacon.
* Camilo Trumper. *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics and the Struggle for the Street in Chile*. 2016. University of California Press.
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*The Amazon: What Everyone Needs to Know*. 2020. Mark Plotkin. Oxford University Press.

**COURSE ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS & EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

* At the end of the semester, there are several choices for a final project. In addition to a final assignment, students will participate in two **oral presentations** (of their choosing) in relation to the weekly themes. The course is set up with five thematic and regional two-week blocks (for example, the two weeks studying Colombia). Students will choose a two-week block and work with a small group to present the common reading, choose the in-class screenings, and facilitate the seminar discussion. Students may also make “parallel” presentations on related issues. For example, during the week when we study the legacy of torture in Argentina, if the team wants to make a report on the state of torture in Mexico, that is welcome, etc. Presenters should also type up a page or two about their presentation for the class. Handouts in the past have included additional information on related NGOs, scholarly references, or web sites where students might seek further information about the weekly theme.
* Besides the oral presentations, **regular attendance, preparation, informed and thoughtful participation, and engagement** will also strongly affect the evaluation of a student's overall performance. If you miss a class, I expect notification and a follow-up email with your thoughts on the week’s readings/screenings. Together the assignments and class participation will constitute the final grade. The assignments are as follows:

**Choice 1. Students can choose to write a final academic paper (15 pages) due the last week of class or May 13th at the latest.**  Students should run their ideas by me towards the end of the term (especially if one is having trouble choosing something to write about.) But in light of the course and the readings/screenings pertaining to Latin America, human rights and media, representational strategies, documentary ethics and practice, human rights and peace education, and participatory media, students should articulate their own question and write a critical paper accordingly.

* **Choice 2.** **Students can write an experimental paper (15 pages).** Here you should feel free to write with a great deal of subjectivity and from an experiential perspective. For example, you might think about writing a reflective journal about how your perspectives have changed and developed through this course experience. As a means of tying this into the class, you should use references from the readings or class activities or class media. You should also note how the process of writing has influenced your ideas and reflections. This is not a course assessment but rather an opportunity to integrate your own work with your class experience.
* **Choice 3. Students can create a media project.** Students in the past who chose not to write a term paper, have made short films, integrated text and images in StoryMaps, an original photographic portfolio, or designed a human rights educational website for their final project. Students may also team up with another student if the media project warrants more than one person. All media projects should be approved beforehand and each media piece should have an additional reflective text (5 - 7 pages) on the relation of the project to the class.
* For papers or projects that do not quite fit into these themes, you might want to make an appointment with me to discuss your ideas. (I will hold office hours at CLACS on late Thursday afternoons before our group session.) If you have several ideas, perhaps I can help you narrow down your choices. In human rights; research, reflecting, creating, producing, designing, and writing are all integral components for developing critical consciousness. So the papers/projects are a vital part to our learning process. But most of all, I hope the final projects can deepen your understanding of human rights and help you grow as an emerging scholar in Latin American studies.