

## Human Rights and Cultural Production in Argentina

### Course Description

This course analyzes the ways in which Human Rights and cultural production intertwine in Argentina

Since the last military dictatorship (1976-1983), not only have cultural productions engaged in the representation and problematization of issues of human rights, they have also been involved in the process of representing, memorializing, and working through the most obscure period in Argentina's recent history, helping to shape both our perception and our understanding of what happened.

While, on the one hand, pictures taken by the military inside the concentration camp known as ESMA made their way out and ended up exhibited in Art Galleries, on the other hand, testimonies given by survivors performing at a play helped change laws barring them from testifying at the trial. Thus, we don't consider works of art and other cultural products as merely representing or reporting human rights violations but rather as an active part in the social process of dealing with the trauma.

The course examines theoretical concepts and problems, historical facts, and cultural manifestations, in photographs, poems, collages, theatre, films, paintings, and performances in Argentina from 1960s to our present and encompass the dictatorship and its aftermaths, issues of social and economic inequalities, poverty, immigration, race, gender, and other areas where human rights are or need to be protected.

Our goal is to inform students on the facts but also to provoke discussions and reflection on how cultural production has been crucial in raising awareness and helping advance past and present fights for human rights protection.

**Reading Material:** All required readings are available to students electronically on the Campus Virtual.

Course Requirements:

- (1) Knowledgeable, constructive and active participation in class discussions (30%). For each meeting, you are expected to have read the assigned text carefully and to be ready to discuss it. Always bring the assigned text to class.
- (2) Midterm examination. It consists of 10 multiple-choice questions that require a succinct justification (30%).

- (3) Final term examination. A short in-class argumentative essay on a problem topic assigned at the moment of the exam. (40%)

**Academic Integrity Policy:** Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

We will hold you responsible for understanding this, so if you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, or what it means to turn in an exam that is entirely your own work, you should talk to either of us in advance. Plagiarism (or similar academic dishonesty) is a grave offense, and it shall be treated accordingly. The presentation of another person's work as one's own will be reported to the university administration.

**Attendance policy:** Class attendance is mandatory. Students must attend at least 80% of classes and academic visits related to the course. Students are allowed only three (3) absences and one (1) late arrival to class (subsequent late arrivals count as absences). Visits are an integral part of the program, therefore not attending or arriving late to a visit will be treated in the same way as an absence or late arrival to class. If students miss class for a medical reason, they must present a medical waiver in order for the class to be counted as an excused absence. Medical waivers will only be valid if they are issued on letterhead, include the doctor's signature and stamp, are issued immediately before or on the date of the absence and indicate diagnosis and indicated treatment. Please note, when students miss a class they are still responsible for the material covered. It is their responsibility to ask a classmate for class notes and then, after reading them over, see the professor in a timely manner with any questions on the material.

## Class Schedule and Readings

### WEEK 1

#### Lecture 1: The Politics of Aesthetics

Theoretical introduction to the problems that organize the course: how do the Aesthetic Regime and the Political Regime intersect? What are the effects –if any– of that intersection both in the aesthetic and in the political spheres? What are the specificities of this intersection in Argentina?

#### Readings

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Argentine Writer and tradition". *Lectures*. P.420-427.

Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More*. "Introduction: Chebella Noce!". The MIT Press. 2006.

Ranciere, Jacques. "Politicized Art". *Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*. Continuum. 2011.

#### Lecture 2: Argentina Cultural History from the Rise of Peronism to 2001 Crisis

An examination of the cultural processes from 1945 to 2001 including forms of cultural production from the State, Unions, political parties and social movements.

#### Readings

Artinian, Juan Pablo. *Imagining Argentina: Politics, Protest and the Cultural Politics of Representation 1950-1966*. Ph.D diss., Stony Brook University, 2013. Chapter 4-5.

James, Daniel. *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Chapter 1

Nouzeilles Gabriela and Graciela Montaldo (editors). *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002. Pp. 377- 386 and 399-420.

### WEEK 2

#### Lecture 3: Dictatorship and its Aftermaths I.

Problems and possibilities of portraying the disappeared. Going back to the (affective) archives. Building collective memory.

## Works

Brodsky, Marcelo "Fernando en la ESMA I" 1979.

Photography. <http://marcelobrodsky.com/good-memory-4-nando-my-brother/?lang=en>

Brodsky, Marcelo "La clase" [The Class] 1996.

Photography. <http://marcelobrodsky.com/good-memory-1-the-classmates/?lang=en>

Germano, Gustavo "Ausencias Argentina" [Absences Argentina] 2006. Photo-Essay.

<http://www.gustavogermano.com/gallery/ausencias/>

Perlongher, Nestor. Poem "Corpses". Montaldo, Graciela and Gabriela Nouzeilles (eds.). *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002.

## Readings

Bell, Vicky. "On Fernando's Photograph: The Biopolitics of *Aparición* in Contemporary Argentina". *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27(4), pp. 69-89.

Franco, Jean. "Introduction", "The ghostly Arts", and "Hypocrite Modernity". *Cruel Modernity*. Duke University Press, 2013.

Huyssen, Andreas. "The Mnemonic Art of Marcelo Brodsky." *Nexo: A Photographic Essay by Marcelo Brodsky*. Buenos Aires, La Marca Editora, 2001.

## Lecture 4: The cultural dimension of the Argentine military regime: repression and cultural resistance

From censorship to cultural resistance. The role of youth and its forms of representation. Rock Nacional. Lyrics, protest and resistance to authoritarianism.

## Readings

Manzano, Valeria. *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality from Perón to Videla*, UNC Press, 2014, pp. 221-248.

Vila, Fabio. "Rock Nacional and dictatorship in Argentina" in *Popular Music*, Volume 6, Issue 2, May 1987, pp. 129-148

## WEEK 3

### Lecture 5: Dictatorship and its Aftermaths II

An analysis of two works that directly impacted social knowledge of what happened during the dictatorship: a collage showing what newspapers were saying, and a playwhere a cast comprised by children of the disappeared share their personal stories with the aid of photos, letters, home movies and old clothes.

Taking into account that the playprompted changes in laws regulating the trials against the military, this class will also interrogate the role of art in building a sense of justice and in working through social trauma.

### **Works**

Arias, Lola. "Mi vida después" ["My Life After"], 2009.

<https://vimeo.com/channels/873480/61676885>

Ferrari, León. "Nosotros no sabíamos" ["We didn't know"]. Collage, 1976.

<http://www.leonferrari.com.ar/index.php?/series/nosotros-no-sabiamos>

### **Readings**

Taylor, Diana. "Trauma and Performance: Lessons from Latin America", PMLA, 2006, pages 1674-1677.

Taylor, Diana. "Acts of Transfer", *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Durham: Duke UP, 2003.

### **Lecture 6: Madres de Plaza de Mayo**

Resistance against the dictatorship. Gender and the role of women challenging the Junta. Nonviolent activism and memory.

### **Readings**

Kurtz, Lester, *The Mothers of the disappeared: Challenging the junta in Argentina (1977-1983)*, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, 2010.

Nouzeilles Gabriela and Graciela Montaldo (editors) *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002. Pp.429-447

[https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/kurtz\\_argentina.pdf](https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/kurtz_argentina.pdf)

Movie: *La Historia Oficial*, Luis Puenzo (1985)

## **WEEK 4: MIDTERM EXAM**

### **Lecture 7: Economic Inequalities, the burden of poverty.**

This class reflects on the promises and perils of the treatment of poverty in Argentinean art as a social reality that concedes to and reinforces external stereotyping demands.

## Works

Berni, Antonio. Series on Juanito Laguna and Ramona Montiel (1950s, 1960s, 1970s).

Bony, Oscar. “*La Familia Obrera*” [*The Working Class Family*], 1968. Performance.

León, Federico and Marcos Martínez. Dirs. *Estrellas*[Stars]. 2007.

Ospina, Luis. “Agarrando Pueblo” [*The Vampires of Poverty*], 1978.

## Readings

Gago, Veronica. “Introduction” and “Between the Workshop and the Villa: A Discussion about Neoliberalism.” *Neoliberalism from Below. Popular Pragmatics and Baroque Economies*. Duke University Press, 2017.

Goldgel- Carballo, Victor “The Reappropriation of Poverty and the Art of ‘Making Do’ in Contemporary Argentine Cultural Production”, *The Global South*, Volume 8, Number 1, Spring 2014, pp. 112-12

Harvey, David. “The Argentinian Collapse”. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2005. pp.104-112

Page, Joana. “Polytemporality in Argentine Science Fiction Film”. *Simultaneous Worlds*. 2015.

## Lecture 8: Social and Economic Inequalities

Overview of economic inequalities in Argentina between 1930 and 2004. Differences between rich and poor. The shantytowns and the living conditions of the poor. Health and Pollution in shanty towns.

## Readings

Alvaredo, Facundo. “The Rich in Argentina over the Twentieth Century, 1932-2004” in A.B Atkinson & T. Piketty (editors) *Top Incomes Global Perspective*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

Auyero, Javier and Débora Alejandra Swistun. *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentina Shantytown*, Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. 1-27

Svampa, Maristella. “Revising Argentina 2001-2013: From ‘¡Que se vayan todos!’ to the Peronist Decade” in Cara Levey, Daniel Ozarow & Christopher Wylde (editors), *Argentina since the 2001 Crisis, Recovering the Past, Reclaiming the Future*, London Palgrave Macmillan 2014.

## WEEK 5

### Lecture 9: Whose Rights? Social Inequalities, Immigration, and Racism in Adrián Caetano's *Bolivia*.

A reflection on the ties between human rights and notions of *Nation* and citizenship that, at this time of massive global migration, result in increasing amounts of unprotected, unrecognized, people, exposing the non-universality of the human rights.

#### Works

Caetano, Adrián Dir. *Bolivia*. 2001

#### Readings

Aguilar, Gonzalo. "Words That Wound: Discrimination in *Bolivia*". *Other Worlds. New Argentine Film*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Ranciere, Jacques. "Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 1 July 2004; 103 (2-3): 297–310.

Souza Santos "Toward a Multicultural Conception of Human Rights". *Lua Nova Revista de Cultura e Política*. 18(39):105-124. December 1996.

Sutton, Barbara. "Contesting Racism: Democratic Citizenship, Human Rights, and Antiracist Politics in Argentina". *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 35, no. 6, 2008, pp. 106–121

### Lecture 10: Race and Ethnicity

The ethnic question in Argentina. The legacy of the "Conquest of the desert" The invisibility of Afro-Argentines, the indigenous problematic and their representations. A white country and a descendant of Europeans?

#### Readings

Andermann, Jens, "Argentine Literature and the 'Conquest of the Desert', 1872-1896"  
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ibamuseum/texts/Andermann02.htm>

Grimson, Alejandro. *Ethnic (In)Visibility in Neoliberal Argentina*, September 25, 2007  
<https://nacla.org/article/ethnic-invisibility-neoliberal-argentina>

Karush, Matthew. "Blackness in Argentina: Jazz, Tango and Race Before Peron" in *Past Present*, no. 216 (Aug. 2012). Pp, 215-245.

## WEEK 6- FINAL EXAM