

Memories of repression and political violence in Latin America: struggles for meaning, truth and justice

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Course description

The aim of this interdisciplinary course is to present and discuss various approaches to the study of how different societal actors, in different historical, cultural and national settings and scenarios, construct meanings and narratives of their past political violence and inter-group conflicts. It sets the cultural and symbolic construction of diverse meanings and the subjective understandings in the context of quests for justice, truth and institutional changes in post-dictatorial periods. Besides some conceptual discussions, the course will deal with the recent experiences of Latin American societies (particularly in the Southern Cone), although including and extending analytical categories evolving in the study of other significant cases.

Assignments and evaluation:

Students are expected to come to class regularly, read the assigned readings, see the videos, and participate actively in class discussions.

Evaluation will be based on active class participation, one three-page book or film report, and a final paper (due on April 15).

Syllabus:

Week 1. Analytical dimensions in the study of memory of repression. Public and private memories.

Week 2. Testimony, subjectivity and the public sphere.

Week 3. State institutions, truth commissions and trials. National and local responses.

Week 4. Vehicles of memory. Commemorations, memorials, and expressive cultural products.

Week 5 (end of April). Review of students' essays.

Readings:

Week 1. Required:

- Huyssen, Andreas, 2000. Present pasts: Media, politics, amnesia. *Public Culture* 12(1): 21-38.
- Jelin, Elizabeth, 2003. *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*. Minn.: Univ. of Minnesota Press. Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Yerushalmi, Joseph, 1996. Postscript: Reflections on forgetting. In *Zakhor. Jewish history and Jewish memory*. Seattle and London, University of Washington Press.
- FILM: *Obstinate memory*, by Patricio Guzmán

Week 2. Required:

- Jelin, Elizabeth, *State Repression...* Chapters 5 and 6.
- Jelin, Elizabeth and Susana G. Kaufman, *Layers of memories: twenty years after in Argentina*. In Ashplant, T. G., G. Dawson and M. Roper (eds.), 2000. *The politics of war memory and commemoration*. London, Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative.
- Van Alphen, Ernst, 1999. Symptoms of discursivity: experience, memory, and trauma. In Bal, M., J. Crewe and L. Spitzer (eds.), *Acts of Memory. Cultural recall in the present*. Hanover, University Press of New England.
- FILM: *Montoneros, una historia*, by Andrés Di Tella

Week 3. Required:

- Peruvian Truth Commission Report. <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/>
- Jelin, Elizabeth, *State Repression...* Chapters 3 and 4.
- Stern, Steve, 1998. Introduction. *Beyond Enigma: An Agenda for Interpreting Shining Path and Peru, 1980-1995*. In Stern, Steve, ed., *Shining and other paths: war and society in Peru, 1980-1995*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Theidon, Kimberly, 2003. *Disarming the Subject: Remembering War and Imagining Citizenship in Peru*. *Cultural Critique*, N° 54.

Week 4. Required:

- Jelin, Elizabeth, 2003. *Contested memories of repression in the Southern Cone: Commemorations in a comparative perspective*. In Gready, Paul, ed., *Political Transition: Politics and Cultures*. London: Pluto Press.
- Langland, Victoria, 2003. *The house of memories at Praia de Flamengo 132: Student and national memories in Brazil, 1964-1980* (to be distributed).
- Portelli, Alessandro, 1997. *The battle of Valle Giulia. Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press. Chapter ten: The massacre at

Civitella Val di Chiana (Tuscany, June 29, 1944). Myth and Politics, Mourning and Common Sense.

• Sturken, Marita, 1997. Tangled memories. The Vietnam war, the AIDS epidemic, and the politics of remembering. Berkeley, University of California Press. Introduction and Chapter 2, The Wall and the Screen Memory: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Additional readings.

Week 1.

- Nora, Pierre, 1996. General Introduction: Between memory and history. In Pierre Nora (director), *Realms of memory: Rethinking the French past*. Vol. 1. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Winter, Jay, 1999. Setting the framework. In Winter, Jay and Sivan, Emmanuel (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 2.

- Brison, Susan J., 1999. Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self. In Bal, M., J. Crewe and L. Spitzer (eds.), *Acts of Memory. Cultural recall in the present*. Hanover, University Press of New England.
- LaCapra, Dominick, 2001. Writing history, writing trauma. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press. Conclusion. Writing (about)Trauma.
- Sommer, Doris, 1991, Rigoberta's Secrets. *Latin American Perspectives*, 70, vol. 18, núm 3.

Additional readings for French readers:

- Pollak, Michael and Nathalie Heinich, 1986. Le témoignage. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* N° 62/63.
- Pollak, Michael, 1986. La gestion de l'indicible. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* N° 62/63.

Week 3.

- Degregori, Carlos Iván, 1991. How Difficult it is to be God. Ideology and political violence in Sendero Luminoso. *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 11, n° 3.
- Minow, Martha, 1998. Between vengeance and forgiveness: facing history after genocide and mass violence. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Ross, Fiona C., 2003. The Construction of Voice and Identity in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Gready, Paul, ed., *Political Transition: Politics and Cultures*. London: Pluto Press.
- Theidon, Kimberly, 2001. Terror's Talk: Fieldwork and War. *Dialectical Anthropology* 26(1): 19-35.

Week 4.

- Van Alphen, Ernst, 1997. Caught by history. Holocaust effects in contemporary art, literature and theory. Stanford, Stanford University Press. Introduction.
- Yoneyama, Lisa, 1999. Hiroshima Traces. Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory. Berkeley: California University Press. Introduction and Epilogue.
- Young, James E., 2000. At Memory's Edge. After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture, New Haven-London: Yale University Press. Chapter When Stones Speak.

Additional readings for Spanish readers:

- Jelin, Elizabeth, ed., 2002. Las conmemoraciones: las disputas en las fechas "infelices". Madrid and Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
- Jelin, Elizabeth and Langland, Victoria, eds., 2003. Monumentos, memoriales y marcas territoriales. Madrid and Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.