

HIST 407/507
Fall 2013
Professor Carlos Aguirre

Human Rights and Memory in Latin America

Course Description

Between 1960 and 2000, various countries in Latin America experienced long-term political violence, military/authoritarian regimes, and massive human rights violations. State terror was systematically used in order to crush different types of social movements and insurrectionary groups that were trying to effect radical social change. Kidnapping, torture, imprisonment, exile, extrajudicial executions, and the disappearance of persons were among the most widely-used forms of state terror. The same period witnessed the emergence of revolutionary movements and the consolidation of the Cuban revolution, which became an inspiration for many individuals and movements seeking radical social change.

In the post-authoritarian era, a “battle for memory” has been taking place among various groups of civil society, political organizations, military institutions, and state agencies. Newly-established democratic governments attempted, with varying degrees of zeal, and under pressure from Human Rights organizations, to identify political and legal responsibilities for the atrocities of the recent past and sought to foster a culture of reconciliation. In order to accomplish such goals, a number of “Truth Commissions” were formed in various countries such as Argentina (1983-84), Chile (1990-91, 2003), Guatemala (1994-99), El Salvador (1992), and Peru (2001-03). These semi-independent bodies were in charge of investigating and revealing the “truth” about what had happened, but operated within both explicit and unspoken legal and political constraints. Their work and final reports became highly contested as different actors struggled to shape both historical memory and the political and legal processes of justice and reparation. At the same time, other efforts from civil society are trying to either contest or supplement these efforts: museums, memorials, artistic forms of expression, testimonials, documentaries, and many other forms of memorializing are used to give voice to different actors (victims, relatives, human rights activists, archivists, historians, and others) and decenter and complicate the memories of past atrocities.

This seminar will explore these multiple forms of memory building in Latin America during and after the Cold War period and will interrogate their context and effects in the midst of efforts towards the democratization of social relations and the dissemination of a culture of human rights in the region.

Readings

The following books will be available for purchase at the UO bookstore and on reserve at Knight Library:

Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

Jean Franco, *Cruel Modernity* (Duke University Press, 2013).

Steve Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile. On the Eve of London 1998* (Duke University Press, 2004).

Michael Casey, *Che's Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image* (Vintage, 2009).

Leigh Ann Payne, *Accounting for Violence: Marketing Memory in Latin America* (Duke University Press, 2011).

In addition, a number of articles and papers will be available electronically through Blackboard (<https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/>) or on reserve at Knight Library.

Course Requirements

Attendance is mandatory. More than one unjustified absence will result in a grade penalty. Participation is a central component of this course, so students must read all the materials assigned and come to class prepared to discuss them. A 15-20 research paper on a topic related to this course is required. A preliminary bibliography and abstract will be due on week 4. Final papers will be due during finals week. In addition, each student will be in charge of introducing the reading materials during one of the class meetings.

Grade breakdown

Attendance and participation: 20%

Oral presentation: 20%

Paper abstract: 10%

Final research paper: 50%

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1 (10/2) Introduction: Cold War, Revolution, State Terror, and Memory in Latin America

Week 2 (10/9) How Memory Works?

Readings:

Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

David Berliner, "The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78, 1, 2005.

Week 3 (10/16) No class meeting. Individual meetings with students to discuss research projects.

Week 4 (10/23) Violence, Cruelty, and Modernity. *Paper proposals and preliminary bibliography due.*

Reading:

Jean Franco, *Cruel Modernity* (Duke University Press, 2013).

Book discussion with Jean Franco, Browsing Room, 3:30 pm.

Week 5 (10/30) Archives and Memory: The Case of Guatemala

Readings:

Kirsten Weld, "Dignifying the Guerrillero, Not the Assassin: Rewriting a History of Criminal Subversion in Postwar Guatemala," *Radical History Review*, 113, spring 2012.

George Lovell, "The Archive that Never Was: State Terror and Historical Memory in Guatemala," *The Geographical Review*, 103, 2, 2013.

Elizabeth Oglesby, "Educating Citizens in Postwar Guatemala: Historical Memory, Genocide, and the Culture of Peace," *Radical History Review*, 97, winter 2007.

Anika Oettler, "Encounters with History: Dealing with the 'Present Past' in Guatemala," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 81, October 2006.

Greg Grandin, "Chronicles of a Guatemalan Genocide Foretold: Violence, Trauma, and the Limits of Historical Inquiry," *Nepantla*, 1, 2, 2000.

Documentary, *Keep Your Eyes on Guatemala*, by Gabriela Martínez

Week 6 (11/6) Truth Commissions: History, Memory, Politics, and Justice.

Readings:

Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-31, 72-85.

Greg Grandin, "The Instruction of Great Catastrophe: Truth Commissions, National History, and State Formation in Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala," *American Historical Review*, 110, 1, 2005.

Lisa J. Laplante and Kimberly Theidon, "Commissioning Truth, Constructing Silences. The Peruvian Truth Commission and the Other Truth of 'Terrorists,'" in *Mirrors of Justice*, Kamari Maxine Clarke and Mark Goodale, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Brian Loveman and Elizabeth Lira, "Truth, Justice, Reconciliation, and Impunity as Historical Themes: Chile, 1814-2006," *Radical History Review*, 97, winter 2007.

Emilo Crenzel, "Between the Voices of the State and the Human Rights Movement: *Never Again* and the Memories of the Disappeared in Argentina," *Journal of Social History*, 44, 4, summer 2011.

Week 7 (11/13) Battles for Memory in Post-Pinochet Chile

Reading:

Steve Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile. On the Eve of London 1998* (Duke University Press, 2004).

Week 8 (11/20) Peru: Conflicting Memories of the Dirty War

Readings:

Peruvian Truth Commission and Reconciliation, "General Conclusions" <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/conclusiones.php>

Wendy Coxshall, "From the Peruvian Reconciliation Commission to Ethnography: Narrative, Relatedness, and Silence" *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 28, 2, 2005.

Kimberly Theidon, "Disarming the Subject: Remembering War and Imagining Citizenship in Peru," *Cultural Critique*, 54, spring 2003.

Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru (CSRV) "The Truth about the 'Truth Commission'"

Cynthia Milton, "At the Edge of the Peruvian Truth Commission: Alternative Paths to Recounting the Past," *Radical History Review*, 98, spring 2007.

Deborah Poole and Isaías Rojas Perez, "Memories of Reconciliation: Photography and Memory in Postwar Peru," *e-misférica*, 7, 2, winter 2010.

Week 9 (11/27) Photography and revolutionary memory in Cuba

Reading:

Michael Casey, *Che's Afterlife. The Legacy of an Image* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009).

Documentary: *Kordavision*

Week 10 (12/4): The Marketing and Commodification of Memory

Reading:

Ksenija Bilbija and Leigh A. Payne, eds. *Accounting for Violence. Marketing Memory in Latin America* (Duke University Press, 2011).

Final Papers Due: December 13, 2013, 5 p.m.