Cultures and Contexts: Latin America

Class code  CORE-UA 9515-001

Instructor Details  Cecilia Palmeiro
cp77@nyu.edu

116570-3179
Office hours by appointment

Class Details  Cultures and Contexts: Latin America
Monday, Wednesday 3.30 - 5 pm
Borges

Prerequisites  None

Class Description  Over the last 50 years, millions of Latin Americans have experienced extraordinary shifts in their social, political, and cultural landscape, a result of the transformative effects of revolution or insurgency, state repression, popular resistance and social movements. To understand this experience, this course uses three strategies, focusing on (1) key dates, (2) keywords, and (3) primary sources.

By "key dates" we mean dates that mark a critical juncture in larger processes of social change, usually marking a consolidation of or turn from the dominant social forces of the time: elections, deaths of leaders, signing of new laws or treaties, the beginning or end of governments, social movements, and of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. For this class, we focus on events that had continental, hemispheric, and even global impact, including the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the military coups of the 1970s, and the Zapatista uprising in 1994. But by key dates, we also mean something more: our goal is not only to learn about the succession of events, but to capture the urgency and contingency of those moments. A historian might ask: "why did the Chilean military coup take place in 1973?" and offer an explanation of why events unfolded as they did. Drawing on a range of primary sources and cultural forms (film, music, art), we listen carefully to the voices of the major social actors of the time, in order to ask, "at the moment of the military coup in 1973, what was in the balance? What concert of competing hopes or fears were in play? And how did these shape the course of events?" Historian Greg Grandin helps us understand such moments as "simultaneously compressed and exploded moments of intense hope and dread—hope of release and liberation, and dread of either the coming of the new or the return of the old."
By "keywords" we use the rich meaning lent to the term by cultural theorist Raymond Williams. Keywords name concepts that are central to understanding a shared reality even though—or because—they have highly contested and at times mutually exclusive meanings. Imagine, for example, the contested meanings invested in the idea of “revolution” by the insurgents, the leaders, and different sectors of the population in Cuba in 1959. A dictionary definition of such a term would try to eliminate contradiction and ambivalence by laying out a hierarchy of distinct and accepted meanings. A keywords analysis would focus on exactly those competing, overlapping, and contradictory meanings in order to understand better what social relations and what struggles such contradiction may reveal. Where a dictionary cares about establishing consensus around what a term means, a keywords approach examines and understand that lack of consensus. Over the last 50 years Latin America has generated keywords with global impact that anchor the greatest of hopes, particularly Revolution, and also the most harrowing: desaparecido (disappeared).

In the class we overlay key dates with keywords, and draw on a range of primary sources to understand the realities they name. Our sources are drawn from a wide range of media: newsprint, television broadcasts, transcripts, testimony, essay, documentary and feature film, art, and music. We deliberately mix artistic representations with documentary evidence: one goal of the course is to understand how the arts—music, visual art, literature, film—do not just reflect the reality around them, but are themselves vital sites for shaping and changing that reality and our imagination of it, both then and now.

**Desired Outcomes**

At the end of the course, you will: (1) have familiarity with many of the key dates, political events, and social forces and actors that have shaped the course of Latin American history in the last 50 years; (2) will have read, heard, or watched the work of leading intellectuals, artists, and politicians whose decisions and actions were decisive in that history; and (3) will have a deeper understanding of how the legacies of those actions continue to inform Latin American reality today.

**Assessment Components**

You will receive a fuller explanation of each paper assignment at least 2 weeks before the due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Take home, essay</td>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Take home, essay</td>
<td>12/05</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation, participation</td>
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Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated
the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** Work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade conversion</th>
<th>100-93</th>
<th>92-90</th>
<th>89-87</th>
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<th>82-80</th>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>76-73</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>66-60</td>
<td>59-0</td>
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**Exams and Submission of work**

Final Exam dates cannot be changed under any circumstance.

Mid term exam dates will be scheduled with each professor and it must be before the break. Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorization, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

**Final essays must be submitted to the professor in print and electronic copy.** If the student is not in Buenos Aires, he / she must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FeDEX, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 - (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.
NYU’s Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a **strict policy regarding course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted.**

- Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 1% from the student’s final course grade.
- Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
- Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña **within one week** of your return to class.
- A doctor’s note excusing your absence is mandatory.

### The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam

- Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said examination via email to the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, María Pirovano Peña (mpp6@nyu.edu).
- Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your professors prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please contact the Assistant Director of Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña mpp6@nyu.edu.)
- If students have more than four unexcused absences, they will fail the course.
- Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. **Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.**
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

- **Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.**

**Late work should be submitted in person** to the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs **during office hours** (Mon – Fri, 9.30 am to 5 pm), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above. **Written work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.**

**Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.**

**Language Courses:** Work submitted within 2 days after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100-point scale. Written work submitted after 2 days after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**Please note** end of semester essays must be submitted on time.
Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is intimately related to the teaching and learning process. When writing research papers, you need to keep in mind that plagiarism includes the use of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It also includes presenting and/or paraphrasing discourse or ideas from a published work (in print or on internet) without quotation marks and clear without acknowledgment of the original source.

For formatting in your papers, refer to MLA guidelines. On matters regarding academic integrity, refer to the section “Academic Standards and Discipline” in the College of Arts and Science Bulletin http://bulletin.cas.nyu.edu/page/academic.policies#STANDARDS and to “Statement on Academic Integrity” in NYU Expository Writing Program: Policies and Procedures: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/policies__procedures.html#statementacademicintegrity

All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.

It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

Required Text(s)

All texts, recordings, or other media listed below are required, unless otherwise noted. All will be found on your reading packet, and most are drawn from Duke University Press’s excellent “Latin America Readers” series, which are compilations of primary documents by or about key social actors in the history of the region. There are no books required for purchase, but if you are interested in the study of the region, you may want to own some of the books from which our readings are drawn. We are reading more than half of the following texts, so you may prefer to purchase them:


Some assignments are recordings, films, music or other media: these are required, and should be treated as seriously as any assigned texts. The duration of each film/video is listed below; please budget your time accordingly.

Films:

Memories of Underdevelopment. Dir. Tomás Alea. 1968. 97 minutes. [Cuba]

Before Night Falls. 2001. Dir. Julian Schnabel. 133 minutes. [Cuba]

Dzi Croquettes. Dirs. Issa, Tatiana, and Raphael Alvarez. 2009. 110 minutes. [Brazil]
Batalla de Chile, Dir. Patricio Guzmán. 1975, 1976. [Chile]
Part 1 La insurrección de la burguesía (The insurrection of the bourgeoisie). 96 minutes.
Part 2 El golpe de estado (The coup d'état). 88 minutes.

Las Madres: the mothers of the plaza de mayo, Dir. Lourdes Portillo. 1985. 64 minutes. [Argentina]

When the Mountains Tremble, Dir. Pamela Yates. 1983. 90 minutes. [Guatemala]

Maquilopolis: City of Factories, Dir. Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre. 2006. 70 minutes. [Tijuana/US-Mexico border]

Supplemental Texts(s)

Internet Research Guidelines

Additional Required Equipment
You are encouraged to bring your tablets and laptops to class.

Week 1 Introduction - Revolutionary time

Week 2 Empire and Revolution.
Readings:

9/1-9/3 Cuba Reader:
The United Fruit Company in Cuba / Oscar Zanetti 290–95
History Will Absolve Me / Fidel Castro
Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War / Ernesto “Che” Guevara 315–320
The Cuban Story in the New York Times / Herbert Matthews 326–332
Cuba and the Cold War Collection: http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/cuba/
Castro speaks to reporters a week after the revolution. (1 minute) http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/cuba/6203.shtml

Recommended:
National Archives – Cuba: The Battle of America 1960. (51:13)
Extraordinary news analysis from 1960 of the Cuban Revolution.
Inside the Revolution, Everything
Cuba Reader: The Literacy Campaign, 389–394

See at home: clips on the Literacy Campaign, and from Por Primera Vez

Week 3
Outside the Revolution, Nothing
Watch at home: Memories of Underdevelopment, dir. Tomás Alea
Cuba Reader: For an Imperfect Cinema / Julio Garcia Espinosa 458–465
Inconsolable Memories: A Cuban View of the Missile Crisis / Edmundo Desnoes 547–551
Watch at home: Before night falls, Dir. Julian Schnabel.
Reinaldo Arenas. "The parade begins"
Cuba reader: Reinaldo Arenas: Homosexuality, creativity, dissidence. pp. 406-411

Week 4
Readings:

9/15-9/17

Watch 15 minutes of Walt Disney’s Saludos Amigos

Tropicália. Brazil.

9/19 Paper 1 due

Week 5
From Tropicalism to Desbunde. Brazilian countercultural tradition.
Watch at home: Dzi Croquettes
Glauco Mattoso. "The saddest thing is that it's over", in My deep dark pain is love.
Tucumán is Burning/Argentina.

Readings:


Art under the paradigm of politics: Culture, intellectuals, and politics in the 1960s / Oscar Terán

Experiences 68: Message in the Di Tella / Roberto Jacoby

First national meeting on avant-garde art and Tucumán is burning: The work of art as product of the ethical consciousness-aesthetic consciousness relationship / Juan Pablo Renzi

Tucumán is burning: statement of the exhibition in Rosario / María Teresa Gramuglio, Nicolás Rosa, and others

At home, watch the film on Tucumán Arde in emisférica: http://hemisphericinstitute.org/journal/8.1/tucumanarde/index.html (22 minutes)

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**Week 6**


Watch at home: *Batalla de Chile*, Part 1

**Chile Reader:**

"I told myself I must find work, I cannot continue here" / interview with Elba Bravo, domestic service activist

Fundamental theoretical principles of the Socialist Party / The Chilean Socialist Party, 1933

The Movement for the Emancipation of Chilean Women (MEMCH) / interview with Elena Caffarena

A Mapuche land takeover / Peasants and landowners of Rucalán

"We take the factory" / Workers at the Yarur Cotton Mill

Watch:

Vanderbilt TV Archive, NBC Evening News for Friday, Aug 28, 1970 Duration: 02:40 http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=452877

Vanderbilt TV Archive, NBC Evening News for Sunday, Sep 06, 1970 Duration: 02:30 http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=453482

1973 Coup.

Watch at home: selections from *Batalla de Chile*, Part 2


The last September 11 / Ariel Dorfman --
I begin by invoking Walt Whitman / Pablo Neruda --
Last words transmitted by Radio Magallanes, September 11, 1973 / Salvador Allende --
The coup / Joan Jara --
An unfinished song / Joan Jara --
Estadio Chile / Victor Jara --
"We never saw him hesitate," September 28, 1973 / Beatriz Allende --

http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm

Watch at home: NBC Evening News for Tuesday, Sep 11, 1973
http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=472502

FRIDAY 10/3 AT HOME MIDTERM DUE

Week 7
Readings:

**Chile Reader:**
- Pinochet's caravan of death / Patricia Verdugo --
- Women and torture / The National Commission on Political Detention and Torture --
- Transnationalization of terror: Operation Condor / US Federal Bureau of Investigations --
- "I never looked for power" / Augusto Pinochet Ugarte --
- The Mapuche nation and the Chilean nation / Elicura Chihuailaf --
- "To never again live it, to never again deny it" / President Ricardo Lagos, The Valech report --

Rodolfo Walsh. "Open Letter to the Military Junta"
Argentina reader. Néstor Perlongher. "Corpses".

[Click and enter essay deadlines/work due]

[Click and enter co-curricular activities, etc.]

Week 8
Semester break
10/13-10/15

Week 9
Madres/ Argentina
10/20-22/10

Watch at home: Las Madres: the mothers of the plaza de mayo (dir. Lourdes Portillo, 1986)

Argentina Reader:
Artificial Respiration / Ricardo Piglia 421–428
22/10 Class replaced by conference “Perder la forma humana” by Ana Longoni

**Week 10**

1982 Genocide. Guatemala

Readings:
- Greg Grandin, *War by Other means*, “Five Hundred Years”

Watch at home:
- NBC Evening News for Friday, Apr 17, 1981
  Headline: Special Segment (Central America: The Next Act?)
  [http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=516268](http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=516268)
- Watch at home, selections from *When the Mountains Tremble* (Dir. Pamela Yates)

  Guatemala Reader, Part VI Intent to Destroy, 361–430
  Thunder in the City / Mario Payeras
  The San Francisco Massacre, July 1982 / Ricardo Falla
  We Cannot Confirm Nor Deny / United States Embassy
  Acts of Genocide / Commission for Historical Clarification
  Exodus / Víctor Montejo
  The Oil Lamp / Antonio L. Cota García
  We Are Civilians / Communities of the Population in Resistance of the Sierra
  Time to Get Up / Francisco Goldman

**FRIDAY 10/31 PAPER 2 DUE**

**Week 11**

1982 Genocide in Guatemala. War in Argentina


War
**Class replaced** by screening of *The exact shape of the islands* (2012). Dir. Edgardo Dieleke and D. Casabé. Tuesday 11/18 7 pm.

**Week 12**

Malvinas War. /Memory and Museum, Peru

Reading:
- Fogwill. *Malvinas requiem*
  El Museo Travesti (The Travesti Museum), by Guiseppe Campuzano
Putis is Peru, curated by José Pablo Baraybar (Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team, EPAF) with photography by Domingo Giribaldi and Marina García Burgos.

Yuyanapaq: to remember, video (14 mins)

Memory/ Nunca más.
Friday 14 make-up class replaced by talk on Human Rights and Memory, by activist Alba Rueda 11/11 at 7 pm.

Week 13
Readings:

11/17-11/19
- Mexico Reader:
  EZLN Demands at the Dialogue Table / Zapatista Army of National Liberation  638–645
  The Long Journey from Despair to Hope / Subcomandante Marcos  646–654
  A Tzotzil Chronicle / Marian Peres Tsu  655

Feminism as resistance

Week 14
Neoliberal borderlands.
Readings:

11/24 -11/26
11/24 National Holiday
- Documentary, Maquilopolis (selections)
  Gloria Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la mestiza" (99-113), "Del otro lado" (poem), in Borderlands/La Frontera

- Mexico Reader:
  The Border and Beyond, Introduction  687–88
  Plan of San Diego/Anonymous 689-91
  The Maquiladoras / William Langewiesche  698-707
  The New World Border / Guillermo Gómez-Peña  750–55

- Listen: Radio Free Pocha (Guillermo Gómez Peña)
  Explaining performance art to a nurse, 2000 (3:39)

1 – Border interrogation, 1985 (2:47)
2 – Green card exchange, 2001 (2:58)
3 – Conversation with a radical nativist, 2010 (4:24)

FRIDAY 11/28 PAPER 3 DUE

[Click and enter co-curricular activities, etc.]

### Week 15

FIREDAY 12/05 AT HOME FINAL DUE

12/1-12-3

2001-2002 CRISIS/ Argentina/ Conclusions and exam review

Field trip to Eloísa Cartonera.

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**Classroom Etiquette**

The use of Blackberrys, phones and IPods in class are forbidden

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

[Click here and enter information about required activities, whether organised by NYU or not.]

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

[Click here and enter information about suggested activities, societies, lectures, etc.]

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**Your Instructor**

Dr Cecilia Palmeiro specializes on contemporary Latin American cultural studies, with special attention to Argentinean and Brazilian literature and gender studies. Her main interests are critical theory, intellectual history and the relation between art and politics. She has published a range of articles on contemporary Argentinean and Brazilian literature and gender issues, and translated contemporary Brazilian literature into Spanish. She is the author of *Desbunde y felicidad. De la Cartonera a Perlongher* (2011) and she is currently working on a critical edition of Néstor Perlongher’s correspondence, *Política de amistad: Correspondencia reunida* (forthcoming).