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
classroom TBA

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.

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Take home, essay</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Paper 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Take home, essay</td>
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<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.

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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.

**Academic Accommodations:**

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website ([http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html](http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html)) for further information.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see **Study Away and Disability**.
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 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.
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.
- 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.

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

Plagiarism Policy

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.


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. Dir. 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’etat). 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
8/31-9/2

Week 2
Empire and Revolution.
Readings:
9/7-9/9
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.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBdv1PRLFA

**Inside the Revolution, Everything**

**Cuba Reader:** The Literacy Campaign, 389–394

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

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**Week 3**

Outside the Revolution, Nothing

9/14-9/16

Watch at home: *Memories of Underdevelopment*, dir. Tomás Alea

**Cuba Reader:** *For an Imperfect Cinema* / Julio García 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

9/19 PAPER 1 DUE

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**Week 4**


9/21-9/23


Watch 15 minutes of Walt Disney’s *Saludos Amigos*

Tropicália. Brazil.


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**Week 5**

From Tropicalism to Desbunde. Brazilian countercultural tradition.

9/28-9/30

Watch at home: *Dzi Croquettes*

Glaucio 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

Watch the film on Tucumán Arde in emisférica:


**Week 6**


10/5-10/7

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

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 --
FRIDAY 10/9 AT HOME MIDTERM DUE

**Week 7**
Semester break
10/12-10/14

[Click and enter essay deadlines/work due]

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

**Week 8**
10/19-10/21

19/10 class replaced by screening 9/29

### 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 --

**Week 9**
Desaparecido/ Argentina. Madres
10/26-10/28

Rodolfo Walsh. "Open Letter to the Military Junta"

### Argentina Reader:
- Néstor Perlongher. "Corpses".
- The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo / Hebe de Bonafini and Matilde Sanchez

Watch at home: The Official Story (dir. Luis Puenzo, 1985), available at:
http://vimeo.com/62472094

**Week 10**
1982 Genocide/ Guatemala
11/02-11/04

Ronald Regan, Address on Central America (April 27, 1983) (35:07)

http://millercenter.org/president/reagan/speeches/speech-5858


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

Watch at home, 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 Clarification
Roads to Revolution
Declaration of iximché
We Rose up

FRIDAY 11/06 PAPER 2 DUE

Week 11

1982 War/ Argentina
In class Screening of The exact shape of the islands (2012). Dir. Edgardo Dieleke and D. Casabé.

11/9-11/11

11/11 National Holiday replaced lecture talk by Martin Sivak (TBA)

Week 12

Memory and Museum, Peru. Shining Path/ Museo Travesti del Perú

11/16-11/18

Shining Path: Putis is Peru, curated by José Pablo Baraybar (Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team, EPAF) with photography by Domingo Giribaldi and Marina García Burgos.
http://hemi.nyu.edu/hemi/en/e72-putis-intro

Yuyanapaq: to remember, video (14 mins)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKfqZR0aMRs

http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/peru/shining-path.pdf

El Museo Travesti (The Travesti Museum), by Guiseppe Campuzano
https://hemi.nyu.edu/hemi/en/campuzano-presentation

PAPER 3 DUE FRIDAY 11/20

Week 13


11/23-11/25

David Harvey. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (introduction and "Uneven Geographic Developments: Mexico and Argentina")

11/23 Holiday

Documentary, *Maquilopolis*

- NAFTA and the War on drugs. From Zapatismo to Ayotzinapa

Greg Grandin. "This mass grave isn't the Mass Grave you have been looking for".

http://www.thenation.com/blog/190721/mass-grave-isnt-mass-grave-you-have-been-looking


- Christy Thornton. "White House silence on Mexico protests speaks volumes",


- Telesur: In depth coverage of the Disappearance of the 43 Students in Mexico

http://www.telesurtv.net/english/telesuragenda/Missing-Mexican-Students-20141014-0077.html

Francisco Goldman full coverage:

- "Crisis in Mexico: Who Is Really Responsible for the Missing Forty-three?" available at:


Week 14

2001-2002 CRISIS/ Argentina/ Conclusions and exam review

11/30 -12/02


Eloísa Cartonera.

Guest lecturer: Javier Barilaro, co-founder of Eloísa Cartonera
Week 15

Exam week

12/07-12/09

FRIDAY 12/09 AT HOME FINAL DUE

Classes replaced by conferences by Martín Sivak on Elections and on Bolivia (TBC)

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.]

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 editor of Néstor Perlongher’s correspondence, Política de amistad: Correspondencia reunida (2015).