Dictators and Dirty Wars in Latin America

“A dónde van los desaparecidos?”
“Where do the disappeared go?”
--Rubén Blades

HIST 3350.001
Fall 2018
Class Time: MW 3:30-4:45 IH 267
Office Hours: TBA

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Course Description

Latin America’s Cold War took a particularly brutal turn in the 1960s and 1970s, as states unleashed a wave of terror on its citizens. Armies, secret police and paramilitary groups murdered or “disappeared” hundreds of thousands of people between 1960 and the 1990s. This class will examine the rise of dictatorships and military regimes in twentieth century Latin America. We will discuss why democracies break-down, when and why states become violent, and how ordinary citizens respond. To answer these questions we will focus on five countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, and Argentina. We will look at the emergence of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, their use of torture and other counterinsurgency methods, and the U.S. role in the dirty wars that characterized this period. We will also spend quite a bit of time studying the societies from which these regimes emerged. We will look at the people who tacitly or overtly supported state violence as well as the ordinary men and women who struggled to safeguard human rights. Finally, we will look at how these nations transitioned to democracy and how they have reckoned with the violence of the past.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Demonstrate their comprehension of the historical processes that led to the rise of dictatorships and military regimes in Cold War era Latin America
- Demonstrate their ability to summarize and evaluate historical arguments
- Develop oral communication skills by participating in class conversations and leading the class in discussion
- Craft and support historical arguments using a variety of sources
- Compare and contrast historical approaches to the study of Latin America’s Dirty Wars.
Required Texts and Supplies

- Stephen Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America*
- Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden*
- Mark Danner, *Massacre of El Mozote*
- Jennifer Harbury, *Bridge of Courage*

Strongly recommended, but not required: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*

Assignments

- Daily Writings 25%
- Film Essay 15%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Research Paper 20%
- Final Exam 20%

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = 0-59

**Daily Writing:** This course asks you to engage with a variety of reading assignments, from primary sources to plays and monographs. Because this is a class that focuses on the Dirty Wars of the Cold War era and the human rights struggles that ensued, much of the material will be compelling and often emotionally difficult. To help you work through the readings as well as your reactions, you will write every day. We’ll begin class with short 10 minute writing assignments that help you process what you have read for class that day. You can always use your notes on these writing assignments. Make up writings will not be offered for tardiness or unexcused absences. I will drop the three lowest daily writing grades.

**Film Essay:** A short essay (4-5 pages) based on *The Official Story*. The specifics of the assignment will be handed out in class the week before the film showing.

**Exams:** There will be two essay exams for this class, a midterm and a final. The exam will consist of short and/or long essay questions.

**Research Paper:** Students will perform original research and write a 5 to 7 page research paper. More information will be handed out in class.
Class Schedule

Unit One: Introduction to the Cold War in Latin America

Aug. 27th  Introductions, A Short History of Cold War

Aug 29th  Democratic Expansion and Contraction  
*Reading*: Rabe, chps 1-3

Sept 3rd  No Class, Labor Day

Sept 5th  The Cuban Revolution and its Repercussions  
*Reading*: Rabe, Chps 4-5

Unit Two: Dirty War and Disappearances in Argentina

Sept 10th  Peron and Argentina’s Guerrilla Movement  
*Reading*: “Montoneros” and “Antirevolutionary Peronism” (BB)

Sept 12th  Rise of the Military: Formulating an Ideology of Repression  
Reading: “Armed Forces’ Decision to Assume”, Excerpt from The Flight and Testimony of General Heriberto Justo Auel (BB)

Sept 17th  Survival and Resistance  
Reading: Excerpts from *I Remember Julia* (BB)

Sept 19th  The Decline of the Regime  
Reading: Excerpt from *Revolutionizing Motherhood* (BB)

Sept 24th  Reconciliation  
Reading: Excerpt from Feitlowitz (BB)

Sept 26th  *The Official Story*  
Reading: “Children of the Dirty War” (BB)

Oct 1st  Finish *The Official Story*  
Reading: Jelin’s “Minefields of Memory” (BB) and Kaiser, “Outing Torturers in Post-Dictatorship Argentina” (BB)

Oct 3rd  Discussion

Unit Three: Pinochet’s Chile

Oct 8th  Allende and Pinochet

Oct 10th  Creating Order through Terror
Reading: Excerpt from Kornbluh (BB)

***Essay one is due in my office, Friday, October 12th, by 5 PM***

Oct 15th  Creating Order through Austerity: The Neoliberal Regime
Reading: Excerpt from A Nation of Enemies (BB)

Oct 17th  Opponents and Allies: Chilean Lives
Reading: Excerpt from Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile (BB)

Oct 22nd  Resisting Pinochet/Debate: National Security State
Reading: “Fear of the State”(BB), Start Dorfman Act 1

Oct 24th  Reckoning with the Past
Reading: Dorfman Acts II and III and the Afterward.

**Unit 4: Genocide in Guatemala**

Oct 29th  Exam One

Oct 31st  Guatemala Post 1954: The Guerrilla Option
Reading: Harbury, Part one

Nov 5th  Military Response
Reading: Harbury, Part two
Research Paper Proposal Due

Nov 7th  Society Responds
Reading: Rabe, Chp 7

Nov 12th  Path to Peace
Reading: Harbury, Part three

Nov 14th  How to Nail a Dictator
No reading: work on research papers
Unit 5: Impunity in El Salvador

Nov 19th  Workshop: Peer Review of Rough Drafts  
*Bring a hard copy of your rough draft*

Nov 21st  No Class, Thanksgiving

Nov 26th  Insurgency and Counterinsurgency  
Reading: Danner, Chps 1-3

Nov 28th  Societal Reactions  
Reading: Danner, Chps 4-6

***Research Paper Due, December 1st by 5 PM***

Dec 3rd  Peace through the Polls, Debating U.S. Intervention  
Reading: Danner, Chp 7-9

Dec 5th  Final Thoughts, Review  
*Reading: Dorfman’s, “The Last September 11th”*

***Final Exam Date: December 9th, 1:45-4:15***

Class Policies

Email Correspondence
I will use Blackboard to communicate announcements, changes and updates to the class. Blackboard is linked to your school email address (or whatever address you linked to your blackboard account). It is your responsibility to check your email and/or Blackboard for these updates.

Office Hours
I strongly encourage you to come visit me during my office hours. This is the time for you to seek extra help or further pursue a topic that interests you. Please feel free to come by my office hours on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. If you cannot make this time, email me to set up an appointment.
Classroom Conduct
One of the goals of this course is to help you develop their oral communication skills. In order to do this, it is absolutely essential that we all work to create a safe and respectful space in which people can craft arguments and debate ideas. It is necessary that we ground our opinions in evidence, either from the readings, from the lectures or from some other source related to the class. Undoubtedly, there will be disagreement, but so long as we respect differing opinions and refrain from personal attacks, these exchanges will both illuminate the past and help us develop our own interpretations of it.

Your everyday behavior also affects the classroom atmosphere. Arriving late, talking with your neighbors, using the internet, checking your cell phone and/or studying for other classes distracts both your peers and your instructor and will affect your participation grade. If you are caught engaging in any of these behaviors, I reserve the right to ask you to leave.

I discourage the use of laptops or tablets. You may use them only with advance permission, obtained during office hours. All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off at the beginning of class.

Late Work
Assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (e.g. if the assignment was due on Monday and you turn it in two days late, on Wednesday, the highest grade you can earn will be a B+).

If you find that you need an extension, you must request it at least two days before the assignment is due.

Academic Dishonesty
In this class, plagiarism is defined as taking somebody else’s work and words and passing them off as your own. In practice, this means copying more than three words from a source without using quotation marks or using information from a source without proper citation. As such, plagiarism is cheating. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and it will not be tolerated in this class. If you are caught plagiarizing you will automatically receive an F for the entire course.

Always cite your work. In this class, we will use Chicago style footnotes. All of the work (with the exception of the daily write-ups) that you submit must follow Chicago style citation formats. Essays that do not use the Chicago format will be penalized accordingly. We will discuss this in class, but more information on Chicago style and plagiarism can be found in the History Area Style Guide at http://cla.tamucc.edu/history/graduate.html

Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability
requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. *Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.* Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).