

**(PALAS 444) Human Rights & Cultural Representations Professor  
Alejandro Manara**

Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies

Universidad de Belgrano

syllabus 2024

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**Course Information**

T-TH 2:30-4.00 PM

Instruction in English

**Contact Information**

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**Course Description**

Through the study of visual culture, this course will provide an introduction to the values, ideologies and representations that have shaped the human rights discourse in Latin America since mid XX Century. The abuse of human rights has left its imprint on the culture of the region. We will examine the aspects which constitute human rights in Latin America in order to understand how political, social, economic and environmental forces have created a society where the systematic neglect of those rights has become the norm. The use of visual, oral and audio material will allow us to discover how human rights have been represented, challenged and negotiated at a popular and cultural level.

Eventually, we will realise how historical thinking can institute a valuable context for considering ethical issues in the past and present.

**Course Requirements**

Each class is based on a specific topic with associated mandatory readings which will be discussed weekly. The course is organized around the engagement and participation of the students and it is expected that they will have read all of the material before class. There will be class presentations, a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam.

**Grading Policy**

Participation: 30%

Oral presentation: 20%

Midterm exam 20%

Final exam: 30%

## Class schedule

### Week 1      March 5-7

**Introduction.** What are Human Rights?

Required readings:

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, Bartolomé de las Casas. Power in violence in the Conquest of America.

### Week 2      March 12-14

**The history of Human Rights in Latin America.** 1968 student protests in different countries. Paris & Mexico. Memorializing human rights victims: the Parque de la Memoria, the Monument of the victims of Tlateloco.

Required reading

The Tlatelolco massacre: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB99/>  
Ma Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolas Rosa: Tucuman is Burning

### Week 3      March 19-21

**Political and civic rights I.** Chile and human rights under Pinochet.

Film: Nostalgia of the Light, Patricio Guzman

Required readings:

*Nostalgia for the Light: A 'Documemory' and The Conflict between History and Memory* by Didem Durak.

Irma Muller, Marjorie Agosin, in *The Human tradition in Latin America* Paula

Thorrington Cronovitch, *Out of the Blackout and into the Light*

<https://journals.iai.spk-berlin.de/index.php/iberoamericana/article/view/385/69>,

### Week 4      March 26-28

**Political and civic rights II** THE CONDOR YEARS How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents, John Dinges (2004) Argentina and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo.

Required readings: Margaret E Burchianti, *Building Bridges of Memory*. State

Terrorism on Film: *Argentine Cinema during the First Years of Democracy (1983–1990)* Mario Ranalletti.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnTPJ6kmB0s&ab\\_channel=lachambreverte](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnTPJ6kmB0s&ab_channel=lachambreverte)

**Week 5 April 4**

**Human Rights and the kidnapping of children.**

*La historia oficial* (1985) film by Luis Puenzo.

Class Debate: Student feedback on the film. Students will share their notes & impressions about the film from the view point of all characters. The class will be divided into groups and students will take positions by standing on the feet of Alicia (main character), Roberto (husband), Gaby (daughter), Professor Benítez (at school), Ana (Alicia's close friend), and Sara (member of Madres de Plaza de Mayo)

**Week 6 April 9-11**

**Indigenous peoples and human rights I.** The Zapatistas in Mexico and the EZLN.

Required readings: Zapatista manifesto, The revolutionary law of women, Tijen Tunali, Zapatista Voice, Visibility and Vision, *Revista de Estudios Globales y Arte Contemporáneo* | Vol. 7 | Núm. 1 | 2020 Visual: Manu Chao, Clandestino

**Week 7 April 16-18 Indigenous peoples and human rights II**

*Los Herederos* by Eugenio Polgovsky, is a documentary about peasant children who work in the fields and the mountains of Mexico.

**Week 8 April 23 Midterm 25**

**Indigenous peoples and human rights III.** Genocide in Guatemala & El Salvador. Las Comadres. The Church and human rights.

Required readings:

Maria Teresa Tula, *Hear my testimony*, 1996.

Rigoberta Menchu, *I Rigoberta* (1983) Film: Salvador! Oliver Stone

**Week 9 April 30-May 2**

**Indigenous peoples and human rights IV.** Amerindian Rights.

Film: *The Embrace of the Serpent*, (2015) Ciro Guerra.

**Week 10 May 7-9 Environmental rights**

*Mujeres de la Mina* (2014) documentary by [Malena Bystrowicz](#) and [Loreley Unamuno](#).

Women and grassroots activism. Anti-mining resistance in the Andes Required readings:

Kate Jenkins, Unearthing Women's Anti-Mining Activism in the Andes: Pachamama and the "Mad Old Women" *Antipode* 47: 2 (2015)

[https://www.academia.edu/4856109/The\\_Inheritance\\_of\\_Resistance\\_Indigenous\\_Women\\_Leadership\\_in\\_Ecuador](https://www.academia.edu/4856109/The_Inheritance_of_Resistance_Indigenous_Women_Leadership_in_Ecuador)

**Week 11    May 14-16 Indigenous rights**

*The Pearl Button*: film by Patricio Guzman about the extermination of the Fuegian Indians

Required readings: Metaphors, Dreams, and History: Patricio Guzmán, Renate Sachse and Declan McGrath <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26891906>

**Week 12    May 21-23 Human rights and corporations** The maquiladoras

Required Readings William Langewiesche, Las Maquiladoras

<http://inside.sfuhs.org/dept/history/Mexicoreader/Chapter6/lamaquiladoras.pdf>

**Week 13    May 28-30 Gender and sexual rights.**

Required readings:

Catherine Grant. 'Becoming 'Arturo Ripstein'? On Collaboration and the 'Author Function' in the Transnational Film Adaptation of *El lugar sin límites*'. FILM: Arturo Ripstein (1978): *Place without limits*.

**Week 14    June 4-6 The rights of children**

Film The Devil's Mine, Richard Ladkani and Kief Davidson,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZlpBQh\\_0jc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZlpBQh_0jc), Required

readings:

<https://nacla.org/article/devil%27s-miner-film-kief-davidson-and-richard-ladkani>

**Week 15    June 11-13 Final exam**

**Note:** Students holding a tourist visa will NOT be allowed to take final exams, they have to go to the 17 Floor to clear the hold.

## Bibliography

- Barbara Sutton, Contesting Racism: Democratic Citizenship, Human Rights and Anti-Racist Policies in Argentina, *LAP*, 35:6 (Nov.2008) Prieto, Pequeno, Cominal, et al, Respect, Discrimination, Violence: Indigenous Women in Ecuador 1990-2007 in *Women's Activism in Latin America* (2010)
- Elizabeth Jelin, Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America, *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 1, 2007
- Paula Thorrrington Cronovitch, Out of the Blackout and into the Light <https://journals.iai.spk-berlin.de/index.php/iberoamericana/article/view/385/69> Katy Jenkins, Unearthing Women's Anti-Mining Activism in the Andes: Pachamama and the "Mad Old Women" *Antipode* 47: 2 (2015)
- Tijen Tunali, Zapatista Voice, Visibility and Vision, *Revista de Estudios Globales y Arte Contemporáneo* | Vol. 7 | Núm. 1 | 2020
- Margaret E Burchianti, Building Bridges of Memory, *History and Anthropology* 15 (2004)
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Ma Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolas Rosa, Tucuman is Burning, *The Argentina Reader*
- Zapatista manifesto and The revolutionary law of women, *The Mexico Reader*
- William Langewiesche, Las Maquiladoras, *The Mexico Reader*
- Irma Muller, Marjorie Agosin, in *The Human tradition in Latin America*

## Testimonies

- Rigoberta Menchu, *I Rigoberta* (1983)
- Maria Teresa Tula, *Hear my testimony* (1996)

## Films

- Nostalgia for the Light, Patricio Guzman (2010)
- Salvador! Oliver Stone (1986)
- Mbya: Tierra en rojo, Phillip Cox (2005)
- The Devil's Mine, Richard Ladkani and Kief Davidson (2005)
- The Embrace of the Serpent, Ciro Guerra, (2015).