

**LASP 396 – Topics in Latin American Studies:  
Human Rights in Latin America  
Spring 2014 - MWF 2:45-3:35**

**Dr. Ben Penglase**

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**Office hours:** Wed 4-5  
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**Course description:**

This course will examine human rights in Latin America from a multi-disciplinary perspective. It is organized around three themes. First, we will critically examine the concepts, discourses, and practices embedded in human rights. We will ask questions such as: what are human rights, and what institutions, procedures and organizations have been set up to protect human rights? Second, we will analyze why human rights abuses have occurred, the effects abuses have had, and how Latin Americans have responded. Third, we will examine human rights activism in several specific Latin American contexts. Case studies will focus on Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador and the U.S.-Mexico border. The goal of this class is for students to be able to critically examine both human rights abuses, and also the discourses and practices of human rights organizations. Throughout the class we will also see how policies and programs initiated in the United States have impacted human rights in Latin America.

**Course objectives:**

1. To examine why human rights abuses have occurred in Latin America and understand how Latin Americans have responded.
2. To explore the contexts within which international human rights developed as a legal and cultural concept, and as a transnational social movement in Latin America
3. To analyze the effects of human rights movements through the use of specific case studies

**Required readings:**

Edward Cleary, *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*

Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*

Victor Montejo, *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village* OR Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*

Victoria Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*

Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: the War on “Illegals” and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary.*

Additional articles (marked \*\* below) will be available on Sakai and on-line via Loyola's library

**Course requirements:** The requirements for this class include: participation in class discussions, three exams, and a final take-home essay. To ensure good participation, students must come to class having completed the assigned readings. Over the course of the semester I will also require occasional short reflection papers or pop quizzes on the readings. These assignments are to encourage reading and critical thinking about the class material, and will be one component of your participation grade. All assignments must be completed on the dates specified below, and late assignments will not be accepted.

**Grading** (out of 100 total possible points):

- class participation: 10 points
  - o may include occasional quizzes on the reading
- three exams: 20 points each (60 points total)
- one final exam: 30 points

**Grade scale:**

100-92: A	89-88: B+	79-78: C+	69-68: D+	59-0: F
91-90: A-	87-82: B	77-72: C	67-62: D	
	81-80: B-	71-70: C-	61-60: D-	

**Class etiquette:** Discussion and debate is encouraged, but please respect the opinions of others. Students must also be punctual for all class sessions. Arriving to class late or leaving early is disruptive and disrespectful to your fellow students. Laptop use is discouraged, and please be sure to turn off your cell phones. Texting in class is not permitted.

**Communication:** Class communication will occur via the course's Sakai website and via email sent to the student's official Loyola email address. Students are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis. Grades will not be disseminated over the phone or by email.

**Contacting me:** If you are having problems with the class, or want to discuss the class material, please come speak to me during my office hours. I am also available during other times, but you should email me to make sure that I'll be in my office.

**Academic integrity:** It is the student's responsibility to fully understand Loyola's policies on cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. Please read your Undergraduate Catalog on Academic Integrity, or see:

[www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml).

It is mandatory for professors to report any form of academic dishonesty to the Dean's Office. This will minimally result in a grade of 0 for the assignment, but could lead to failure of the entire course and possible expulsion from the university. It is expected that students will abide by the highest standards of academic integrity, and no forms of cheating will be tolerated.

## SPRING 2014: CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1: Introduction

Monday, January 13: introducing class

Wednesday, Jan 15: Mobilizing for Rights in Latin America

- Edward Cleary, "Introduction: A New Era of Human Rights Mobilization in Latin America," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*.

Friday, Jan 17: Philosophical Origins and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Lynn Hunt, "The Paradoxical Origin of Human Rights," in *Human Rights and Revolutions* \*\* (on Sakai)

### Week 2: Historicizing and Contextualizing Human Rights

Mon, Jan 20: no class (Dr. MLK day)

Wed, Jan 22: Latin American Human Rights Traditions

- Edward Cleary, "Chapter 1: Is there a Distinctive Tradition of Human Rights in Latin America?" in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*.

Fri, Jan 24: Latin American Rights Practices and Institutions

- Ellen Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Human Rights Law and Practice in Latin America," *International Organization* 54(3), June 2000: 633-659. \*\*
- recommended: Robert K. Goldman, "History and Action: The Inter-American Human Rights System," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31(4), November 2009. \*\*

### Week 3: Argentina's Dictatorship and Timerman's *Prisoner Without a Name*

Mon, Jan 27: the Cold War and National Security Doctrine

- start reading Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*.

Wed, Jan 29: Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in Argentina, Brazil and Chile

- continue reading Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*.

Fri, Jan 31: Argentina's Dictatorship and "State Terrorism"

- finish Timerman, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*.

### Week 4: Mobilizing against Torture

Mon, February 3: Attempting to Understand Pain and Torture

- Elaine Scarry, "excerpts from The Body in Pain," in *Violence in War and Peace*. \*\*
- Possible guest lecturer from Marjorie Kovler Center for torture survivors

Wed, Feb 5: Mobilizing against Torture

- Cleary, "Chapter 7: Torture," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*

## **Fri, Feb 7: FIRST EXAM**

### **Week 5: The Emergence of a Human Rights Network**

Mon, Feb 10: Transnational Networks and Liberation Theology

- Katheryn Sikkink, 1996. "The Emergence, Evolution and Effectiveness of the Latin American Human Rights Network," in *Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship and Society in Latin America*. \*\*
- recommended: Mark Engler, "Toward the 'Rights of the Poor': Human Rights in Liberation Theology," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 28(3): 2000:339-365. \*\*

Wed, Feb 12: no class (Dr. Penglase at a conference)

Fri, Feb 14: Chile as an Example

- Edward Cleary, 1997. "Chapter 1: Beginning of the Human Rights Era," in Cleary, *Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America*. \*\*
- film: excerpts from "Threads of Hope"

### **Week 6: Counter-insurgency in Guatemala and El Salvador: Montejo or Danner**

Mon, Feb 17: the Cold War and Counter-Insurgency in Central America

- start **either** Victor Montejo, *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village*
- **OR** Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*

Wed, Feb 19: Local Causes of Armed Conflict in El Salvador and Guatemala

- continue either Montejo, *Testimony* or Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*
- film: excerpts from "When Mountains Trembled" or "Maria's Story"

Fri, Feb 21: Experiencing Counter-Insurgency

- finish Montejo, *Testimony* or Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote*

### **Week 7: Challenging Violence: Women and Activism**

Mon, Feb 24: Growth of a Women's Rights Movement

- Edward Cleary, "Chapter 2: Women and Rights in Latin America," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*.
- film: excerpts from "Las Madres: the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo"

Wed, Feb 26: Women's Resistance to Violence in El Salvador and Guatemala

- Jennifer Schirmer, "The Seeking of Truth and the Gendering of Consciousness: The COMADRES of El Salvador and the CONAVIGUA Widows of Guatemala," In *Viva: Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*. \*\*

**Fri, Feb 28: SECOND EXAM**

**March 3-8: Spring break!**

### **Week 8: Legacies of Dictatorship and Mobilizing for Social Rights**

Mon, March 10: Impunity and Violent Policing

- Cleary, "Chapter 6: Policing," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*.

Wed, Mar 12: Police Violence in Democratic Brazil

- Teresa Caldeira, 2002. "The Paradox of Police Violence in Democratic Brazil," *Ethnography* 3(3): 235-263. \*\*

Fri, Mar 14: New Geographies of Violence in El Salvador

- Elana Zilberg, "Fools Banished from the Kingdom: Remapping Geographies of Gang Violence between the Americas." *American Quarterly*, 56(3): 759-779. \*\*

### **Week 9: Accountability and Truth-Telling: Sanford's *Buried Secrets***

Mon, Mar 17: Guatemala: Truth-Telling and "Peace" after Genocide?

- start: Victoria Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*, read Introduction (pages 13-20) and Chapter 1.

Wed, Mar 19: Terror and the Role of Exhumations

- continue Sanford, *Buried Secrets*, read Chapter 5
- film: excerpts from "Jesus Tecu Osório" or "Following Antigone"

Fri, Mar 21: Fighting Impunity, Creating Civil Society

- finish Sanford, *Buried Secrets*, read Chapters 8 and 9 (recommended: 10)

### **Week 10: Mobilizing for Social Justice in Transitional Societies: Children's Rights**

Mon, Mar 24: Mobilizing for Children's Rights

- Cleary, "Chapter 3: Life and Death on the Streets: from Street Children to Children at Risk," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*

Wed, Mar 26: Children and Youth in Brazil

- Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Daniel Hoffman, "Brazilian Apartheid: Street Kids and the Struggle for Urban Space," in *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics of Childhood*. \*\*
- recommended: Udi Butler, "Children's Participation in Brazil," *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 16(3):301-312. \*\*

**Fri, Mar 28: THIRD EXAM**

### **Week 11: Indigenous Rights**

Mon, Mar 31: Brazil and Indigenous-Ecologist Alliances

- Beth Conklin and Laura Graham, "The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics." *American Anthropologist*, 97(4), 1995: 695-710. \*\*
- film: excerpts from "Kayapó: Out of the Forest"

Wed, April 2: Resurgence of Indigenous Activism throughout the Americas

- Cleary, "Chapter 4: Indigenous Rights Resurgence," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*.

Fri, Apr 4: Maya Cultural Revival in Guatemala

- Abigail Adams, "Reviving our spirits: revelation, re-encuentro, and retroceso in post-peace accords Verapaz," in *Mayas in Postwar Guatemala* \*\*
- recommended: Kay Warren, "Reading History as Resistance," in *Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala* \*\*

### **Week 12: Struggling for Land**

Mon, Apr 7: Mobilizing for Land and Challenging Neoliberalism

- Cleary, "Chapter 5: The Landless," in *Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America*.

Wed, Apr 9: the Movimento Sem Terra (MST) in Brazil

- Mônica Dias Martins, "Learning to Participate: the MST Experience in Brazil," in *Promised Land: Competing Visions of Agrarian Reform* \*\*

Fri, Apr 11: Struggles over Land in Guatemala or El Salvador

- David Stoll, "Land Conflict and Memories of Violence," in *Human Rights in the Maya Region* \*\* OR
- Lisa Kowalchuk, "The Salvadoran Land Struggle in the 1990s: Cohesion, Commitment and Corruption," in *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society and Community in El Salvador* \*\*

## **Week 13: Naturalizing Violence at the U.S.-Mexico Border: Nevins' *Operation Gatekeeper***

Mon, Apr 14: Denaturalizing the U.S.-Mexico Boundary and Producing a Crisis

- Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond*, skim “Chapter 1: On Gate Keeping and Boundary Making,” read “Chapter 5: Producing the Crisis”

Wed, Apr 16: “Illegals” and Ideology

- Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper*, read “Chapter 6: The Ideological Roots of the Illegal”
- film: excerpts from “Crossing Arizona”

Fri, Apr 18: no class (Good Friday)

## **Week 14: Bringing it Home**

Mon, Apr 21: no class (Easter break)

Wed, Apr 23: the Border and the “Gatekeeper State”

- Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper*, read “Chapter 7: The Effects and Significance of the Bounding of the United States” (recommended: Chapter 8)

Fri, Apr 25: Mobilizing for Latin America Rights in the U.S.

- Sara Koopman, “Cutting through Topologies: Crossing Lines at the School of the Americas,” *Antipode* 40(5) 2008: 825-247, \*\*
- OR Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Genelle Gaudinez , Hector Lara, and Billie C. Ortiz, “‘There’s a Spirit that Transcends the Border:’ Faith, Ritual, and Postnational Protest at the U.S.-Mexico Border,” *Sociological Perspectives* 47 (2) 2004: 133-159. \*\*

**FINAL EXAM: due THURSDAY, MAY 1, by 1pm**