

INTD 498
Violence and Memory in Global Perspective

Professor Jacob Blanc
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Class time 8:30am-11:30am
Thursdays in Education Bldg 613

Office Hours: 11a-12p, Wednesday and Friday, Leacock 627
By appointment: <https://calendly.com/jacob-blanc/prof-blanc-office-hours>
Email me if these two slots do not work for your schedule.

Course outline

This class explores the histories and legacies of violence, using case studies from four different countries to try to make sense of the incomprehensible: how individuals and groups suffer violence (whether at the hands of a military dictatorship, an apartheid state, or a project of settler colonialism), the social and legal mechanisms for reckoning with violence, and the reverberations of violence at the realm of memory and commemoration. As such, the course will draw on theories and concepts that arose initially in relation to the study of the Holocaust, but which have in recent decades expanded and changed to help explain cases across the globe.

Our four case studies will be Argentina, South Africa, Cambodia, and Canada. We will take each case in turn, spending three weeks on each country, following a weekly progression around the themes of 1) Violence, 2) Justice, and 3) Memory. There will of course be much overlap between the three themes, but the goal is to understand how violence escalates initially, then how in the aftermath of violence a society confronts its recent past (e.g. truth commissions, criminal trials, state-led investigations), and then how the violence is remembered (or forgotten), including in art work, literature, museums, and public spaces. This class is global in scope, and it is also multidisciplinary—we shall work to understand how scholars across different fields have grappled with these questions, and we will highlight the work of scholars from each of the four countries.

Assessment

Final essay: 75%

- Proposal, due Feb 21, 5%
- Annotated bibliography and updated research question, due March 28, 5%
- Final paper, 65%

Seminar facilitation: 15%

Attendance and participation: 10%

A note on Engagement and Content

A lot of the content in the course will be difficult to talk about, and it can be very upsetting. We will look at examples of torture, murder, genocide, forced displacement, and abuse, including of children. To keep our discussions grounded in the material at hand—and to support each other throughout the semester—coming to class prepared is extremely important. As a 400-level

course, students are expected to engage deeply with all readings and with each other. Each week includes an average of three article-length readings, and especially because of the complex and unsettling nature of the course material, for us to appropriately and respectfully study questions of violence, it is paramount that students enter the classroom each week prepared and ready to engage.

Participation

The following criteria will be used to determine each student's participation grade: weekly attendance; evidence of appropriate preparation; respect for classmates; relevant and useful contributions to discussion; clear expression of ideas and arguments; quality of presentation/discussion questions; collaboration with others.

Of note: *participation does not only mean vocal participation*. Many students are naturally shier than others, and that is, of course, perfectly fine. This is especially true for a class like ours, which focuses on very difficult content. Participation for this course means *engagement*: so even if one does not vocally participate as much as other classmates, the requirement is still active engagement and it should be clear to the instructor that students are closely following conversation, taking notes, and remaining an active, even if quiet, member of the seminar. Participation in all forms is respected and encouraged.

Conversely, being distracted on laptops and phones, or otherwise keeping classmates from focusing on the seminar, will be interpreted as a sign of great disrespect, and will be graded accordingly.

Seminar Structure

Other than week 1 all seminars will take the same format.

1. Student facilitators will make a 10 to 15-minute presentation of their main takeaways from the week: what is the context and history for the week's readings, what were the major themes, what surprised you, what frustrated you, what are the larger implications of studying this particular case study/theme, etc. More information about student facilitations is given below.
2. The majority of the seminar will be devoted to discussion, based largely off the questions prepared by the facilitators, but also including other themes or ideas. Given the class size of our seminar, we may break into small groups to discuss these questions and then come back together for a larger conversation with the whole class.

Student Facilitators

This assessment requires that each student take one turn facilitating, or co-facilitating, seminar. Working in groups of 2 (or more or less, as necessary), students will be responsible for facilitating the discussions in seminar.

From a close reading of the assigned texts for that week, discussion leaders will craft a list of 5-8 guiding questions that illustrate the major themes or tensions within the readings. This will serve

as a jumping off point for the class discussion. This handout must be compiled as a word document (not an email) that includes:

1. the bullet-listed required readings
2. a short list (2-4) of general themes for the week
3. the guiding questions.

Student facilitators will post these questions to the discussion tab on MyCourses by 9pm three evening before seminar – for this class that means Monday night by 9pm.

During class, the discussion leaders will use their guiding questions to begin class discussion. Discussion leaders should be prepared to ask follow-up questions to further class discussion. Discussion leaders will be evaluated by the quality of their submitted questions and the quality of the discussion that they generate and oversee.

Additionally, students must, prior to the start of seminar, submit in the “Assignments” tab the following materials, all collated as a single pdf file:

- the handout that you had sent to the class;
- PowerPoint slides of the presentation they will give in class;
- Accompanying notes from each student’s reading.
 - o This can be an informal and does not need to be polished or structured. Here, the requirement is to show the notes taken and/or outline that you compiled while preparing your presentation and while mapping out how to facilitate seminar.
 - o This can take the form either of a word document, or if you take notes on longhand, then a photo/scan of the pages of your notes.
 - o *It is important that each student shows their notes for each of the assigned readings.* This is required to avoid situations where a group of three students split up the three readings, meaning that not everyone in the group has done all the assigned readings.
 - o There is no page limit (minimum or maximum) for these notes; rather, the goal is to show the thoroughness of your preparation, and to help students be diligent about notetaking.

Course Materials

All required readings (and most further readings) are posted as pdfs on myCourses. All readings are also available through the library as a course reserve, an e-book/article, or in hard copy.

Academic Integrity

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) / “L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et

des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Language

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.” (approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.) / “Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).”

Il me ferait plaisir de vous adresser en français par courriel ou en personne.

Course Overview

Week 1. January 4

Violence, Justice, and Memory

Minow, Martha (1998), *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press, chs 1-2

Hirsch, Marianne. 2008. “The Generation of Postmemory.” *Poetics Today* 29 (1): 103–28.

Dwyer, Philip. 2017. “Violence and Its Histories: Meanings, Methods, Problems.” *History and Theory* 56 (4): 7–22.

Week 2, January 11

Argentina I: Violence

Feitlowitz, Marguerite. 2011. *A Lexicon of Terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, intro and chapters 1 + 2, pp. 16-93.

Week 3, January 18

Argentina II: Justice

Paige Arthur, “How ‘Transitions’ Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 31:2 (2009), 321-367.

Sikkink, Kathryn. 2008. “From Pariah State to Global Protagonist: Argentina and the Struggle for International Human Rights.” *Latin American Politics and Society* 50 (1): 1–29.

Lessa, Francesca. "Against Impunity: The Condor Trial in Argentina," chapter 9, *The Condor Trials: Transnational Repression and Human Rights in South America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022, pp. 207-230.

Week 4, January 25
Argentina III: Memory

Strejilevich, Nora. "Beyond the Boundaries of Legal Justice: A Country Called Memory," in Marjorie Agosin, *Inhabiting Memory: Essays on Memory and Human Rights in the Americas*, San Antonio, TX: Wings Press, 2011, 174-182.

Stockwell, Jill. (2014). "The country that doesn't want to heal itself": The burden of history, affect and women's memories in post-dictatorial Argentina." *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 8(1), 30-44.

Taylor, Diana. "Performing Gender: Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo". In Taylor and Villegas eds, *Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality, and Theatricality in Latin/o America*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994, pp. 275-305.

Lessa, Francesca & Cara Levey. (2015). "From Blanket Impunity to Judicial Opening(s): H.I.J.O.S. and Memory Making in Postdictatorship Argentina (2005–2012). *Latin American Perspectives*, 42(3), 207-225.

Week 5, February 1
South Africa I: Violence

Etoke, Nathalie. 2019. *Melancholia Africana: The Indispensable Overcoming of the Black Condition*. (French original: 2010. *Melancholia africana : L'indispensable dépassement de la condition noire*. Paris: Éditions du Cygne.) pp. ix-14 (foreword, translator's note, author's introduction, and chapter 1)

Evans, Ivan. *Cultures of violence: Lynching and Racial Killing in South Africa and the American South*. Manchester University Press, 2013, ch 9: Racial Violence and the Legal System in South Africa," pp. 208-237.

Dlamini, Jacob. 2020. *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Intro + ch 1

Week 6, February 8
South Africa II: Justice

Dlamini, Jacob. 2016. "Apartheid Confessions." *Interventions* 18 (6): 772–85.

Posel, Deborah. 2008. "History as Confession: The Case of the South African Truth and

Reconciliation Commission.” *Public Culture* 20 (1): 119–41.

Oboe, Annalisa. 2007. “The TRC Women’s Hearings as Performance and Protest in the New South Africa.” *Research in African Literatures* 38 (3): 60–76.

Bevernage, Berber. 2010. “Writing the Past Out of the Present: History and the Politics of Time in Transitional Justice.” *History Workshop Journal* 69 (1): 111–31.

Week 7, February 15

South Africa III: Memory

Gobodo–Madikizela, Pumla. 2008. “Radical Forgiveness: Transforming Traumatic Memory Beyond Hannah Arendt.” In du Bois and du Bois-Pedain, *Justice and reconciliation in post-apartheid South*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 37–61.

Coombes, Annie E. 2003. *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*. Durham: Duke University Press, Ch 3 “District Six: The Archaeology of Memory,” 116-156.

Jolaosho, Omotayo. “Singing Politics: Freedom Songs and Collective Protest in Post-Apartheid South Africa.” *African Studies Review* 62, no. 2 (2019): 6–29.

Week 8, February 22

Cambodia I: Violence

Kiernan, Ben, “The Cambodian Genocide–1975–1979,” in Totten, Samuel, and William S Parsons. 2009. *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, ch 11, pp. 339-373.

Kalyanee E. Mam, “An Oral History of Family Life under the Khmer Rouge,” Genocide Studies Program Working Paper No. 10, Yale University.

Hinton, Alexander Laban. 1998. “Why Did You Kill?: The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (1): 93–122.

Week 9, Feb 29

Cambodia II: Justice

Doung, Virorth and Sophal Ear, 2010. “Transitional justice dilemma: The case of Cambodia.” *Peace and Conflict Review* (2009)

Hinton, Alexander Laban (2014) "Justice and Time at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal: In Memory of Vann Nath, Painter and S-21 Survivor," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*: Vol. 8: no. 2: 7-17.

Manning, Peter. "Governing memory: Justice, reconciliation and outreach at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia." *Memory Studies* 5, no. 2 (2012): 165-181.

**** Winter Reading Break: from March 4 to March 8 ****

Week 10, March 14
Cambodia III: Memory

Tyner, James A., Gabriela Brindis Alvarez, and Alex R. Colucci. "Memory and the everyday landscape of violence in post-genocide Cambodia." *Social & Cultural Geography* 13, no. 8 (2012): 853-871.

Hughes, Rachel. "The abject artefacts of memory: photographs from Cambodia's genocide." *Media, Culture & Society* 25, no. 1 (2003): 23-44.

Cooke, Paul, Katie Hodgkinson, and Peter Manning. 2022. "Changing the Story: Intergenerational Dialogue, Participatory Video and Perpetrator Memories in Cambodia." *Memory Studies*, 16(5), 1223-1239.

Week 11, March 21
Canada I: Violence

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC). 2015. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The History + The Legacy (pp. 41-236)

Other resources:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. *The Survivors Speak: A Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Wolfe, Patrick. 2006. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (4): 387-409.

Week 12, March 28
Canada II: Justice

TRCC. "Introduction" and "commission activities" (pp.1-40)

James, Matt. "A carnival of truth? Knowledge, ignorance and the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 2 (2012): 182-204.

Nagy, Rosemary. "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Genesis and Design." *Canadian Journal of Law and Society / La Revue Canadienne Droit Et Société* 29, no. 2 (2014): 199–217.

MacDonald, David B. 2020. "Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Assessing Context, Process, and Critiques." *Griffith Law Review* 29 (1): 150–74.

Week 13, April 4
Canada III: Memory

TRCC. "The Challenge of Reconciliation" (pp. 237-364)

Milton, Cynthia E., and Anne-Marie Reynaud. "Archives, museums and sacred storage: Dealing with the afterlife of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 13, no. 3 (2019): 524-545.

Dean, Amber, and Angela Failler. 2021. "'An Amazing Gift'? Memory Entrepreneurship, Settler Colonialism and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights." *Memory Studies* 14 (2): 451–65.