

LLCU 301 (Fall 2026): FASCISM IN LATIN AMERICA: LITERATURE AND FILM

Professors Amanda Holmes and Cecily Raynor

Office: 680 Sherbrooke, offices 386 (AH) and 323 (CR)

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: amanda.holmes@mcgill.ca; cecily.raynor@mcgill.ca

Teaching Assistant: Hernán Rojas Rodríguez, hernan.rojas@mail.mcgill.ca

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

How do societies remember—and confront—the legacies of dictatorship, disappearance, censorship, and political violence? This interdisciplinary course explores how literature, film, art, testimony, and performance have shaped the ways Latin Americans understand authoritarianism, resistance, and its aftermath. Focusing primarily on Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, students encounter novels, short stories, documentary and feature films, and visual and performance art that grapple with repression, exile, memory, nationalism, trauma, and the struggle for democracy. We will consider how authoritarianism reaches beyond governments and institutions into families, schools, language, media, and everyday life, and how artists challenge official histories and create alternative ways of remembering the past. The course also examines the transnational dimensions of fascism and authoritarianism, from Cold War geopolitics and former Nazis in Latin America to contemporary right-wing populism and democratic crises. Through close analysis and discussion, students will ask how culture can confront violence, shape collective memory, and imagine different futures.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS AVAILABLE AT LE JAMES MCGILL BOOKSTORE

Resistance (2015), Julian Fuks

When My Body Ceased to be Your Home (2025), Emma Sepúlveda, Trans. Denise Kripper

All other readings are available on MyCourses as downloadable PDFs

For all the films, watching options have been indicated clearly

III. NOTE ON COURSE MATERIAL

Please note that several of the readings and films in this course deal with sensitive topics. Please contact the instructor if you would like more information about this.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation and class work	10%
Mid-term	25%
Creative Project	30%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>35%</u>
	100%

Students are expected to come prepared to class (having read all the primary and secondary readings assigned in the syllabus) and to **participate** actively in class discussions by both asking critical questions and responding to questions. In the spirit of participation, students are expected to arrive to class with one

prepared question for each reading covered that day. The participation grade will be based on the student's contribution to class discussions, measured not only by frequency but also by quality.

In the final **creative project**, students will work in groups to critically and creatively engage with themes from the course—such as authoritarianism, memory, censorship, disappearance, resistance, nationalism, or political violence—through a medium of their choice. Possible formats may include short films, podcasts, multimedia essays, visual art, digital projects, creative writing, zines, performances, or other experimental formats developed in consultation with the instructors. Projects must demonstrate substantial engagement with course materials, including films, literary texts, and theoretical readings. In addition to the creative component, students will submit a group critical reflection (4-5 pages) situating their project in relation to course concepts, documenting their individual roles in the project, and explaining their artistic and intellectual choices. Further guidelines and evaluation criteria will be provided during the semester.

The **mid-term exam** on **October 21st** will assess material from the first half of the semester. The **final exam** will assess material discussed throughout the semester.

****Assignments submitted late will incur a three-point deduction per day. ****

V. COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION—FASCISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Week 1. September 2 and 4

Readings:

- “In Defense of the Word” Eduardo Galeano (1977)
- “The Culture of Terror” Eduardo Galeano (1989)

ARGENTINA

Week 2. September 9 and 11

Readings:

- Film: *The Official Story/La historia oficial* (Luis Puenzo, 1984)
- *Abuelas: Grandmothers on a Mission* (Noemi Weis, 2025)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSsyoHUwSac>
- Spahr, Adriana. “Chapter 5 Growing Up in Pain: Children of the Victims of the Argentinean Dictatorship.” *Testimony and Trauma*. Brill, 2019, pp. 108-127.

Week 3. September 16 and 18

Readings:

- Film: *The Secret in Their Eyes/El secreto de sus ojos* (Juan José Campanella, 2009)
- Short Story: Luisa Valenzuela “Change of Weapons”/“Cambio de armas” (1982)

Week 4. 23 and 25 de September

Readings:

- Film: *The German Doctor/Wakolda* (Lucía Puenzo, 2013)
- Hogan, Erin K. “Girls and Dolls: The Biopolitics of Gender and Race in Lucía Puenzo’s *Wakolda*.” *The Comparatist*, vol. 42, 2018, pp. 246–63.
- **Suggested reading:** Stahl, Daniel. *Hunt for Nazis: South America’s Dictatorships and the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes*. Routledge, 2025, pp. 19-48.

CHILE

Week 5. September 30 and October 2

Readings:

- Film: *La casa lobo* (Cristóbal León and Joaquín Cociña, 2018)
- Novel: *Literatura nazi en América* (Roberto Bolaño, 1996) (excerpts)

Week 6 and 7. October 7 and October 16

Readings:

- *When My Body Ceased to be Your Home* (Emma Sepúlveda, Trans. Denise Kripper, 2025), full novel, will be available as a PDF on MyCourses
- Translator Denise Kripper to speak to the class over Zoom from Buenos Aires

Week 8. October 21 and 23

Mid-term exam October 21

Readings:

- Film: *Machuca* (Andrés Wood, 2004)
- CADA group (performance art)
- Richard, Nelly. “Margins and Institutions: Performances of the Chilean Avanzada.” *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*. Routledge, 2000, pp. 203-218.

Week 9. October 28 and 30

Readings:

- Film: *No!* (Pablo Larraín, 2012)
- Burns, Mila. “Introduction.” *Dictatorship across Borders: Brazil, Chile, and the South American Cold War*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2025, pp.1-14.

BRAZIL

Week 10. November 4 and 6

Readings:

- Film: *I’m Still Here (Ainda Estou Aqui)*, 2025; Dir. Walter Salles)
- Iecker de Almeida, Gisele. “Introduction: Exploring the Construction of Historical Representations of the Dictatorship in Brazil.” *From Dictatorship to Democracy: Confronting the Authoritarian Past in Brazil*. Liverpool UP, 2025.

Week 11. November 11 and 13

Readings:

- Novel: *Resistance (A resistência)*, Julian Fuks, 2015)

- Michael Lazzara, “The Memory Turn,” *New Approaches to Latin American Studies* (2018), 14-31.

Week 12. November 18 and 20

Readings:

- Film: *The Edge of Democracy* (2019), Dir. Petra Costa, **Available to watch on Netflix Canada**
- Lapper, Richard. “Introduction.” *Beef, Bible and Bullets: Brazil in the Age of Bolsonaro*. Manchester UP, 2021, pp. 1–18.
- Guest lecture on Bolsonaro’s authoritarian environmental politics in the Amazon region: McGill Ph.D. Candidate in Biology, Ana Catarina Avila Vitorino.

CONCLUSION

Week 13. November 25 and 27

Readings:

- *Landmarks/Nuestra tierra* (Lucrecia Martel, 2025) **Available for rent on YouTube:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzPmZGkbnqw>

Week 14. December 2 and 4

Student presentations of creative projects

VI. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Discussion is the essence of class time in this course. Through discussion, students will advance as critical thinkers and enhance their understanding of the texts and engaging with them under the guidance of the instructor. The more ideas the students bring to class, the more enriching the class discussions will be. Please keep in mind that some of the material we will be studying may touch on sensitive issues for some students. Students are expected to help foster a positive classroom environment for the benefit of all.

VII. COMPUTERS, TABLETS, PHONES

Students are permitted to use electronic devices during class for academic purposes related to the course subject (dictionaries, readings, notes). Tablets are less disruptive to discussion than computers. At times, the instructor may request a device-free discussion.

VIII. CLASSTIME

Students should make every effort to arrive to class on time as it is disruptive to enter a class that is already in session. Similarly, to avoid disruption to the class session, if students anticipate that they might need to leave early, please mention this to the instructor and sit close to the door to create the least commotion possible when you leave the room. Some students might have medical conditions that require them to leave the classroom during class to take medications, etc. Please self-identify to the instructor if you have a condition that will require this, as leaving class mid-session is also disruptive.

IX. ABSENCES

Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick, and to wear a mask to class if symptoms are mild but still present. Students should contact a classmate to find out what they miss in case of an absence. They should also send the instructor a quick email if they need to miss a class. Please note that extended absences

will impact the participation grade if they are not supported by a note from a medical professional. As per McGill regulations, if students accrue unexcused absences for more than 40% of the class sessions, they automatically fail the course.

X. ACADEMIC HONESTY

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).

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

XI. HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES AT MCGILL

Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; many [resources](#) are available on-campus, off-campus, and online.

XII. LANGUAGE POLICY

In accordance 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.

XIII. EXAMS

According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams. Please consult the Calendar, section 4.7.2.1, General University Information and Regulations at www.mcgill.ca.

XIV. SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS IN FRENCH

In accordance 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.

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).

XV. A NOTE ON STUDENT INCLUSION

As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Student Accessibility and Achievement (SAA), 514-398-6009.

****In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.**