Contemporary Perspectives on the Civil War and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain

Instructor Information
- Name: Dr. Lee Douglas
- Office hours: Wednesdays 4:00-4:30pm and by appointment
- Email address: lee.douglas@nyu.edu

Course Description
In 2000, Emilio Silva, a journalist from Madrid, spearheaded a local initiative in the town of Priaranza del Bierzo in León. In search of the body of his deceased grandfather, Silva’s quest resulted in the exhumation of a mass grave containing the remains of 12 individuals, all of whom had been killed by Francoist forces during the Spanish Civil War. Widely covered by local and national media, the exhumation in Priaranza became the starting point for a new, vibrant social movement, in which the children and the grandchildren of those who fell victim to 20th-century fascist violence would turn to forensic science as a mode of recovering and bringing into view evidence that would point to an alternative historical narrative that had long been silenced, both during the Franco dictatorship and the democratic transition that followed it. The resulting Movement for the Recovery of Historical Memory is a dynamic, heterogeneous campaign, in which victims and their kin challenge the Spanish “pact of forgetting,” as well as long-standing amnesty laws, in an attempt to contest official historical narratives that have excised the voices of those who lost the war. In this context, exhumations and the multiple forms of evidence that they produce have helped recast political violence in relation to contemporary debates regarding human rights and collective calls for the provision of truth, justice, and reconciliation.

This course provides an in-depth look at the Historical Memory Movement and considers how different forms of scientific expertise have been mobilized to produce more nuanced forms of historical knowledge. In order to contextualize this movement based on the recovery and retrieval of human remains, the seminar also provides students with a historical introduction to the Spanish Civil War, the Franco dictatorship, and the ensuing Transición. By examining the
symbolic and political weight of the dead during these distinct periods, the course considers how
different forms of truth have been constituted and mobilized during the last eighty years and, in
turn, how a haunted past continues to invade the present in powerful, meaningful ways. Arguing
that contemporary exhumation projects must be understood both in relation to transnational
human rights discourses and debates regarding post-violence truth and reconciliation, the
seminar maps out how distinct actors—like forensic experts, memory activists, photographers,
and filmmakers, as well as victims’ kin—engage with unearthed evidence in order to produce and
mobilize new forms of historical knowledge in a context marked by legal amnesty and cultural
forgetting.

The course draws on a wide variety of sources, including historical texts, documentary films,
news articles, and artworks in order to present students with a comprehensive introduction to
contemporary Spanish memory politics. It encourages them to approach these materials
critically in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of how the past invades the present
and how historical knowledge can be mobilized to produce alternative political futures.

- Co-requisite or prerequisite: N/A
- Class meeting days and times: Wednesdays 4:30-7:20

Desired Outcomes

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- To gain a more complex, comprehensive understanding of contemporary Spain by
  examining the Historical Memory Movement, the vibrant and, at times, controversial
  social movement in which contemporary exhumation projects are embedded.

- To identify the differences and intersections between history and memory in order to
  explore more attentively the role of the past in contemporary Spanish politics.

- To consider the ways in which contemporary mass grave exhumations have been
  interpreted, not only by scientific experts, but also by “cultural producers,” such as
  artists, photographers, and filmmakers in order to produce new avenues for dealing with
  a complex collective past.

- Become acquainted with Madrid and the institutions, neighborhoods, and monuments
  where the traces of political violence can be seen; to engage with these places in ways
  that are sensitive to the long-standing effects of trans-generational silence; and to
  suggest the role that these contested sites play in the generation of historical knowledge.

- To improve students’ analytical and writing skills, as well as their research abilities.
Assessment Components

Class Participation (15% - 15 points)
Students are asked to actively participate in class. Class participate grades will evaluate students’ contributions to class discussion, their engagement with fellow students ideas, and their ability to connect diverse course materials.

Written Reading Responses (10% - 10 points)
Students will be asked to engage thoughtfully and critically with the assigned readings and film screenings. As such, students will be asked to post a total of 10 short reading responses (250-500 words) to NYU Classes over the course of the semester. The responses must be posted by 3pm on the Sunday prior to each session. In the responses, students should be able to identify the main idea/argument of each text. They should also present a short analysis of the material at hand or propose engaging questions regarding the material for class discussion. The professor will provide a detailed handout that describes what an effective reading response should include via NYU Classes.

All reading responses will be returned to students in class.

Assignment 1: Final Essay Proposal (10% - 10 points)
In Week 5, all students will be required to submit a 2-page paper proposal that will outline the topic to be analyzed in the final paper. In addition to the 2-page proposal, students will be asked to submit a proposed bibliography of no longer than 1 page that will outline possible readings and/or resources to be analyzed in the final essay. In Week 1, a list of possible essay topics will be distributed to students in class. Students are encouraged to use these topics as a springboard to explore issues of interest to them. They are also encouraged to discuss their ideas and interests for the final essay with the professor before Week 5.

Paper 1: Short field trip essay (25% - 25 points)
Students will be asked to participate in two field trips during the course of the semester. These field trips will occur outside of our regular class schedule. Students may choose to write a short 5-page essay in response to one of these activities. In the essays, students will be asked to think anthropologically about their surroundings and to describe the significance of each site in relation to contemporary Spanish memory politics. Students are encouraged to include photographs, found objects, or other materials in their essays. Since some of these mandatory extracurricular activities will occur over the weekend, the short essays will be due the second Monday following each visit. Once the final dates for these events are confirmed, a list of deadlines for the essays will be posted to NYU Classes.
Students must attend the field trips. All efforts will be made to schedule these activities at a time that works for everyone.

Class Presentation (15% - 15 points)

Each student will be required to conduct a 10-minute, in-class presentation of one of the assigned readings. Presentations should describe the central arguments of each text and the significance of these arguments in relation to the topic or topics to be discussed in class. An excellent presentation will also include thoughtful reflections and/or questions that will help spark discussion among classmates. It is highly recommended that presenters review and engage the questions proposed by other students in the reading responses posted on NYU Classes.

Paper 2: Final Essay (25% - 25 points)

Students will be required to submit a 10-15 page research paper that analyzes in depth one of the class topics. Research topics will be selected by Week 5, after which students will receive detailed feedback regarding their proposed topics. An optional draft can be submitted anytime before Week 10 if students want to receive more detailed feedback. Questions regarding proposed topics, available bibliography, and the inclusion or analysis of other materials, such as interviews, films, exhibits, etc. can be discussed during office hours. The due date for the final essay is Monday, May 7th.

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

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<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Reading Responses</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Assignment 1: Final Essay Proposal</td>
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<td>Paper 1: Short Field Trip Essay</td>
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<td>Assignment 2: Class Presentation</td>
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<td>Paper 2: Final Essay</td>
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Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.
Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Example: 92.5% and higher</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

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<td><strong>In-class film screening:</strong> Las Hurdes: Tierra sin pan (Luis Buñuel, 1933 – 28 min.  documentary)</td>
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<td>6th</td>
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<td>Chapter One / The Origins of the Spanish Civil War (pp. 1-20)</td>
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<td>Chapter Six / Victory &amp; Defeat: The War after the War (pp. 115-137)</td>
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<td>Chapter Seven / The Uses of History (pp. 138-150)</td>
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<td><strong>In-class film screening:</strong> The Spanish Earth (Joris Ivens, 1937 – 52 min. documentary)</td>
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<td>and Spectacle: Portraying Civil War Exhumations in the Early Years of Spanish Democracy.” In <em>Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies</em> 17(1).</td>
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<td><strong>In-class film screening:</strong> Selections from Franco’s 1969 Christmas Greeting Selections from <em>Después de</em>… (Cecilia and José Juan Bartolomé, 1983 – 2 part documentary)</td>
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<td>Session 6, March 6th</td>
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<td><strong>DUE: Final Essay Topic</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Required reading:</strong> Jelin, Elizabeth. 2003. <em>State Repression &amp; the Labors of Memory</em>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 1 / Memory in the Contemporary World (pp.1-7) Chapter 3 / Political Struggles for Memory (pp. 26-45)</td>
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<td>Week/Date</td>
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<td>Rubin, Jonah. 2015 “Transitional Justice Against the State: Lessons from Spanish Civil Society Led Forensic Exhumations.” In</td>
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**Guest lecturer:** Dr. Luis Ríos (TBC)  
**DUE:** For students who want written feedback on drafts of their final essays, the draft must be submitted today. |
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<th>Week/Date</th>
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<th>Reading</th>
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| Session 12, April 24th | CULTURES OF DOCUMENTATION I: PHOTOGRAPHY | Commemoration (pp.211-241) Chapter Seven / The Exhumation as Emerging Archive (pp. 243-254).  
*Suggested Reading:*  
*Selections from Photo Essays to be reviewed before class:*  
*** All selections will be posted on NYU Classes. We will be examining this work in more detail during class,
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<td><strong>In-class film screening:</strong> <em>What Remains</em> (Lee Douglas &amp; Jorge Moreno Andrés, 2015 – 30 min.)</td>
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<td>Session 14, May</td>
<td>AFTER EXHUMATIONS: THE EMERGENCE OF NEW</td>
<td>No assigned readings. Please come to class prepared to discuss your individual paper topics and your conclusions.</td>
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<td>8th</td>
<td>HISTORICAL NARRATIVES</td>
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<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>DUE: Final essays!</td>
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Required Co-curricular Activities

**Field Trip #1**  (DATE TBD – possibly Friday, February 15)
A guided tour of the collections at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia with a Spanish art historian. This is a unique opportunity to see Picasso’s *Guernica* as well as the Museum’s extensive collection on war time art with a specialist.

**Guest lecturer:** TBD

**Suggested reading:**

**Field Trip #2**  (DATE TBD)
A guided tour of the Valle of the Fallen. This is an unmissable opportunity to visit Spain’s largest monument to fascism and the sight of highly contested memory debates in contemporary Spain.

**Guest lecturer:** Emilio Silva, Presidente Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory

**Suggested reading:**

**Lecture**  (Wednesday, March 27)
Professor Lee Douglas. “The Valley of the Fallen: The Politics of Re-membering Violence in Contemporary Spain”
Wednesday, March 27, 2:30-3:30 pm, Room 204
Suggested Co-curricular Activities

There is a wealth of historical memory events that occur weekly in Madrid. The professor will send students information regarding a monthly seminar series on the effects of political held at the Center for Human and Social Sciences (CSIC), as well as exhibition openings and film screenings that may occur during the semester. These are not required activities, but many of these events could be a point of analysis for students’ final papers. For example, the Thursday evening walks in Sol are a great place to meet with the vibrant community of memory activists in Madrid. Students are encouraged to explore these extra-curricular activities as a way to delve into the politics of memory in contemporary Spain.

Professor Jason Xidias. The Constitutional Crisis in Spain. (Lecture in English) Wednesday, March 6, 2:30-3:30 pm, Room 204.

Professor María López. Espacios educativos de la Segunda República. (Lecture in Spanish) Wednesday, March 13, 2:00-3:00pm, Room 204.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials in Print Form


*** Please note that the majority of the required texts are available at the NYU-Madrid Library or via the NYU e-brary. Some will also be made available via NYU Classes.

We will briefly discuss options for accessing the required texts on the first day of class.
Required Textbooks & Materials in NYU Classes

Agence France. 2016. “Spain to Make First Exhumation from Civil War Mausoleum.” In The Guardian, May 9, 2016. (short news article)


Araguete-Toribio, Zahira. “Confronting a History of Loss in a Spanish Family Archive.” In History and Anthropology. 28(2).


Optional Textbooks & Materials

**Films:**
*** Many of these films will be screened in class. However, they will also be available to students who wish to re-screen or use them for their final papers. Access to all films to be screened as part of a class assignment, will be available either through NYU Classes or alternative sources.

*Las Hurdes: Tierra sin pan* (Luis Buñuel, 1933 – 28 min. documentary)
*The Spanish Earth* (Joris Ivens, 1937 – 52 min. documentary)
*Después de…* (Cecilia & José Juan Bartolomé, 1983 – 2 part documentary)
*Morir de sueños* (Clemente Bernad, 2012 – 25 min. documentary)
*What Remains* (Lee Douglas & Jorge Moreno Andrés, 2015 – 30 min. documentary)

**Resources**

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](library.nyu.edu)
● **Assistance with strengthening your writing**: [NYU Writing Center](nyu.mywconline.com)
● **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance**: [IT Help Desk](nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

**Class Etiquette**

Students are expected to devote their full attention to lectures and to participate actively in class discussions. No cell phones or other electronic items should be on or used during class, except for laptops or tablets used solely for note-taking. Any infraction will forfeit your right to use your laptop in class for the remainder of the semester. Students should not leave class to take phone calls.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance Policy**

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.

Unexcused absences affect students’ grades: In classes meeting once a week, a 2% deduction from the student’s final course grade occurs on the occasion of the first unexcused absence.

Absences are excused only for illness, religious observance, and emergencies.

**Illness**: For a single absence, students may be required to provide a doctor’s note, at the discretion of the Assistant Directors of Academics. In the case of two consecutive absences, students must provide a doctor’s note. Exams, quizzes, and presentations will not be made up without a doctor’s note.

**Religious Observance**: Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is
for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Academic Office in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If exams, quizzes, and presentations are scheduled on a holiday a student will observe, the Assistant Directors, in coordination with the instructor, will reschedule them.

**Please note:** if you are unable to attend class, you are required to email your professors directly and notify them.

**Late Submission of Work**

Papers and paper proposals will not be accepted if submitted late. If students run into any issues with the timely submission of their work, they must contact the professor *before* the submission deadline.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

**Plagiarism:** presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one’s own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:

- a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
- an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
- the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one’s own
- submitting evaluations of group members’ work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member
- altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.
- using language translation software.

For further information, students are encouraged to check *NYU Policies and Guidelines on Academic Integrity* (about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html)

**Disability Disclosure Statement**
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosecsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. For more information, see Study Away and Disability (https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities/study-away.html)