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

Class code
ANTH-UA 9252 / HIST-UA 9264.

Instructor Details
Instructor: Francisco Ferrándiz
Email: paco.ferrandiz@cchs.csic.es
Office Hours: Mondays 19:30-20:30

Class Details
Meets at Segre on Mondays 16:30-19:20

Prerequisites
N/A

Class Description
This class will introduce students to one important and controversial topic in contemporary Spain, namely, the effects and after-effects of the unburial of mass graves with civilians executed in the rearguards during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and later during the postwar years. Most of the exhumations that have taken place in the last fifteen years have aimed at recovering the corpses of civilians executed by military and paramilitary squads under the instructions of Francisco Franco and his top military aids in a well designed scorched earth military strategy. That is, they are mostly mass graves containing Republican militants and sympathizers executed in what some historians have labelled either as a politicide (Rodrigo), a genocide (Espinosa) or even a Holocaust (Preston).

When sociologist and journalists Emilio Silva opened in 2000 the grave containing the remains of his grandfather and twelve other men in the municipality of Priaranza de Bierzo in the province of León, nobody anticipated the impact that this act would have in the following decade in Spanish society. For, in the period 2000-2011 (ending with the electoral victory of the right wing Partido Popular), debates around Spain’s relationship with its uncomfortable past—namely, the Civil War—, springing from the public exposure of these exhumations, have raged and caused major turmoil in the media, in the political arena, in the judicial system and in civil society alike, leading to the questioning and reframing of the effectiveness of Spain’s renown and prestigious transition to democracy, and critically engaging the consequences of the prize that the country had to pay, in terms of providing impunity to past crimes, to achieve a democratic regime after Franco’s death. In this sense, the analysis of these unburials provides a privileged window into Spain’s contemporary social and political heartbeat. During the process, Spain’s unburials and reburials have developed connections with other human rights oriented exhumation processes across the globe, including Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bosnia, Greece, Chad,Timor or Irak. Thus, the analysis of Spanish exhumations will necessarily incorporate at every stage a comparative and transnational perspective.

In order to understand the complexity of this tortuous engagement with the violent past, this class will explore the main landmarks and features of this exhumation campaign,
both looking to the past and to the future. Although the class is focussed on the contemporary impact of these exhumations in the *age of human rights*, to understand them properly it is crucial to acquire some basic notions about the origin of these graves in the late thirties and early forties of the XXth century during the war and early after war years. It is also important to explore the genealogy of Civil Ear exhumations, which have taken place in different *necropolitical stages* since the end of the war. Finally, it will analyze in detail what I have called the *afterlives* of the exhumed bodies, that is their impact in different milieus, from the judicial system to forensic laboratories to the popular culture and the arts (Ferrándiz 2006, 2013).

The class includes some films and documentaries. Although some short clips may be used in class, they have to be watched by students in full before the session to which they are assigned. The professor will facilitate access to them. The class also includes visits to some relevant memory sites in Madrid and surroundings as co-curricular activities.

### Desired Outcomes

- To understand contemporary Spain through one of its most controversial contemporary social movements.

- To explore the role of memory politics of the traumatic past in contemporary societies though its different manifestations.

- To identify controversial traces of the past in Spanish cities, streets and landscapes.

### Assessment Components

**Final Essay topic (10%)** (All students have to turn in a 2 page proposal for the Final Essay in class in week 4).

**Class presentation (20%)** (All students will have to critically present in class one of the required readings for general discussion)

**Midterm essay (20%)** (10 page annotated bibliography using the class’ required and recommended literature, to be turned in class in week 6)

**Final essay (25%)** (10-15 page research paper on one of the class topics, approved and assisted by the professor; research topics will be selected by week 4, and an optional draft can be turned in to the professor by week 9 for improvement; due date Friday May 6th)

**Final exam (25%)** (To assess the understanding of the class readings, visual material, class discussions and required co-curricular activities; format to be determined; date tbd in the week of May 9th-13th)
Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Grading Policy**

**Statement on Provisions to students with disabilities**

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

**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.
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 www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html


**RECOMMENDED**


Ferrándiz, Francisco. 2014. *El pasado bajo tierra: Exhumaciones contemporáneas de la*
Guerra Civil. Barcelona: Siglo XXI/Anthropos.


Gobierno de España. 2007. “LEY 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura.” *BOE* núm 310: 53410-53416 (to be translated).


Session 1
January 29th
(FRIDAY)

PART I: THE VIOLENT AND UNCOMFORTABLE PAST

Topic: THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR


Film: *Pan's Labyrinth* (Guillermo del Toro, 2006)

Session 2
February 1st

Topic: THE LOGICS OF REPRESSION DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND THE DICTATORSHIP


Documentary: *Canciones para después de una guerra* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1976)

Session 3
February 8th

PART II: CIVIL WAR NECROPOLITICS: HISTORICAL EXHUMATIONS

Topic: EXHUMATIONS 1: POSTWAR YEARS

Box, Zira and Ismael Saz. 2011. “Spanish Fascism as a Political Religion (1931-1941).”


Documentary: *NODO*

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**Session 4**
February 15th

Topic: EXHUMATIONS 2: THE VALLEY OF THE FALLEN

**Visits to Paracuellos and the Valley of the Fallen (TBA)**


**Final Essay topic due in class**

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**Session 5**
February 22nd

Topic: EXHUMATIONS 3: UNBURIALS DURING THE SPANISH TRANSITION (1977-19982)


Documentary: *Historical footage from transition exhumations.*

Guest: Zoé de Kerangat (CSIC)

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**Session 6**
February 29th

PART III: CONTEMPORARY EXHUMATIONS: DIGGINGS AND AFTERLIVES

Topic: GENERAL CONTEXT


Ferrándiz, Francisco and Antonius Robben. 2015. “The Ethnography of Exhumations.” In

**Midterm Essay due**

**Session 7**  
March 7th  
Topic: ASSOCIATIVE AFTERLIFE


Guest: Emilio Silva (ARMH founder and president)

**Session 8**  
March 14th  
Topic: POLITICAL AFTERLIFE

Gobierno de España. 2007. “LEY 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura.” *BOE* núm 310: 53410-53416 (to be translated).


**Session 9**  
March 28th  
Topic: JUDICIAL AFTERLIFE


RECOMMENDED


Guest: Rafael Escudero (UC3M)

**Optional Draft of the Final Essay due in class**

**Session 10**

April 4th

Topic: MEDIA AFTERLIFE


Documentary: *Les fosses del silenci* (English versión; Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis, 2003); *selected TV news reports*

**Session 11**

April 11th

Topic: SCIENTIFIC AFTERLIFE


**Guest: Luis Ríos (CSIC)**

**Session 12**

April 18th

Topic: EMOTIONAL AFTERLIFE


**Session 13**

April 25th

Topic: ARTISTIC AFTERLIFE


Torres, Francesc. 2007. *Dark is the Room Where we Sleep*. Barcelona: Actar.

Documentary: *Morir de sueños* (Clemente Bernad, 2011)

**Guest: Fernando Sánchez-Castillo (independent artist)**

**Session 14**

May 6th (FRIDAY)


Bibliography in the making! Will be assigned by the beginning of the class.

**Final Essay due**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Co-curricular Activities</th>
<th>Visit to Paracuellos and the Valley of the Fallen (Madrid). Visit to at least one ongoing exhumation or related memorial act.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Co-curricular Activities</td>
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