

NYU Buenos Aires

Cultures and Contexts: Latin America

CORE-UA 9515-001

Instructor Information

- Cecilia Palmeiro, Ph.D
- Office hours by appointment

Course Information

- Over the last 50 years, millions of Latin Americans have experienced extraordinary shifts in their social, political, and cultural landscape, a result of the transformative effects of revolution or insurgency, state repression, popular resistance and social movements. To understand this experience, this course uses three strategies, focusing on (1) key dates, (2) keywords, and (3) primary sources.

By “**key dates**” we mean dates that mark a critical juncture in larger processes of social change, usually marking a consolidation of or turn from the dominant social forces of the time: elections, deaths of leaders, signing of new laws or treaties, the beginning or end of governments, social movements, and of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. For this class, we focus on events that had continental, hemispheric, and even global impact, including the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the military coups of the 1970s, and the Zapatista uprising in 1994. But by key dates, we also mean something more: our goal is not only to learn about the succession of events, but to capture the urgency and contingency of those moments. A historian might ask: “why did the Chilean military coup take place in 1973?” and offer an explanation of why events unfolded as they did. Drawing on a range of primary sources and cultural forms (film, music, art), we listen carefully to the voices of the major social actors of the time, in order to ask, “at the moment of the military coup in 1973, what was in the balance? What concert of competing hopes or fears were in play? And how did these shape the course of events?” Historian Greg Grandin helps us understand such moments as “simultaneously compressed and exploded moments of intense hope and dread—hope of release and liberation, and dread of either the coming of the new or the return of the old.”

By “**keywords**” we use the rich meaning lent to the term by cultural theorist Raymond Williams. Keywords name concepts that are central to understanding a shared reality even though—or because—they have highly contested and at times mutually exclusive meanings. Imagine, for example, the contested meanings invested in the idea of “revolution” by the insurgents, the leaders, and different sectors of the population in Cuba in 1959. A dictionary definition of such a term would try to eliminate contradiction and ambivalence by laying out a hierarchy of distinct and accepted meanings. A keywords analysis would focus on exactly those competing, overlapping, and contradictory meanings in order to understand better what social relations and what

struggles such contradiction may reveal. Where a dictionary cares about establishing consensus around what a term means, a keywords approach examines and understand that lack of consensus. Over the last 50 years Latin America has generated keywords with global impact that anchor the greatest of hopes, particularly Revolution, and also the most harrowing: *desaparecidos* (disappeared).

In the class we overlay key dates with keywords, and draw on a range of primary sources to understand the realities they name. Our sources are drawn from a wide range of media: newsprint, television broadcasts, transcripts, testimony, essay, documentary and feature film, art, and music. We deliberately mix artistic representations with documentary evidence: one goal of the course is to understand how the arts—music, visual art, literature, film—do not just reflect the reality around them, but are themselves vital sites for shaping and changing that reality and our imagination of it, both then and now.

- No prerequisites
- Monday, Wednesday 5.15 - 6.45
- Room TBC

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will:

- have familiarity with many of the key dates, political events, and social forces and actors that have shaped the course of Latin American history in the last 50 years
- will have read, heard, or watched the work of leading intellectuals, artists, and politicians whose decisions and actions were decisive in that history
- will have a deeper understanding of how the legacies of those actions continue to inform Latin American reality today

Course Requirements

Class Participation

A short (10 minute) class presentation on a topic selected by the student from a list provided by the lecturer, in the last session as a preparation for the final exam.

Assignment 1

A 4-page essay presenting an argument about the relation between the keyword “revolution” and one of the keywords chosen by students from a list. Students need to advance their argument through an analysis of AT LEAST two of the works covered in class. The goal is not to define the concepts as general concepts, but to illustrate the meanings they have developed in the contexts in which they are practiced and lived. **To be submitted 02/21.**

Assignment 2

A 6-page essay comparing and contrasting the different strategies for historical representation by reflecting on certain keywords as they provide a theoretical approach to **ONE or TWO** of the reading materials, including two sources not included on the reading list. **To be submitted 03/13.**

Assignment 3

An 8-page essay, comparing and contrasting different approaches to the possible articulations between keywords and keydates, using AT LEAST FIVE sources, including FOUR of the students' own research. **To be submitted 4/17**

Midterm Paper

A 5/6-page-essay analysis of keywords in contexts, with two given choices of contexts. **To be submitted 03/27**

Final Paper

In a 8/10-page essay compare and contrast the notion of identity as a political tool in particular struggles and/or social movements studied in the course. **To be submitted 05/18.**

Assigned Readings

All texts, recordings, or other media listed below are required, unless otherwise noted. All will be found on your reading packet, and most are drawn from Duke University Press's excellent "Latin America Readers" series, which are compilations of primary documents by or about key social actors in the history of the region.

There are no books required for purchase, but if you are interested in the study of the region, you may want to own some of the books from which our readings are drawn. We are reading more than half of the following texts, so you may prefer to purchase them:

- Dorfman, Ariel, and Armand Mattelart. How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic. New York: International General, 1975.
- Chile: The Other September 11: an Anthology of Reflections on the 1973 Coup. Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2006.

Some assignments are recordings, films, music or other media: these are required, and should be treated as seriously as any assigned texts. The duration of each film/video is listed below; please budget your time accordingly.

Films:

Memories of Underdevelopment. Dir. Tomás Alea. 1968. 97 minutes. [Cuba]

Before Night Falls. 2001. Dir. Julian Schnabel. 133 minutes. [Cuba]

Dzi Croquettes. Dirs. Issa, Tatiana, and Raphael Alvarez. 2009. 110 minutes. [Brazil]

Batalla de Chile, Dir. Patricio Guzmán. 1975,1976. [Chile]

Part 1 La insurrección de la burguesía (The insurrection of the bourgeoisie). 96 minutes.

Part 2. El golpe de estado (The coup d'etat). 88 minutes.

Las Madres: the mothers of the plaza de mayo. Dir. Lourdes Portillo. 1985. 64 minutes. [Argentina]

When the Mountains Tremble. Dir. Pamela Yates. 1983. 90 minutes. [Guatemala]

Maquilopolis: City of Factories. Dir. Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre. 2006. 70 minutes. [Tijuana/US-Mexico border]

The Exact Shape of the Islands. Dir. Edgardo Dieleke and Daniel Casabé. [Argentina] 2012. 90 minutes

Grading of Assignments

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

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class participation	10%
Assignment 1	15%
Midterm Paper	20%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	20
Final Exam Paper	20

Letter Grades

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

Letter Grade	Percent
A	100-94

Letter Grade	Percent
A-	93-90
B+	89-87
B	86-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-77
C	76-74
C-	73-70
D+	69-67
D	66-65
F	below 65

Note: grades with .5 will be round up and grades with less than .5 will be round down. Ex.: 93.5 is an A, while 93.4 is an A-.

View Grades

Letter Grade	Explanation of Grade
A	Clear evidence of understanding, plus the ability to apply knowledge and reflect on the student's own learning.
B	Evidence of understanding and the ability to apply course content, but lacking reflectivity.
C	Evidence of good understanding, but lacking evidence of reflectivity and the ability to apply course content.
D	Evidence of understanding in a minimally acceptable way, and lacking reflectivity and the ability to apply course content.

Letter Grade	Explanation of Grade
F	Plagiarized, did not participate satisfactorily, did not hand in work, lack of understanding

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Week 1, 2/3-2/5	Introduction - Revolutionary time	Greg Grandin, "Living in revolutionary time: coming to terms with the violence of Latin America's long Cold War," In Greg Grandin and G M. Joseph, Eds. <u>A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War</u> . Durham: Duke University Press, 2010: 1–42.	
Week 2, 2/10-2/12	1959 Revolution Empire and Revolution	<p><u>Cuba Reader</u>:</p> <p>The United Fruit Company in Cuba / Oscar Zanetti 290–95 The United States Rules Cuba 1952–1958 / Morris Morley 321–25 History Will Absolve Me / Fidel Castro Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War / Ernesto "Che" Guevara 315–320 The Cuban Story in the New York Times / Herbert Matthews 326–332</p> <p>Recommended: National Archives – Cuba: The Battle of America 1960 (51:13)</p> <p><u>Cuba Reader</u>: The Year of Education + The Literacy Campaign, 386–394 Fidel Castro, "Words to the Intellectuals" (Havana, June 30, 1961) <u>Fidel Castro Reader</u>, 213–240.</p> <p>Watch at home: clips on the Literacy Campaign, and from <u>Por Primera Vez</u></p>	
Week 3, 2/17-2/19	Cold Warriors/ Outside the	<p>Watch at home: <u>Memories of Underdevelopment</u>, dir. Tomás Alea <u>Cuba Reader</u>: For an Imperfect Cinema / Julio Garcia</p>	02/21 PAPER 1 DUE

	Revolution, Nothing	Espinosa 458–465 Inconsolable Memories: A Cuban View of the Missile Crisis / Edmundo Desnoes 547–551 Watch at home: <u>Before night falls</u> . Dir. Julian Schnabel. Reinaldo Arenas. "The parade begins" <u>Cuba reader</u> : Reinaldo Arenas: Homosexuality, creativity, dissidence. pp. 406-411	
Week 4, 2/24-2/26 2/24 National Holiday, class replaced by lecture by Identidad Marrón 3/10	1968 Counterculture. Anti- imperialism	Dorfman, Ariel, and Armand Mattelart. <u>How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic</u> . New York: International General, 1975. Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Watch 15 minutes of Walt Disney's <u>Saludos Amigos</u>	
Week 5, 3/2-3/4	From Tropicalism to Desbunde. Brazilian countercultural tradition	Christopher Dunn, "The Tropicalist Moment," in <u>Brutality Garden. Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture</u> (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 73-121. Watch at home: <u>Dzi Croquettes</u> Glauco Mattoso. "The saddest thing is that it's over", in <u>My deep dark pain is love</u> .	
Week 6, 3/9-3/11	Tucumán is Burning /Argentina	Selections from Inés Katzenstein, <u>Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde</u> . New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004. Art under the paradigm of politics: Culture, intellectuals, and politics in the 1960s / Oscar Terán	03/13 Friday PAPER 2 DUE

<p>3/9 class replaced by visit to Museo de la Lengua Friday 20/3 TBC</p>		<p>Experiences 68: Message in the Di Tella / Roberto Jacoby First national meeting on avant-garde art and Tucumán is burning: The work of art as product of the ethical consciousness-aesthetic consciousness relationship / Juan Pablo Renzi Tucumán is burning: statement of the exhibition in Rosario / María Teresa Gramuglio, Nicolás Rosa, and others</p> <p>In class: Watch the film on Tucumán Arde in emisférica: http://hemisphericinstitute.org/journal/8.1/tucumanarde/index.html (22 minutes)</p>	
<p>Week 7, 3/16-3/18</p> <p>March 17 Visit to CC Conti</p>	<p>1971. Popular/ Populism. Popular Unity/ Chile</p> <p>1973 Coup</p>	<p>Watch at home: <u>The Battle of Chile</u>, dir. Patricio Guzmán, part 1</p> <p><u>Chile Reader:</u> The Demands of the People Movement of the Revolutionary Left -Allende First Anniversary of the popular government -Chile Reader Revolution in the Factory- Interviews with Workers at the Yarur Cotton Mill.pdf -Chile Reader The Mapuche Land Takeover at Rucalan- Interviews with Peasants and Landowners.pdf</p> <p><i>Chile: The Other September 11: an Anthology of Reflections on the 1973 Coup.</i> Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2006. (selections) The last September 11 / Ariel Dorfman I begin by invoking Walt Whitman / Pablo Neruda Last words transmitted by Radio Magallanes September 11, 1973 / Salvador Allende The coup / Joan Jara An unfinished song / Joan Jara Estadio Chile / Victor Jara "We never saw him hesitate," September 28, 1973 / Beatriz Allende</p> <p><u>Chile Reader:</u></p>	

		<p>Pinochet's caravan of death / Patricia Verdugo -- Women and torture / The National Commission on Political Detention and Torture -- Transnationalization of terror: Operation Condor / US Federal Bureau of Investigations -- "I never looked for power" / Augusto Pinochet Ugarte -- -- The Mapuche nation and the Chilean nation / Elicura Chihuailaf -- "To never again live it, to never again deny it" / President Ricardo Lagos, The Valech report --</p>	
<p>Week 8 03/23-03/25 03/23 National Holiday. Class replaced by visita CC Conti 03/17</p>	<p>Desaparecidos Chile</p> <p>1976 Proceso/ Desaparecidos (Argentina)</p>	<p>Chile Reader: Pinochet's caravan of death / Patricia Verdugo -- Women and torture / The National Commission on Political Detention and Torture -- Transnationalization of terror: Operation Condor / US Federal Bureau of Investigations -- "I never looked for power" / Augusto Pinochet Ugarte -- -- The Mapuche nation and the Chilean nation / Elicura Chihuailaf -- "To never again live it, to never again deny it" / President Ricardo Lagos, The Valech report --</p> <p>Rodolfo Walsh. "Open Letter to the Military Junta"</p> <p>Argentina Reader: Néstor Perlongher. "Corpses".</p>	<p>FRIDAY 03/27 MIDTERM DUE</p>
<p>Week 9 3/30-2/1 Semester Break</p>			
<p>Week 10, 04/06-04/08</p>	<p>Madres/ Abuelas</p>	<p>Argentina Reader: The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo / Hebe de Bonafini and Matilde Sanchez 429</p>	

	<p>1982 Genocide/ Guatemala</p>	<p>Watch at home: Botin de Guerra (Dir. David Blaustein, 2000)</p> <p>Greg Grandin, <u>The Last Colonial Massacre</u>, Introduction.</p> <p>Watch at home, <u>When the Mountains Tremble</u> (Dir. Pamela Yates)</p> <p><u>Guatemala Reader</u>, Part VI Intent to Destroy, 361–430 Thunder in the City / Mario Payeras The San Francisco Massacre, July 1982 / Ricardo Falla We Cannot Confirm Nor Deny / United States Embassy Clarification Roads to Revolution Declaration of iximché We Rose up</p>	
<p>Week 11, 04/13- 04/15</p>	<p>1982 War/ Argentina</p> <p>Memory and Museum, Peru. Shining Path</p>	<p>Watch at home <u>The exact shape of the islands</u> (2012). Dir. Edgardo Dieleke and D. Casabé</p> <p>Shining Path: Putis is Peru, curated by José Pablo Baraybar (Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team, EPAF) with photography by Domingo Giribaldi and Marina García Burgos.</p> <p>Yuyanapaq: to Remember (14 mins) -Orin Starn. "Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru- Shining Path and the Refusal of History" http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/peru/shining-path.pdf</p>	<p>04/17 Friday PAPER 3 DUE</p>

<p>Week 12, 04/20- 04/22</p>	<p>Museo Travesti del Perú</p> <p>1994-2014 Neoliberalis m, Mexico- Argentina</p>	<p>Museo Travesti del Peru (The Travesti Museum), by Guiseppe Campuzano</p> <p>David Harvey. A Brief History of Neoliberalism (introduction and "Uneven Geographic Developments: Mexico and Argentina")</p> <p>Veronica Gago. Neoliberalism from below (introduction, pp. 1-28)</p>	
<p>Week 13, 04/27- 04/29</p> <p>04/29 class replaced by 04/28 Lecture on Feminist perspecti ve on debt by Lucia Cavallero</p>	<p>Neoliberalis m Mexico: Borderlands - NAFTA</p>	<p>Watch in class: Documentary, Maquilopolis</p> <p>EZLN. "First declaration of the Lacandona Jungle". "Second Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle". "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle"</p>	
<p>Week 14 05/04- 05/06</p>	<p>2001-2002 CRISIS/ Argentina/</p>	<p>Watch at home: The Take (2003) Dir. Naomi Klein.</p> <p>Social Genocide/ Memory of the Plunder (2004). Dir. Pino Solanas</p> <p>The Radical Art of Poverty: Eloisa cartonera project (guest lecturer: Fernanda Laguna)</p>	

Week 15 05/11- 05/13	2015 Feminist Tide Conclusions and exam review	Veronica Gago. "Eight Theses on the Feminist Revolution" https://towardfreedom.org/archives/americas/eight-theses-on-the-feminist-revolution/	
Week 16 05/20		Final Exam Monday May 18	Final exam due

Course Materials

All texts, films, images and music will be available in PDF on NYU Classes (accessible through the "Academics" tab on NYU Home).

Resources

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

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

- NYU's Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a **strict policy regarding course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted.**
- Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 1% from the student's final course grade.
- Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
- Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs **within one week** of your return to class.
- A doctor's note excusing your absence is mandatory.
- **The date on the doctor's note must be the date of the missed class or exam**
- Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said

examination via email to the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs.

- Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your professors prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please contact the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs)
- If students have more than four unexcused absences, they will fail the course.
- Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. **Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.**
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a **field trip or other external visit**, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.
- 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^{SEP} only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.
- Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.

Late Assignment

- Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs during office hours (Mon - Fri, 10 am to 6 pm), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.
- Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100point scale.
- Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.
- Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

- Academic Integrity is intimately related to the teaching and learning process.
- When writing research papers, you need to keep in mind that plagiarism includes the use of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were

your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It also includes presenting and/or paraphrasing discourse or ideas from a published work (in print or on internet) without quotation marks and clear without acknowledgment of the original source.

- For formatting in your papers, refer to MLA guidelines.
- On matters regarding academic integrity, refer to the section “[Academic Standards and Discipline](#)” in the College of Arts and Science Bulletin and to “[Statement on Academic Integrity](#)” in NYU Expository Writing Program: Policies and Procedures.
- All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.
- It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@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.

Instructor Bio

Dr Cecilia Palmeiro holds a PhD from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Princeton University. She specializes on contemporary Latin American cultural studies, with special attention to Argentinean and Brazilian literature and gender studies. Her main interests are critical theory, intellectual history and the relation between art and politics. She has published a range of articles on contemporary Argentinean and Brazilian literature and gender issues, and translated contemporary Brazilian literature into Spanish. She is the author of [Desbunde y felicidad. De la Cartonera a Perlongher](#) (2011, 2019) and editor of Néstor Perlongher's correspondence, [Correspondencia](#) (2016). As a writer of fiction, she has published chronicles, short stories and the novel [Cat Power. La toma de la Tierra](#) (2017).