

Freshman Seminar 41 g

The Faces of Human Rights in Latin America: Anthropological Perspectives

Instructor: Theodore Macdonald

Time: Thursday 1-3

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preferably, by appointment)

Course Description

In the 3rd World, Latin America stands out as a champion signatory of international human rights treaties and a gross abuser of those rights (e.g., Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, and Colombia). Likewise, the region has spawned, or been the global focus of many widely known grass roots and international social movements (e.g., indigenous, natural resources, human rights, Anti-Free Trade, and the environment). The seminar will look critically at each of these issues, as well as their perceived conjunctions and disjunctions.

Drawing from social theory, case studies, news reports and other primary sources, students will consider how human rights language, treaties, and legislation have, or have not sparked movements or other means to advance human rights. Conversely, the seminar will ask how social movements do, or do not influence the realization of rights.

The initial readings illustrate local perceptions of problems and related “rights,” and will thus introduce anthropological modes of analysis. Continuing with combined political and symbolic methods of interpretation, the seminar will focus on some of the most well known cases of regional rights violations --Chile and Guatemala of the 1970s and 1980s. The seminar will then review current issues and cases, as illustrated by new debates and social movements --local national and international-- that now map the Latin America landscape. Case studies will expose students to global and regional issues, and, equally important, will encourage critical analysis of the links --actual, imagined, or instrumental-- between social movements and human rights.

The seminar will, in brief, explore Latin American human rights cases, issues, and actors. It will also challenge the “common wisdom” and romantic idealism that have cast some Latin American human rights debates and social movements into high, but nonetheless two-dimensional, relief.

Readings

The required books have been ordered at the Coop. The readings are also on reserve in the libraries (Tozzer and Lamont), with the exception of papers available from the web (marked [W] in the syllabus). A separate syllabus has been posted on the course website to provide you with easy access to all electronic resources [W].

Required Texts:

- Constable, Pamela and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*
- Manz, Beatriz, *Paradise in Ashes*
- Sawyer, Suzana, *Crude Chronicles*
- Guillermprieto, Alma, *The Heart that Bleeds: Latin America Now*
- Palmer, David Scott, *Shining Path in Peru*
- Donnelly Jack, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice.*
- **Course Pack**

Readings listed for each class should be completed *before* class.

Syllabus and Readings

Part 1: Introduction

Week 1 -- Interpreting Latin America

Readings:

- Guillermprieta, Alma, *The Heart that Bleeds: Latin America Now*
Read: *Bogota, 1989, Lima 1990, La Paz 1992, Lima 1993, and Bogota 1993.*
- Geertz, Clifford, *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*

Week 2 -- Voices from Rural Latin America

Reading:

- Robin Kirk, *More Terrible than Death: Violence, Drugs, and America's War In Colombia.* (Please read this entire book as you would a novel, quickly and for general ideas and impressions, not specific details.)

Week 3 -- Human Rights: Global Concepts in the Americas

Readings:

- Donnelly. Part 1, (pp 1-53)
- Regional support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, related Conventions, and the American Declaration on Human Rights [W]
- Social Issues and Agrarian Unrest of the 1960s: Reacting to Cuba [W]

Part 2: Civil and Political Rights and Violations

Week 4 -- Political Crises of the 1970s: National and International Focus on Political and Civil Human Rights: Chile, Argentina, and Mexico

- Keck and Sikkink, Chapter 3, pp 79-120. (course pack)
- Constable, Pamela and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet.* (Selections: approximately 100-150 pages)

Week 5 -- Rural Violence of the 1980s: International Focus and Local Perceptions of National Issue: Individual and Group Rights—Guatemala

- Manz, Beatriz, *Paradise in Ashes.* (Selections: approximately 100-150 pages)

Week 6 --Rural Violence of the 1980s: International Focus and Local Perceptions of National Issue: Individual and Group Rights—Peru.

Reading:

- Palmer, David Scott, *Shining Path in Peru*. (Selections: approximately 100-150 pages)

Part 3. Transitions to Democracy: New Human Rights Issues, Actors, and Movements

Week 7 -- Democracies and the Rule of Law

- Donelley,
- Lutz and Sikkink --- *International Human Rights Law and Practice in Latin America [W]*
- Regional Rights Mechanisms –
 - Interamerican Commission on Human Right (IACHR) [W]
 - Interamerican Court of Human Rights [W]
 - *International Labor Organization: Convention # 169*[W]

NGOs

Week 8 -- Democracy and Development: Indigenous Peoples as Bellwethers

Readings:

- Smith, Richard Chase. *The Dialectics of Domination: Native Communities and the Myth of the Vast Amazonian Emptiness*.(handout)
- Chapin, Mac. *A Challenge to Conservationists [W]*

Week 9 -- Rights/Development Case Study: Nicaragua-- Claims to Land and Resources in Awas Tingni

Readings:

- Anaya S. James and Scott Cridder, “Indigenous Peoples, The Environment, and Commercial Forestry in Developing Countries: The Case of Awas Tingni, Nicaragua”. *Human Rights Quarterly [W]*
- Macdonald, Theodore.. Inter-American Court of Human Rights Rules in Favor of Nicaraguan Indians [W]
- Macdonald, Theodore Awas Tingni: An Ethnography of a Community [W]

Week 10 -- Dilemmas in Democracy: Neoliberalism, Transnationalism, and Globalization

Reading:

- Sawyer, Suzana, *Crude Chronicles*. (Selections: approximately 100-150 pages)
- Macdonald, Theodore, S. James Anaya, and Yadira Soto. *The Samoré Case: Final Report of the Harvard/OAS Project in Colombia*. Washington: Organization of American States, 1997 [W]

Week 11-- Dilemmas in Democracy

a. Corruption and Constitutions

Readings:

- Excerpts from: UN Development Program Report on *Democracy in Latin America* [W]

b. Demands for Multicultural Citizenship, Participation, and Consultation

Case Study: Ecuadorian Indigenous Movements, bellwethers once more

Readings

- Macdonald, Theodore, Ecuador's Indian Movement: Pawn in Short Game or Agent of State Reconfiguration. In Maybury-Lewis, David, *The Politics of Ethnicity*, pp.168-198 [W]
- Macdonald, Theodore, Approaching Indigenous Rights in the Early 21st Century: International Norms, Social Movements, and Citizenship Claims. In: *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Latin America: From Ideals to Tools*. Alicia Ely Yamin (ed.) Lima: APRODEH (Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos del Perú) In Press. [W]

Week 12 -- The Future: US Hegemony, Populism, or Reconfigured Democracy?

Issues:

- Transnationalism and Free Trade
- Chavez' "New Bolivarism"
- Indigenous Politics and Politicians

Readings:

Recent News Clips: *NY Times*, *The Economist* and others (*handouts*)