

## **KILLING DISSENT: THE AFTERMATH**

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The question of historical memory underlies this course. How does a society respond to the end of an authoritarian regime that suppressed dissent by any means necessary? How do textbooks, films, writers, for example, “remember” such a regime? And what of the children of those who witnessed the “disappeared”? These and related questions center the content of this course. Toward this end, the class will discuss the aftermath of four authoritarian regimes: the long rule of Francisco Franco of Spain (1939-1975); the military coups of Chile (1973-1989) and Argentina (1976-1983); and the “perfect dictatorship” of Mexico (1940-2000). The course will of course consider political and economic factors, but much attention will also be dedicated to literature, film, and popular culture.

Each session will be divided into two segments of about 45 minutes, with 15 minutes or so of Q&A. A brief bibliography is included here, but a more robust list will be posted by March 1st for those who seek more detail and background information. The concluding session will be somewhat different, see below.

### **Session 1: What Happened?**

The initial lecture will focus on key contextual aspects of each regime, such as the importance of the cold war (e.g., the specter of Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution), the significance of economic conditions (e.g., the value of key exports), the political scene (e.g., Evita and Peronismo), social structures (e.g., rural-urban divides), and cultural issues (e.g., control of the mass media). The second segment will trace the takeover of the regimes, the means of their suppression of dissent, and their implications.

### **Session 2: The Collapse**

The first segment will examine the unraveling of each regime and their immediate aftermath, such as the treatment of the perpetrators, the changes in governance, and the initial efforts to memorialize the fall of the regimes. The second segment will explore the debates over the organized, governmental

moves to reconstruct the telling of the past through legislation, monuments, museums, formation of civic groups, as well as in literature, cinema and popular culture.

### **Session 3: Memorialization**

Decades have passed since the fall of the regimes, and the question of historical memory has passed on to a distinct generation, largely the children of those who experienced an authoritarian government. What are the public meanings of the new textbooks, recent literary works, contemporary films, and the like regarding the past, particularly the interpretation of the origins and consequences of the autocratic regimes. These issues will be the basis of the first hour of the class. The second segment will address another set of questions on the aftermath of the fall of the regimes. To what extent are the remnants of those regimes still present in the democratic governments and the politics that followed the times of the squashing of dissent. What are the impacts of public demonstrations of historical memory, such as marches by the mothers or grandmothers of the “disappeared,” press reports on the unearthing of the remains of the victims of those regimes, or the discovery of recent documents regarding the role of foreign and domestic actors in the suppression of dissent.

### **Session 4: Lessons from the Killing of Dissent**

The first hour of this session will be dedicated to an expanded Q&A regarding the lessons, if any, to be considered in our understanding of authoritarian regimes. The second segment will summarize the current debates in Argentina, Chile, Spain, and Mexico over historical memory and its meanings, followed by the usual 15-20 minutes of Q&A.

### **Brief Bibliography\*\***

Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust* (2013, W.W. Norton & Co.)

*Missing* (film, 1982))

Isabel Allende, *The House of Spirits* (1982)

National Security Archive (in search bar, use Dirty War) available on line.

*Y tu mama Tambien* (film, 2001)

*Pan's Labyrinth* (film, 2006)

Daniel Loedel, *Hades, Argentina* (2021)

\*\*A more comprehensive, notated list will be posted by March 1<sup>st</sup>.