

State Violence and Justice
Department of Political Science
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Introduction

This course is problem driven, focusing on the nature of political violence carried out by the state and the processes of memory, reconciliation, accountability, and justice. These are clearly political questions, including the relationship of the state to the citizen, the role of violence in demobilizing society and stripping the individual of his or her status as a citizen, of human rights, and of the nature of justice. They are also personal, in terms of the affects of violence on the individual, the nature of memory and recovery for victims, the sense of immunity or accountability felt by perpetrators of violence, and the motivations for and impact of justice. This course draws on literature from a variety of disciplines that engage with political science and the politics of state violence and justice.

Clearly, the issues raised by state initiated violence and efforts at accountability or recognition are complex. It might appear obvious, from a moral or ethical perspective, that murderers should be held to account for their crimes, and victims of torture or the survivors of the disappeared should have their day in court. But experience teaches that murderers often negotiate their withdrawal from power on terms that give them legal immunity, as in the case of Pinochet. Or those under investigation have threatened to overthrow democratic governments, as they did in Argentina. Or brutal dictators have refused to withdraw in part to avoid accountability, even fighting civil wars, as they did in Cambodia. These incidents have led some scholars to argue that post withdrawal stability is more important than justice.

The question, “Who are the perpetrators?” is rarely an easy one. Does responsibility rest with the highest authorities, the intellectual authors who put such practices in place? Or does it flow down to the guards, the conscripted soldiers, the doctors and judges, who cooperate with or carry out orders? Are only dictators violence prone? Because democratic practice ensures more human methods of social control and interrogation? Is there a difference between death squads in El Salvador and Lynch Mobs in North Carolina? Between apartheid in South Africa, segregation in the American South, and British rule in Northern Ireland? Between mass dislocation of whole communities in Colombia, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and the destruction of African American communities in Oklahoma, Florida, and North Carolina?

The variety of means put in place to address state violence also complicates these questions. Truth and reconciliation in South Africa is a process of memory and social

peace as much as it is one of justice. In Guatemala, it has been called “historical clarification” to indicate an effort at gathering the facts more than holding some to account. In the US, Japanese-Americans and African-Americans have sought “reparations” for forced interment during World War II, slavery, and Jim Crow. After World War II, crimes against humanity were prosecuted at the war crimes trials in Germany and Japan, under French law as late as the 1990s, and in Israel, which did not exist at the time of the war. Perpetrators from one country have been detained in another and indicted in a third (Pinochet), tried in civil court in the US (Salvadoran generals), kidnapped by those acting on behalf of a state or international organization (Eichmann and Milosevic). Others have died before they faced their accusers in court (Pinochet and Honecker), or were executed by some of their former allies before justice could be pursued (Ceausescu).

Many of these issues are evident in the trial and execution of Saddam Hussein. Is it justice if all victims and their survivors do not get a day in court? Does judicial impartiality extend to the execution of the penalty? Can justice be meted out by one faction? Does justice stand alone and separate from reconciliation, memory, and stability?

Requirements and Evaluations

Attendance and prompt completion of all assignments by the deadlines outlined are mandatory. Thoughtful participation in class discussions, respect for your classmates, and attentiveness are required. You are obliged to offer your individual analysis, respecting citation standards and the college rules regarding plagiarism.

No late assignments or emailed assignments will be accepted outside of authorized procedures and approved in advance.

Plagiarism results in a failing grade and college disciplinary procedures.

You will be evaluated based on the following:

Weekly Readings (30 total, 5 weeks at 6 points each): You are required to produce either a two page analysis of the assignment as scheduled in class and following the outline provided at the end of this syllabus, or 3 pages of notes on the reading assignment. Your choice. An explanation of the weekly assignments is included at the end of the syllabus.

Attendance and participation (20): Again, attendance and participation are mandatory.

Midterm (20): There will be a take-home midterm essay or essays with questions provided at least one week in advance.

Final/Final Project (30): Your choice:

A. A research paper of 8 pages focusing on a question of justice in the aftermath of state-directed or encouraged violence. You will be required to cite sources from the class, new

sources of scholarly research you identify yourself, and original research on the events. There are three key steps. 1. Pose the question in a written proposal 2. Research and create a bibliography 3. Write. I will review your bibliography prior to week 12. It will not be graded but if I do not receive one, you will fail the final.

B. Engaged Participant Observation (EPO), which involves direct action in an existing organization working on issues related to state violence, human rights, and justice, a 6 page paper reflecting on your role in the organization and the outcome of your efforts, and some explanatory research about the issues involved. You are required to cite sources from the class and relate to the project to the debates, theories, and controversies we focus on in class. An explanation of EPO is included at the end of the syllabus. You are required to submit a time sheet reflecting 12 hours of work over the semester.

For A or B, you are required to notify me of your decision by the date indicated on the syllabus in a 1 page proposal and this will count as up to 5 points on your final grade.

C. A Final Exam.

Readings

Moments of Reprieve by Primo Levi
 Eichmann in Jerusalem by Hannah Arendt
 Buried Secrets by Victoria Sanford
 A Lexicon of Terror by Marguerite Feitlowitz
 Facing Death in Cambodia by Peter McGuire
 The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa by Richard A. Wilson

Introduction

Week 1

“The Ugly Death of Saddam Hussein,” New York Times

“Before Hanging, A Push for Revenge and a Push Back from the US,” John F. Burns

The Logic of State Violence

Week 2

Moments of Reprieve, Primo Levi

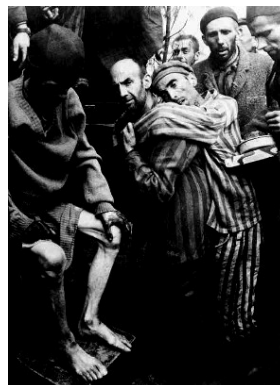
The Trial as Political Problem

Week 3

Eichmann in Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt
 Film: Sophie’s Choice

Week 4

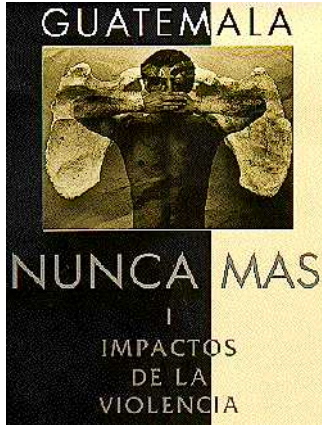
Eichmann in Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt



Latin America: Getting to Know the Generals

Week 5

Buried Secrets, Victoria Sanford



Week 6

Buried Secrets, Victoria Sanford

PROPOSALS DUE

Week 7

A Lexicon of Terror, Marguerite Feitlowitz

Film: *Death and the Maiden*

Week 8

A Lexicon of Terror, Marguerite Feitlowitz

Spring Break

Week 9

Violence, Memory (individual and collective), and Justice

Week 10

Comparing Feitlowitz and Sanford

Film: *The Road to Guantanamo*

Midterm

Week 11

Film: *Ararat*

Justice Denied or Deferred? The Killing Fields that Should Not Have Been

Week 12

Facing Death in Cambodia, Peter McGuire

Film: *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*

Week 13

Facing Death in Cambodia, Peter McGuire

Weekly Assignments

Response papers and notes related to weekly readings give you an opportunity to 1. demonstrate that you grasp the material because you have completed the reading, 2. engage the material in a critical way, and 3. compare and contrast individual readings as we move forward. Whether you are submitting notes or a response paper, your work should:

- Clearly identify the author's primary argument
- Elaborate on subsidiary arguments
- Suggest the evidence the author provides to support his or her arguments

Of course, the extent to which you do this varies. If you are writing a response paper, you will take less time explaining the argument and evidence. If you are submitting notes, you will elaborate the argument, subsidiary arguments, and evidence with as much detail as space allows, and **NO MORE**.

This means you must, on either assignment, analyze and digest the text before you can begin writing. Only tell me what is important. For notes – the most important aspects of the reading. For response papers – the fundamentals of the argument and evidence, and then elaborate on any aspect you want to engage or critique.

A note on notes: These are not narrative, nor even complete sentences. Notes are in the form of an informational hierarchy. **NOT JUST A LIST**. Use any format you desire, but stick to the format.

Argument: State clearly and briefly the author's primary argument. Then organize your notes in terms of a hierarchy, such as the one the author might provide through sections or chapters. Contrast with previous readings

1. Chapter 1. What is this chapter about?
 - A. Important point
 - i. Evidence
 - ii. Evidence
 - B. Important point
 - i. Evidence

A note on response papers: In the first paragraph, tell me the author's primary argument. Be clear and complete. **AND**, tell me what you think – what you will say about the text later. **AWLAYS** contrast with previous readings.

Outline of Engaged Participant Observation

Participant Observation is a specific form of research designed for projects that focus on the values, choices, and actions of individuals through a close understanding of social life and the challenges faced by communities and individuals. When “engaged,” such research includes a strong moral imperative. EPO requires the researcher to:

Participate. Research is based on being an active member of the community or organization you are studying. To the greatest extent possible, you participate in the activities of the community, join in decision-making, and share responsibilities. You are there.

Observe. As the researcher, you retain a distanced perspective at the same time as you insert yourself into a community. This means that you have an obligation as a researcher to *examine* and *analyze* the choices and challenges that the community (and you!) experience. You are studying.

Engage. Though research requires an analytical distance, you have an obligation to accurately and honestly represent the community in whatever you produce, you may not inflict your own values or perspectives on the community (you must engage on a shared basis!), and you *always* retain a moral sense of the intrinsic value and dignity of each member of the community, their shared social life, and the importance of social justice. At times, you are an advocate.

Engaged Participant Observation provides students with an opportunity to experience the practical, real world where the theories and facts you learn are put into practice on a daily basis; to consider social and political action through a perspective that bridges the distance between the academic nature of analysis and moral nature of engagement; finally, to generate a greater awareness of your place in the world when you engage and reflect upon your own moral commitments and learning. In this class, Engaged Participant Observation means that, in groups of 4, you will design a project where you engage in service to consider the activities of an advocacy or service based organization on or off campus that represents or interacts with marginalized communities. Your goal is to understand such communities and consider the challenges they face in light of the political debates brought out in the films we will view.

Requirements of Project Proposal:

- Outline the project, group, and the relationship to state violence and justice;
- Present a form of service engagement that can be completed during the semester;
- Elaborate exactly how you will engage with the organization and what your commitment will be;
- Discuss how you will reflect on your experience and relate it to the course.

Upon completion of the research, each student must submit a brief analytical reflection paper that will discuss

- The project as it relates to the course – be specific and cite course readings;
- The student’s relationship to the community supported or represented;
- Reflections on the goals and efforts of the community;
- The moral issues involved.