

HOW TO COUNT THE DEAD: TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN MEXICO

Fall Quarter, 2019

Tuesday, 9:30-12:20, RBC 1328

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 2-4 PM or by appointment

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Over the past decade, Mexico has faced an unprecedented wave of violence. The death toll tops 150,000, and more than 40,000 people have gone missing. The country is dotted with clandestine graves, most only discovered when citizen search brigades unearth the bodies. Those who stand up against corruption and violence face tremendous risks, and too often these journalists and activists become victims themselves. What can be done to resolve this human rights crisis? How do we make sense of the killing? How do we count the dead? This course examines responses to violence in Mexico, considering questions of memory, reconciliation, international law, and peacebuilding.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

For your capstone, you will write a 20 to 25 page research paper on a topic of your choosing related to contemporary Mexico. You will develop a focused research question based on scholarly research and an arguable thesis supported by secondary and primary sources. Your focus may be historical, contemporary, or theoretical (meaning you may use Mexico as a case study for an established theory) but most importantly your paper will be argumentative not descriptive. You are encouraged to use the course's central questions as guides and inspiration, but they are not specific enough to serve as research questions for this paper.

All assignments are to be turned in during class.

The schedule for the writing assignment is as follows:

Week 3: A preliminary research report consisting of a short paragraph describing a topic you are interested in researching and why that topic is worth researching, a potential idea for your paper will specifically examine, and a list of three sources you have consulted.

Week 5: A formalized research question and an annotated bibliography of at least six sources you consulted in developing the question. In 4 to 5 sentences, each annotation should describe the author's thesis or argument, the general information the source contains, and its place in the broader literature about the topic.

Week 7: A prospectus for your paper describing, in at least five pages, the stakes of your paper's topic, your research question and preliminary thesis, some of the support you have for your thesis, and the significance of your thesis relative to the existing literature.

Week 9: On Friday of week 9 you will exchange a rough draft of your final paper with members of your workshop group. I will not read rough drafts, though I will be available to discuss them in office hours.

Week 10: The first half of class will consist of a meeting with your rough draft readers to discuss suggestions and ideas.

Finals Week: Your paper is due by midnight, Thursday of Finals Week.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work for this course must be your own; plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported. This applies to all writing assignments, quizzes, and exams. If you have any questions as to what constitutes academic misconduct, consult the UCSD Academic Integrity Office website: <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

TECHNOLOGY, PARTICIPATION, AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

We are fortunate to have a class small enough for meaningful discussions, and I hope that we will be able to take advantage of that. While most class meetings will have some lecture component, as I try to provide additional context and information to supplement the readings, I do not intend to make monologues a core feature of the course. Rather, I expect that you will have completed the assigned readings and will come to class prepared to talk about them. Bring questions, curiosities, opinions, and ideas, and share them. That does not mean, however, that you should feel the need to talk incessantly in order to earn participation points: one thoughtful comment can contribute a great deal, and I hope that everyone will feel comfortable participating. It goes without saying that you cannot participate if you are not present, and I do expect you to attend class regularly.

A note on notes: In a small class setting, I generally believe laptops are an obstacle to productive discussion and a distraction more than a learning tool. I would ask that you take notes by hand during my lectures. Don't panic. There is no exam for this course, so your notes will largely serve as reference during discussion, and you can always type them out later.

A note on technology: Please respect me and your classmates by putting your cellphone away during class.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Research Report: 5%
 Annotated Bibliography: 10%
 Prospectus: 20%
 Rough Draft: 5%
 Final Paper: 35%
 Participation: 25%

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: All readings will be distributed electronically.

Week 1 (10/1) - A Hall of Mirrors: Democracy and Human Rights in Mexico

Suggested Readings: David Crow, "The Party's Over: Citizen Conceptions of Democracy and Political Dissatisfaction in Mexico"; Ignacio Sánchez Prado, "Democracy: The Idea of Democratic Transition"

Week 2 (10/8) - The Dirty War that Never Ended: Repression and Democratization

Readings: Selections from Linda Diebel, *Betrayed: The Story of Digna Ochoa*

Suggested Readings: Dolores Trevizo, "Political Repression and the Struggles for Human Rights in Mexico: 1968–1990s"; Sergio Aguayo et. al. "Neither Truth nor Justice: Mexico's De Facto Amnesty"; Lynn Stephen, "Testimony and Human Rights Violations in Oaxaca"

Week 3 (10/15) - From the War on Drugs to the Drug War: The Making of a Humanitarian Crisis**Research Report Due**

Readings: Jo Tuckman, "Narco Trouble"

Suggested Readings: Sandra Rodríguez Nieto, *The Story of Vicente, Who Murdered His Mother, His Father, and His Sister*; Ginger Thompson, "How the U.S. Triggered a Massacre in Mexico" (<https://www.propublica.org/article/allende-zetas-cartel-massacre-and-the-us-dea>); David Shirk and Joel Wallman, "Understanding Mexico's Drug Violence"

Week 4 (10/22) - From the Dirty War to Drug War: Militarization and Human Rights

Readings: Alexander Aviña, "Mexico's Long Dirty War"; Julie Murphy Erfani, "Politics of Death in the Drug War: The Right to Kill and Suspensions of Human Rights in Mexico, 2000–2012"; Dawn Paley, "Drug War as Neoliberal Trojan Horse"

Week 5 (10/29) - Understanding Chronic Violence: Victims, Perpetrators, and Survivors

Annotated Bibliography Due

Readings: Selections from Javier Valdez Cárdenas, *The Taken*; Falko Ernst, "The Life and Death of a Mexican Hitman"

Week 6 (11/5) - *Hasta Encontrarlos*: Disappearances, Memory, and Movements

Readings: Carolina Robledo Silvestre, "Combing History Against the Grain: The Search for Truth Amongst Mexico's Hidden Graves"; Ernesto Schwartz-Marin and Arely Cruz-Santiago, "Pure Corpses, Dangerous Citizens: Transgressing the Boundaries between Experts and Mourners in the Search for the Disappeared in Mexico"

Week 7 (11/12) - Planting the Seeds of Peace: Strategies for Addressing Violence

Prospectus Due

Readings: Selections from Froylan Enciso and Fernando Nieto, *Planters of Peace*; Andreas Schedler, "The Criminal Community of Victims and Perpetrators: Cognitive Foundations of Citizen Detachment From Organized Violence in Mexico"

Week 8 (11/19) - Telling the Tale: Justice and Journalism

Readings: Marcela Turati, "Women, Me, and the War"; Maria Alonso Alonso, "Infrarealist Journalism of Mexican Female Authors: Information Meets Literature in The Sorrows of Mexico"; Gabriela Polit Dueñas, "Chapter Title: Dealing with Everyday Violence: The Journalist and the Painter"

Week 9 (11/26) - Beyond the Drug War: Victims and Social Justice

Rough Draft Due (Friday)

Readings: Lauren Villagran, "The Victims' Movement in Mexico"; Estelle Tarica, "Victims and Counter-Victims in Contemporary Mexico"

Week 10 (12/3) - Rough Draft Workshop and Wrapup