

## PRT 3510 - WITNESSING WAR IN LUSOPHONE CULTURES (GL)

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Course Credits: 3  
No pre-requisites for this class

This is a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts towards your FIU Global Learning graduation requirement.

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### Course Description

This course is an introduction to Witness Literature in Portuguese-speaking cultures (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique). Disruptive life-changing events such as World War II, the Holocaust and the colonial wars in Africa give shape to a powerful literature written in Portuguese by witnesses. By reading a representative corpus of essays, novels and poetry we will reflect on key concepts, challenges and dilemmas of the act of witnessing collective disasters, showing how literature can play a unique role in the preservation of memory and human experiences against the corrosion of time and oblivion. This course is designed with the purpose of illuminating crucial aspects for the formation of all global citizens: the awareness of other people's sufferings and the understanding of the universal relevance of the act of testimony in different times and nationalities. The course aims to look at the wars fought in Portuguese former colonies through the eyes of the colonizers and the colonized: this shift of perspectives aims to enhance students' understanding of the fears and emotional wounds shared by all participants in a war.

### Required Material

\* Essays distributed in class / pdfs

Euclides da Cunha, *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign* (book)

Primo Levi, *The Drowned and The Saved* (book)

Robo Aronson, *The Land at the End of the World* (book)

### Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

- Become familiar with cultural representations of war in different Lusophone countries
- Become more aware about long-term consequences of war for individuals and communities
- Understand and reflect on major issues of the act of witnessing: the representation of the Holocaust and War Trauma and the ethical dilemma of testimony
- Get acquainted with Witness Literature in Portuguese through the analysis of relevant paradigmatic works
- Think critically about the representation of Colonial Wars through the perspective of colonizers and colonized
- Develop critical skills for the interpretation of literary works and films

### Global Student Learning Outcomes

(1) Global awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of the theoretical challenges and ethical responsibilities of bearing witness to the traumatic event of war in different Lusophone cultural contexts in a national and global perspective (Brazil, Portugal, Angola and Mozambique)

(2) Global perspective: Students will be able to analyze the representation of the same traumatic event from opposite points of view (those of the colonizer and the colonized). Students will develop the ability of thinking about an event through a multi-perspective analysis, to understand the universality of human fears, needs and desires and to reflect on the long-term personal and collective damages of war.

(3) Global engagement: Students will be able to engage in the international conversation on the local and global issue of war.

### Method

Lecture conducted entirely in English. All readings are in English. Each class will consist of a presentation on the central topic followed by a group discussion on the readings/videos assigned.

### Course Requirements

This course is recommended for students pursuing a major or minor in Portuguese or the Brazilian Culture Studies Certificate but is open to all students interested.

War in Literature (Preliminary considerations)

\*Homer, from *The Iliad*.

Concepts (Witness Writing, Testimony, *autopsia*)

\* Penelope's Writing: A Myth on Testimony (from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)

\* Herodotus, from *Histories* (Why 'war'?)

\* Thucydides, from *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

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**Brazil: Canudos**

Euclides da Cunha, *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*. Introduction.

**Brazil: Canudos**

Euclides da Cunha. *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*. "The Battle"

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**Film by Glauber Rocha** *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol*

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**Theoretical Perspectives: Einstein, Freud, Adorno**

\*The correspondence between Einstein and Freud on war

\*Theodor Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz."

**Primo Levi**

*The Drowned and the Saved* ("The Memory of the Offense"; "The Gray zone"; "Shame"; "Communicating")

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**Primo Levi**

*The Drowned and the Saved* ("Useless Violence"; "The Intellectual in Auschwitz"; "Stereotypes"; "Letters from Germans")

**Brazilian Narratives of the Shoah**

"Noen Jaffe, *What are the Blind Men Dreaming?* (Lili Stern, "My Diary")

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Review

**ESSAY 1 DUE**  
**Speaker (TBA)**

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**Theoretical Perspectives: Günther Anders, Kenzaburo Oe**

\* Günther Anders, from *Burning Conscience: The Case of the Hiroshima Pilot*

\* Kenzaburo Oe, from *Hiroshima Notes*

**The War in Vietnam**

Francis Ford Coppola, *Apocalypse Now* (film)

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\*Viet Thanh Nguyen, from *Nothing Ever Dies*

**Portuguese writing on African Colonial Wars**

António Lobo Antunes, *The Land at the End of the World*

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**Women's perspectives**

\*Lídia Jorge, from *The Murmuring Coast*

Margarida Cardoso, *A costa dos murmurios* (film)

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**African writing on Colonial Wars**

**African writing on Colonial Wars**

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**ESSAY due**

**Contemporary wars**

\*Alessandro Portelli, "A Dialogical Relationship. An Approach to Oral History."

Svetlana Aleksievich, from *Zinky Boys*

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**Invited speaker (TBA)**

**Studies on memory: Sciences and Humanities**

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## Dialogue with local veterans

### Conclusions

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### ESSAY 3 due

#### Assessment

Essay 1 is a 6-page (double-spaced) essay in English.  
Essay 2 is a 6-page (double-spaced) essay in English.  
Essay 3 is a 6-page (double-spaced) essay in English according to the MLA (Modern Language Association) style. Check MLA Style guidelines at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/7/01/>

#### Grading

Regular attendance and active participation 10 %

Essay 1 30 %

Essay 2 30 %

Essay 3 30 %

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#### Grading Scale

A 95 - 100%

A- 90 - 94%

B+ 87 - 89%

B 83 - 86%

B- 80 - 82%

C+ 77 - 79%

C 70 - 76%

D 60 - 69%

F 59 - 0%

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Assistance is required. Students who cannot come to class due to University sanctioned events (athletes, debaters, musicians, etc.) or family-related events (funerals, marriages, etc.) must inform the professor in advance.

It is extremely important to arrive in class on time. Be aware that disrupting the class with late arrivals will not be tolerated. A 10 minutes delay counts as one absence.

Missing class will be penalized each time by one percentage point. In case of an emergency (illness, hospitalization, etc.) you are required to provide a note from your doctor or another official and verifiable documentation.

**Absolutely no text messaging or use of cell phones, i-pods, MP3, computers and other electronic devices during class. Turn them off or leave them home.**

**Academic Misconduct (as set out in FIU policies):**

As a student of this university, you are expected:

- to be honest in your academic endeavors.
- not represent someone else's work as your own.
- not cheat, nor aid in another's cheating

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and are punishable up to and including expulsion from the University.

Please, get better acquainted with what is considered "Academic Misconduct:"  
<http://www2.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/1academicproc.htm>

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THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE SYLLABUS.

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