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PRT 3510 - WITNESSING WAR IN LUSOPHONE CULTURES (GL)

Faculty Nicola Gavioli

Fall 2017

M/W (3:30 pm - 4:45 pm)

Classroom: Graham Center 285

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Office Hours: M/W 2-3 pm (or by appointment)

Office phone number: 305 348 4556

DM building, room 482 A

Course Credits: 3

No pre-requisites for this class

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 rise 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 resonance 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

1. * Essays distributed in class / pdfs
2. Euclides da Cunha, *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign* (book)
3. Lobo Antunes, *The Land at the End of the World* (book)
4. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and The Saved* (book)
5. Noemi Jaffe, *What are the Blind Men Dreaming?* (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 perspectives 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.

Tentative Schedule: (August 21 – November 29)

M - August 21 – **War in Literature**

Preliminary considerations

*Homer, from *The Iliad*

*Simone Weil, from *Iliad or the Poem of Force*

W- August 23 – **Concepts** (Witness Writing, Testimony, *autopsia*)

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

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

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

M - August 28 – **Brazil: Canudos**

Euclides da Cunha, introduction.

Backlands: The Canudos Campaign. "The Land" (chapter I); "The Man" (chapter II)

W- August 30 – **Brazil: Canudos**

Euclides da Cunha. *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*. "The Battle" (chapters III and IV)

M - September 4 – **Labor Day - University Closed**

W - September 6 – **Brazil: Canudos**

Euclides da Cunha. *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*. "The Battle" (chapters V-VI)

M - September 11 – **Brazil: Canudos**

Euclides da Cunha. *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign*. "The Battle" (chapters VII-VIII)

W - September 13 – **Theoretical Perspectives: Einstein, Freud, Adorno**

*The correspondence between Einstein and Freud on war

*Theodor Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz."

M - September 18 – **Primo Levi**

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

W - September 19 – **Primo Levi**

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

M - September 25 – **Brazilian Narratives of the Shoah**

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

W - September 27 – **Brazilian Narratives of the Shoah**

Noemi Jaffe, *What are the Blind Men Dreaming?* (Noemi Jaffe, "What are the Blind Men Dreaming?"; Leda Cartum, "Here, There")

M - October 2 – **Review**
ESSAY 1 DUE

W - October 4 – **Speaker (TBA)**

M - October 9 – **Theoretical Perspectives: Günther Anders, Kenzaburo Oe**
* Günther Anders, from *Burning Conscience: The Case of the Hiroshima Bomb*
* Kenzaburo Oe, from *Hiroshima Notes*

W - October 11 – **Colonial Wars**
Introduction
Joaquim Furtado, from "A guerra" (documentary)

M - October 16 – **Portuguese writing on African Colonial Wars**
António Lobo Antunes, *The Land at the End of the World*

W - October 18 – **Portuguese writing on African Colonial Wars**
António Lobo Antunes, *The Land at the End of the World*

M - October 23 – **Women's perspectives**
*Lídia Jorge, from *The Murmuring Coast*
Margarida Cardoso, *A costa dos murmúrios* (film)

W - October 25 – **Women's perspectives**
Margarida Cardoso, *A costa dos murmúrios* (film)

M - October 30 – **African writing on colonial wars**
Introduction

ESSAY 2 DUE

W - November 1 – **African writing on colonial wars**
*Luandino Vieira, *The Real Life of Domingos Xavier*

M - November 6 – **African writing on colonial wars**

*Luís Bernardo Honwana, from *We Killed Mangy Dog and Other Stories*

W - November 8 – **Postcolonial returns**

*Dulce Maria Cardoso, from *The Return*

M - November 13 – **Contemporary wars**

Students' oral presentations

W - November 22 – **Contemporary wars**

Students's oral presentations

M - November 20 – **Invited speaker**

Speaker (TBA)

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

*Svetlana Aleksievich, from *Zinky Boys*

W - November 15 – **Dialogue with local veterans**

Encounter with local veterans

M- November 27 – **Review**

ESSAY 3 DUE

W - November 29 – **Review**

December 4 – 9: FINAL EXAMS WEEK

Assessment

Essay 1 is a one-page (double-spaced) essay in English.

Essay 2 is a one-page (double-spaced) essay in English.

Essay 3 is a two-page (double-spaced) essay in English on the encounter with local veterans.

Oral presentation (the topic must be discussed with the instructor)

The Final Project will consist of 10 pages (double-spaced) in English

according to the MLA (Modern Language Association) style. Check MLA Style guidelines at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

The topic of your final paper must be discussed with the instructor during office hours

or by appointment.

Grading

Regular attendance and active participation (including oral presentation) 10 %

Essay 1 20 %

Essay 2 20 %

Essay 3 20 %

Final paper 30 %

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%

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/1acmisconductproc.htm>

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

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