The Politics of Human Rights in New Democracies: 
Transitional Justice and Policing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Dr. Bonner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbonner@uvic.ca">mbonner@uvic.ca</a> (please put Poli 436/533 in the subject line)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Session</td>
<td>Thursdays – 10:00am-1:00pm (DTB A357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>Mondays and Thursdays 4:00-5:00 or by appointment</td>
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<td>(250) 853-3561</td>
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I acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the University stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Welcome to the course

Argentina is the quintessential example of a country that has pursued transitional justice. The country went through a brutal authoritarian regime from 1976-1983. Tens of thousands of people were imprisoned, tortured, disappeared, and killed. When it ended, the newly elected president immediately organized a truth commission and held trials against former military leaders. Eventually reparations were extended and sites of commemoration were established. Is Argentina a model for other transitional countries? Does persistent police violence in democracy challenge the ideals of transitional justice?

In this course we explore human rights debates around transitional justice and policing in democracy. The class discussions will focus on the case of Argentina and what we learn from this case that is useful for understanding human rights in other countries. Each student will develop their knowledge about transitional justice and policing in another country of their choice. This developing knowledge will be shared in class discussions allowing us to place the case of Argentina in a global context.

About the Instructor

The study of human rights in new democracies is my area of expertise and my passion. I study the issue of human rights from the perspective of the political science sub-field of comparative politics. At the graduate level and beyond, the study of comparative politics often involves travelling and conducting many in-depth interviews with fascinating people. I have had the opportunity to spend significant periods of time in a number of countries to interview politicians,
journalists, social movement activists, police, government administrators, political party members, ex-guerrillas, ex-political prisoners, and other academics, about issues of human rights. I have written a number of books and many articles that present some of what I have found through this work. If you would like to know more about me and the work I have published on the topic of human rights you can check out my web profile: https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/politicalscience/people/directory/bonnermichelle.php

Course Goals and Objectives

To Prepare you for future work in human rights. Some students who have taken this course have been motivated to pursue careers in the area of human rights. I have had students in this course who have gone on to train to become human rights lawyers, to pursue the issue of human rights in graduate school, to work on issues of human rights through NGOs, government and international organizations. Whether you pursue a career in human rights or simply continue to follow human rights issues in the news, this course aims to provide you a basic understanding of some of the issues you may encounter.

To Prepare You for Graduate Level Courses. The seminar structure of this course is the same as the structure for graduate level course. Indeed, a few of you are graduate students. For the majority of you this may be the first seminar course you have taken. This course will give you the opportunity to see if you would like to continue on to graduate studies. If you do decide to carry on, this course will help you to prepare a strong academic paper that you can use to showcase your writing skills in graduate school (or other job/career) applications.

To Develop and Share Your Country Specific Interest and Knowledge. This is a comparative politics course and as such is case study based. You will come away from this course with a strong understanding of issues of transitional justice and policing in Argentina and another country of your choice. Through classroom discussions you also will learn about issues of transitional justice and policing in some of the other countries chosen by your classmates. The only restraint to your choice of country is that the country must be and democracy and recovering from authoritarianism, civil war, or colonialism (i.e. it is a democracy and is not currently engaged in a civil war) and is dealing with several of the issues covered in this course. You will develop your country specific knowledge through the paper proposal, final paper, presentations, and share what you learn during classroom discussions. Sharing your knowledge in class will contribute to all students learning more about the similarities and differences in how various countries address human rights as it relates to transitional justice and policing.

To Develop Research and Analytical Skills. Facts are often learnt and then forgotten. Analytical skills, once learnt, are rarely forgotten and can constantly be improved. Many employers seek students with undergraduate or graduate degrees in the social sciences because of the students’ strong writing, research and analytical skills. This course will help you to develop your analytical skills through reflection papers and a research paper. Your term paper will give you the opportunity to build independent research skills and develop a longer argument supported by analysis. The paper proposal aims to get you started writing early and have the opportunity to receive feedback so you can improve your writing on the final paper. You will come away from this course with a good understanding of how to write a comparative politics paper.
For those of you with strong writing skills, I encourage you to aim beyond the course and write a paper that could be submitted for publication in an undergraduate academic journal such as Under Current (http://www.undercurrentjournal.ca/)

Or

On Politics (https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/onpolitics/index)

Or (for papers on a Hispanic country)
PLVS VLTRA: Hispanic and Italian Studies Undergraduate Journal (https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/plvsvltra)

Publication in such a journal would look very good on a graduate school or job application.

To Develop Participation and Presentation Skills. Many jobs, as well as upper-level courses, require presentation and communication skills. This course gives you the opportunity to practice your presentation skills in a small classroom setting. You will have the opportunity to engage with the course material through classroom discussions, informal presentations, and one formal presentation. Class participation not only helps you to develop your verbal communication skills but also assists you in processing the material you are learning.

Requirements and Evaluation

**Paper proposal:** This is a mini-version of your final essay that will give you an opportunity to receive feedback from me before you write the final paper. Details will be provided in class during the first week of classes and are available on a hand-out on the CourseSpaces site.

**Due:** Oct. 10 (no proposals accepted after Oct. 15)  **Value:** 15%

**Final Paper (Poli 436: 10-15 pages; Poli 533: 20-25 pages):** This essay will allow you to showcase the country knowledge you have gained as well as your writing and analytical skills. I will provide more details in class during the first week of class and when I return the paper proposal. An accompanying hand-out with expectations is available on the CourseSpaces site.

**Due:** Dec. 3 (no papers accepted after Dec. 5)  **Value:** 35%

**Three (3) Reflection Papers:** Since this class is discussion based, it is important that you have done the readings and reflected upon the ideas that they address. To help you with this, you will submit a total of 3 reflection papers throughout the semester. Each paper (1-2 pages single spaced) will ask you to reflect on the main ideas raised in the readings in a given week. I will provide more details in class during the first week of class. An accompanying hand-out is available on the CourseSpaces site.

**Due:** at the beginning of corresponding class (see hand-out), no late reflection papers will be accepted. At least one of the reflection papers must be submitted by Oct. 10. If no reflection paper is submitted by this date then you will receive a 0 for the first reflection paper.  **Value:** 20%

**Participation:** Participation in class provides you an opportunity to practice and improve your verbal communications skills. Participation in class will be evaluated based on attendance and the quality of your participation in class discussions and activities. Quality participation is
participation that is constructive, involves listening as well as speaking, shows you have done the
course reading, and is respectful of others in the class even when there is disagreement.
Participation will also involve small assignments linked to classroom discussion and informal
presentations.

Value: 20%

Final Presentation:
The presentation gives you an opportunity to practice your public speaking skills. On the last day
of class, in groups of two, you will compare the two countries you have been working on all
semester and reflect on the course readings. I will provide more details in class during the first
week of class and towards the end of the semester. An accompanying hand-out is available on
the CourseSpaces site.

Value: 10%

Grading and Late Penalties
I do not want you to miss important class time in order to finish an assignment. Moreover,
arriving to class late with a rushed assignment can disrupt the learning of other students. Please
come to class the day the written assignment is due and arrive on time. Submit the assignments
to me at the beginning of class the day they are due (or earlier if you like!). If yours is not ready,
you can complete it after class, though all assignments not received at the beginning of class will
have a late penalty imposed (the same as if submitted the next day). Reflections papers cannot be
submitted once class has started.

In many jobs, deadlines can be very important with high penalties if they are not met. If you have
trouble with time management skills please see the resources listed at the end of the syllabus for
assistance. University is a great opportunity to work on developing these skills before entering
the workforce. The late penalty for written assignments in this class is -4% per day late
(weekends count as one day, e.g. if due on Friday and handed in on Monday -8% will be
deducted), unless there is evidence (e.g., a doctor’s note) of medical or significant personal
reasons preventing submission on time. You should not delay consulting me regarding late or
missed assignments. I will only accept hard copies.

To achieve the goals outlined in this syllabus, you must complete all assignments for this course.
According to university policy, failure to complete one or more of the assignments will result in
a grade of ‘N’ (incomplete) for the course. An ‘N’ is equivalent to a fail for your GPA and will
be assigned a numeric percentage grade of 49% or lower.

Required Texts
There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available through library reserves
in electronic form.

This text is an excellent guide for essay writing. It is highly recommended for this course and any
other course you take in the social sciences. It is available for purchase at the university bookstore.

Northey, Margot and Joan McKibbin. Making Sense: A Student’s Guide to Research and
Keeping in Touch

e-mails to me (for quick individual questions or setting up appointments): Like you, I receive a lot of e-mails every day, but it is very important to me not to miss e-mail questions from participants in this course. Please put Poli 436 or Poli 533 in the subject heading so I know this is a priority e-mail. Please also take a moment before e-mailing me to ask yourself 3 questions: 1) is the answer to the question on the syllabus?; 2) can the question wait until next class so others in the class can benefit from the answer? (It is unlikely you are the only one with the question); 3) can the question wait until my office hours? (Office hours are a great opportunity for me to get to know you one-on-one and have an extended conversation about your work). If your answer is ‘no’ to all these questions, then please e-mail me.

CourseSpaces This course has a CourseSpaces site. You can find it at:
https://coursespaces.uvic.ca/. On the site you will find a copy of the course syllabus and information on all the assignments. To access the site, you will need a Netlink ID, if you don’t have one already.

Please come and see me I enjoy getting to know you one-on-one and helping you in a more individualized manner with your assignments. Do not be shy about using my office hours.

COURSE OUTLINE

Sept. 5: Introductory Session

Part I: What are Human Rights?

Sept. 5: Victims’ Testimonies
Many human rights activists in Argentina have told me: “You cannot understand the issue of human rights and our work unless you hear our stories first”. It is very disturbing to listen, but to honour their request and their courage we will begin this course by listening to and discussing these experiences. The goal of this week is to take the issue of human rights out of the abstract and ground our future discussions in this course in a personal understanding of the abuses. While doing the readings and listening to the testimonies in class, note your reactions and the questions they raise for you.

on-line:

Sept. 12: History and Debates

By the end of the week you should be able to:
• Identify the political debates surrounding the history of human rights.
• Analyze the arguments for and against a broad definition of human rights.
• Analyze the role of the Inter-American Human Rights System in human rights protection in the region.


Recommended


Part II: Transitional Justice: Addressing the Past

Sept. 19: What is transitional justice?

By the end of the week you should be able to:

• Understand the history of transitional justice
• Analyze and debate the multiple meanings of “transitional justice”
• Identify the role of human rights organizations (HROs) in a transition to democracy and transitional justice.


Recommended


Sept. 26: Politics of Memory

By the end of the week you should be able to:
-7-

- Understand what is meant by ‘collective memory’.
- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of remembering versus forgetting.
- Analyze the challenges of establishing a collective memory.


Recommended


Oct. 3: Truth Commissions

By the end of the week you should be able to:
- Understand what a truth commission is.
- Analyze the goals of establishing a truth commission.
- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of having a truth commission.


Recommended:


Oct. 10: Justice and the Courts

Paper Proposal Due Oct. 10

By the end of the week you should be able to:
• Identify the questions that need to be asked before trials are set up.
• Assess the goals of trials versus their outcomes.
• Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of using courts.


Recommended


Oct. 17: Discussion of Death and the Maiden (review notes and readings thus far in the course)

Film: Death and the Maiden (2003) 103 min.

By the end of the week you should be able to:
• Understand the difference between individual and collective memory.
• Assess the debates around collective memory, truth and justice.
• Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of truth commissions compared to courts.
• Understand the connection between the materials we have covered thus far in the course, helping you to prepare for the final presentation.

Recommended


Part III: Rethinking Policing: Toward the Future, Nunca Más (Never Again)

Oct. 24: Policing and Transitional Justice

By the end of the week you should be able to:
• Analyze the challenge policing poses to questions of human rights
• Assess the limits of transitional justice in addressing police violence.
• Analyze the potential obstacles and possibilities for achieving police reform.


Recommended


**Oct. 31: What is Democratic Policing?**

By the end of the week you should be able to:
- Understand the relationship between policing and democracy
- Understanding the history of policing in democracy
- Analyze how different forms of democracy shape policing


Recommended


**Nov. 7: Punitive Populism and Human Rights**

By the end of the week you should be able to:
- Identify punitive populism
- Analyze how it shapes policing and human rights.
- Analyze the tension between security and human rights.


Recommended


Nov. 14: NO CLASS. Professor available in office during regular class time for consultation regarding the final paper and final presentation. It is recommended that students use this time (and even the class space) to meet with their group to prepare their final presentation.

Nov. 21: Protest Policing and Human Rights

By the end of the week you should be able to:

• Understand the right to protest, its limits, and relationship with democracy.
• Identify and analyze the meaning of democratic protest policing.
• Analyze the potential obstacles and possibilities for democratizing protest policing.


Recommended


Nov. 28: Prospects for Human Rights
Presentations: You have been hired by an international organization to assess human rights (as discussed in this course) in your two countries, present your report to the class. What has gone well? What changes do you recommend? Why? (draw on at least 3 topics (3 different weeks’ readings) from the course, see hand-out for details)

Final Paper Due Dec. 3

Your relationship to colleagues in the course

The relationship to your colleagues in this course should be collegial, non-competitive, and supportive. The course is designed to be a model for graduate level seminar courses (for some of you it is a graduate level course), or any other professional environment. Since there will be a variety of levels of student experience in this course, please be prepared to be patient with colleagues who know more, or less than you do. Our collective goal should be that all students who participate fully in the course regardless of level of experience with Political Science will come away with a solid understanding of transitional justice by the end of the term.

Technology in the Classroom

Studies have shown that students, and those sitting near them in class, do better in courses when they use old fashioned pen and paper to take notes. In part, this is due to the distractions of texting, email, facebook etc. and flipping between screens. It is also because taking notes by hand is slower and so forces you to synthesize (and thereby retain) what is being discussed. In a seminar context, technological distractions are particularly disruptive to the whole class. Please use pen and paper and give yourself a restful break from your digital screen.

Resources to Assist You

The Centre for Academic Communication. The Centre for Academic Communication (formerly the writing centre) is used by everyone -- undergraduate students, graduate students and professors. It is not remedial. You can visit them up to a couple of times a week to get assistance with current or past assignments. They can make a huge difference in your confidence and skill with writing. I have seen students receive their first ‘A’s’ as a result of visiting the Centre for Academic Communication. https://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cae/

Time Management. Time management is a key skill that makes a huge difference in how well you do at university. It is also a skill that is very valuable in any job you might have after university. If you know you have trouble organizing your time to finish, for example, 3 papers due the same day, then contact study solutions through the library. They offer excellent courses and provide one-on-one assistance: http://www.uvic.ca/library/locations/home/learning/study.php

Personal Challenges. You may also want to contact a counselor if delays in your coursework completion are due to personal challenges you face over the semester: http://coun.uvic.ca

Accommodations. Students who require additional assistance (personal, technological, exam taking, attendance, assignment requirements and more) are encouraged to book an appointment with the Centre for Accessible Learning to consider registration. Additionally, students who do
require accommodations are advised to speak to the course director early in the term. For general inquiries: inforcsd@uvic.ca. For information regarding registration, documentation, learning disability assessments, contact information and more, see: https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/.

*Equity Policy.* “The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members” “Senate Resolution, January 13, 1999).

**Course Experience Survey (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey you will receive an email inviting you to do so. You will need to use your UVic netlink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

**The responsibility of the institution** - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

**The responsibility of the student** - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found in the undergraduate calendar.
## PERCENTAGE GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
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1. The percentage grading scale applies to all Faculties at the University of Victoria.
2. The percentage grades should be associated with a letter grading schema.
3. A percentage grade for an N grade should be assigned in the following manner:
   - **N GRADE**: If a student has not completed the exam, or has not completed the course requirements, but has submitted course requirements that total more than 49% of the total grade for a course, an instructor will assign a percentage grade of 49%. 
