# UGS 303. Difficult Dialogues: Feminicides and Human Rights Activism in Mexico and Central America

Unique# 65045. Spring 2014

Prof. Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-4:00

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Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays at BEN 1.126

## **Description:**

This signature course aims to introduce students to one of the most concerning issues of gender violence and Human rights violations in the Americas: feminicides, or the systematic women killings, and its implications in activism and public debates on gender justice. To achieve this objective the class will discuss films, chronicles, essays, and testimonies, as well as documents related to Human Rights organizations, courts resolutions, and official statements, in order to: a) define gender concepts in relationship to Human Rights politics; b) understand how economic, political, and social factors are reflected in these crimes; and c) evaluate the different forms of activism and the development of political struggle related to femicides/feminicides.

## **Grade Criteria** (will be given as plus/minus):

20% class participation 30% partial tests 30% final paper 20% final test

**Participation.** Students are expected to participate actively in all activities inside and outside classroom. In their participation, students will contribute with comments on texts and other materials of study, response to professor and classmates positions, and questions addressing analysis and criticism. Attitudes and interventions that discourage the learning experience will be considered negative participation and may affect participation grade. Class and reading sections attendance will be considered for participation grade (after 2 absences, one point of the participation grade will be reduced for each absence).

**Partial Texts.** Three partial tests will include questions on readings and topics discussed in class.

**Final Test.** It will be an overview of the course.

**Final paper.** This will consist of one 1000-1500 words research on one feminicide case in the world. Students will explore the several resources in UT for documenting their entries, and will edit them collaboratively with the supervision and advising of the teaching assistant and the professor. Quality of documentation and comprehensiveness in covering the topic selected, as well as the organization and effective writing will be the criteria for grading these entries.

#### **Rules of the class:**

Only when a student has a valid excuse, he or she will be allowed to present tests or turn in assignments out of the scheduled date.

Students must talk to the professor in the office when they have any concern with grades, class performance, and other issues related to the class.

Professor musts give grades of tests and assignments at least one week after student presented or turned it in.

Professor will give general feedback in class after each test or assignment or any time students request it; he also will be available in office hours or by appointment (in cases of schedule conflict) to talk on the progress of any particular student.

Instructor will make himself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that a student may require as a student with a disability. Before course accommodations will be made, students will be required to provide documentation prepared by the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSD). To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641. For more information, read regulations for Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities <a href="http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd">http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd</a>

Scholastic dishonesty: students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from The University of Texas. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For more information, visit Student Judicial Services (SJS) at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

#### Schedule:

## January

- 14. Introduction to the course
- 16. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 21. The Contemporary History of Human Rights. Reading: Stearns.
- 23. Natural Law vs. Positive Law. Reading: Neier.
- 28. Human Rights and the question of coloniality. Reading: Lodhi.
- 30. Femicide as politics. Reading: Russell, "Introduction"

## **February**

- 4. Definitions I. Russell "Defining Femicide...
- 6. Definitions II. Reading: Lagarde
- 11. Test 1.
- 13. Understanding Cd. Juárez feminicides I. Reading: Monarrez. Amanesty International

"Muertes intolerables."

- 18. Understanding Cd. Juárez feminicides II. Reading: Wright, Disposable Women....
- 20. Perception of feminicides in Cd. Juárez. Reading: Staudt.
- 25. Film: Señorita extraviada
- 27. On Señorita extraviada. Reading: Fregoso

#### March

- 4. Film: La batalla de las cruces
- 6. Activism in Cd. Juárez I. Reading: Wright "Femicide, Mother-Activism..."
- 18. Activism in Cd. Juárez II. Reading: Domínguez, Ravelo.
- 20. Test 2
- 25. Testimonios. Readings: Arce, Ledesma
- 27. Testimonios. Flores, Huamañahui, and Franco.

## April

- 1. Film: *Backyard*
- 3. Guest speaker Lydia Huerta on Backyard
- 8. The legal question. Reading: Harrington.
- 10. The case of Campo Algodonero: resolutions and official reactions.
- 15. Feminicides in Guatemala I. Reading: Cházaro et al.
- 17. Feminicides in Guatemala II. Reading: Musalo et al.
- 22. Feminicides in Argentina. Reading Fontenla.
- 24. Film: *Bajo el Tacaná*
- 29. Test 3

#### May

1. Conclusions. Final projects due.

#### Course materials:

Arce, Eva. "Testimonio." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 45-48.

Bejarano, Cynthia. "Falta de respeto y sistemas de justicia: perspectivas binacionales sobre violencia de género en ambos lados de la forntera." *Diálogos interdisciplinarios sobre violencia sexual.* PAtricia Ravelo Blancas and Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba, ed. México: FONCA-Eón-LLILAS-UTEP, 2012, 119-142.

Cházaro, Angélica, Jennifer Casey, Katherine Ruhl. "Getting Away with Murder. Guatemala's Failure to Protect Women." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 93-115.

Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, Héctor, Patricia Ravelo Blancas. "Obedience without Compliance. The Role of the Government, Organized Crime, and NGOs in the Impunity the Murders the Women of Ciudad Juárez." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 182-196.

Flores, Paula. "The Government Has Tried to Divide Us." *Making a Killing Femicide, Free Trade, and La frontera.* Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzmán, ed. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010, 263-267.

Fontenla, Marta. "Femicides in Mar del Plata." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 116-126.

Franco, Rosa. "Testimonio." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 273-274.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda. "La transformación del terror: *Señorita extraviada* de Lourdes Portillo (2001)." *Diálogos interdisciplinarios sobre violencia sexual.* PAtricia Ravelo Blancas and Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba, ed. México: FONCA-Eón-LLILAS-UTEP, 2012, 235-256.

Harrignton, James C. "¡Alto a la impunidad! Is there a Legal Relief for the Murders of Women in Ciudad Juárez? *Gender Violence at the US-Mexico Border. Media Representation and Public Response*. Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba and Ignacio Corona, ed. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2010.

Huamañahui, Julia. "Testimonio." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 179-181.

Lagarde y de los Ríos, Marcela. "Preface: Feminist Keys for Understanding Feminicide." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, xi-xxv.

Ledesma Ortega, Norma. "Testimonio." *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas.* Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ed. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2010, 273-274.

Lodhi Q., Abdul. "Human Rights and the Third World Development." *Human Rights Issues and Trends*. Abdul Q. Lodhi and Russell A. McNeilly, ed. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1993, 33-49.

Monárrez-Fragoso, Julia E. "The Suffering of the Other." *Making a Killing Femicide, Free Trade, and La frontera.* Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzmán, ed. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010, 183-199.

Neier, Aryeh. *The International Human Rights Movement. A History.* Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Russell, Diana E. H. "Defining Femicide and Related Concepts." Diana E. H. Russell and Roberta A. Harmes, ed. New York-London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2001, 12-25."

-----. Femicide by Gunfire: A Year of Lethal Hate Crimes in the United States." *Femicide in Global Perspective*. Diana E. H. Russell and Roberta A. Harmes, ed. New York-London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2001, 31-40.

----. "Introduction: The Politics of Femicide." Diana E. H. Russell and Roberta A. Harmes, ed. New York-London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2001, 3-11.

Staudt, Katleen. *Violence and Activism at the Border. Gender, Fear, and Everyday Life in Ciudad Juárez*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2008.

Stearns, Peter N. *Human Rights in World History*. New York-London: Routledge, 2012.

Wright, Melissa W. "Femicide, Mother-Activism, and the Geography of Protest in Northern Mexico" *Making a Killing Femicide, Free Trade, and La frontera*. Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzmán, ed. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2010, 211-242.

----. *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. New York-London: Routledge, 2006.

# Films:

Backyard/Traspatio. Carlos Carrera, dir. Bajo el Tacaná. Isabel Vericat, dir. La batalla de las cruces Rafael Bonilla, dir. Señorita extraviada. Lourdes Portillo, dir.