Course Syllabus

Social Movements and Human Rights in Argentina
LACB-3000 (3 credits /45 class hours)
SIT Study Abroad Program:
Argentina: Social Movements and Human Rights

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description
This seminar introduces students to social movements and human rights issues in Argentina. Students will analyze the roles played by NGOs and other organizations, as well as by broader social movements, in Argentina’s struggle to attain and uphold human rights for its diverse citizens. The seminar includes both theoretical and experiential components, and students will learn to draw connections from concepts to case studies and actual issues. The seminar is taught primarily in Buenos Aires with several components in the provinces of Salta, Jujuy and Santa Fe as well.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Discuss the history of human rights struggles in Argentina.
- Analyze the successes and challenges faced by diverse organizations and movements which work to achieve greater social justice.
- Describe the major changes that these social movements have undergone from the 1990s to the present with examples, comparing older initiatives with new models of community-based organizations.
- Apply basic concepts of social movement theory.
- Explain how the concept of popular education has been used in different social movements in Argentina and Latin America.
- Articulate the relationship between new social movements and themes such as afro-descendent populations, gender and sexuality, and environment,
- Assess the importance of traditional and emerging relationships based on communal values and solidarity, and the potential for these practices to deepen democratic governance.
Language of Instruction
This course is taught entirely in Spanish. Readings, lectures, discussions, and visits are conducted in Spanish. Some translations will be available in certain cases. Pre-departure assignments can be written in English. Other assignments are expected to be written in Spanish.

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Introduction to Social Movements

Session 1: Social Movements’ Definition and Main Theories
This class will be devoted to the understanding of the basic concepts and current theories that analyze social movements, including collective action theory, new social movement theory, and domination and resistance processes. We will discuss the definitions and different theoretical frameworks of social movements along with their historical evolution. The main concepts we will work with are: repertoire of contention; political opportunities and constraints; cycles of contention; and framing contention from the North American theory of social movements. This session will also include an introduction to the main concepts and trends of social movements in Latin America.

Required Reading:

Session 2: Introduction to Social Movements in Argentina and the Concept of “Decolonizing”
In session 2, we will analyze social movements that developed in Argentina in the last twenty years, taking into account visible public protests and other visible public demonstrations such as road blockades and pickets. We will also consider subjectivity in the meaning of action for different social actors. Additionally, this session will explore the relationship with policies and productivity at the grassroots level of organization. It will address the meaning of the 2001-2002 crisis for social organizations and the changes that have occurred. The class will discuss a number of readings and movies, in light of the crisis of 2001 and the role of different social movements during that moment in the history of Argentina. We will also debate the concept of decolonizing and analyze the implications decolonization has had on social movements in Latin America today.

Required Readings:
Module 2: Basic Concepts of Social Movements in Latin America

Session 1: Popular Education and Social Movements
In this session, we will explore the concept of popular education, developed by Paulo Freire in the 60s, which continues to be a paradigm that many social movements apply in their daily action. The students will be exposed to the main ideas that this concept implies, and will analyze different ways in which it is implemented in the daily activities of many social movements. There will be a discussion about the experience of Bachilleratos Populares through some concepts such as structure of political opportunities, cycles of protest, territoriality, and latency and visibility.

Required Readings:
  o Read Primeras palabras and Capítulo II.

Session 2: Popular Education as Seen by the Social Movements
The students will visit two different Bachilleratos Populares to interact with high school students. The Bachilleratos Populares are educational projects that are closely related to different social movements. Utilizing a strategy to construct popular education on the ground, these projects implement popular education theory, practice, and principles into the everyday curriculum.

Session 3: Social Movements and Social Economy
This class will debate the theoretical approaches and practical experiences that constitute "new ways" of constructing economy. Building a new economy that is not built around capitalist theory and values has been a struggle and objective of many social movements and different organizations that seek change. The idea of an economy that is based on satisfying the needs of "the people" and not of capital is a great but necessary challenge, as humanity is facing a triple crisis: economic, social, and environmental. In particular, this session will look at the social and solidarity perspective and the basic concepts around it. It will also give an overview of how social movements apply these views in Argentina, through different political and economic organizations.

Required Readings:

Session 4: Campesino and Indigenous Movements in Northern Argentina
During the trip to the north we will discuss different social movements that fight for land rights in Argentina.

Required Reading:

Session 5: Gender and Social Movements
This class will be held in Salta, during which we will discuss social movements from a gender perspective and look at how women are impacted through participation in social movements.

Required Reading:

Session 6: Territorial Movements: Tupac Amaru Neighborhood Association
This session’s visit to the Tupac Amaru organization, one of the biggest social movements in the world, will facilitate a discussion on territory and the role of social movements.

Session 7: Environmental Rights and the Anti-Mining Movement
The visit to the Salinas Grandes during session 7 will enable the group to discuss the issue of mining as it relates to cultural, environmental, and land rights.

Required Reading:

Session 8: Territory and Social Movements
In this class the students will learn about the concept of territory and the debates in Latin America about its implication in the analysis of social movements. Grassroots organizing with local people is one of the basic ideas of many social movements in Argentina. Territory is not only the physical space of action but also a way of constructing power relationships and social change. The territory configures the project of a social movement and at the same time they reconfigure the territory.

Required Readings:

Recommended Reading:

Session 9: Militancy, Government, and Social Change
Social and political militancy is a way to frame most of the work many organizations carry out in their aim for social change. In this session the students will analyze these concepts and the diverse ways that militancy is interpreted in different social movements. The idea of social change will also be incorporated in the debate about what type of social change different organizations are seeking to achieve. Additionally, the session will include some basic debates about the relationship between the government and social movements around the discussion of social change.

Required Readings:

Session 10: Militancy and Social Movements
The students will again visit the Bachillerato Popular, debating with its participants about what social change means in Latin America and in the US. We will also discuss what “to militate” means in their daily lives.

Module 3: Final Reflections about Social Movements in an International Perspective

Session 1: Social Movements in Latin America and the World: An International Perspective
This session will consist of a debate where we will introduce the main social movements present in Latin America. The debates and perspectives discussed in previous classes will be reconsidered and reviewed against the theories discussed and presented in the history of the political processes in the Latin American region. In this debate we will also discuss the formation of regional blocs between countries (Mercosur and Alba, among others) and their conflicts with US policy. In addition, we will study the articulation of social movements in transnational networks. This will lead to the debate about the local and global dimensions. For this, we will analyze and discuss the meetings of social movements that have taken place in the region (World Social Forums, Forum of the Americas, and Summit of the Peoples, among others). In this session we will also address recent protest movements that have been organized in different parts of the world, such as Occupy Wall Street, “Indignados,” and the Arab Spring, among others. From these analyses we will discuss how youth leadership and the use of technology, particularly communication through social networks and other technological channels has been one of the dominant characteristics of these recent movements and has worked to strengthen the social mobilization processes. We will work in class with short newspaper articles to stimulate group discussion.

Session 2: Final Discussion
In the final session we will discuss the four main topics seen in different visits throughout the semester: relationship between social movements and the state; production and social economy as a strategy of self-sustaining social movements; gender and the construction of different types of power in social movements; and territory, practices, and collective action.
Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:
- Pre-departure Assignments: This will include the analysis of certain pre-departure readings and movies. It will take into account the capacity to analyze and reflect upon the reading.
- First Module Quiz: The evaluation of the first module will be a quiz or short written exam. The objective of the quiz is to evaluate knowledge of some basic social movement theories and also the situation of social movements in Argentina.
- Second Module Synthesis and Presentation: The evaluation of the second module will be a synthesis and presentation of one of the key concepts of social movements in Latin America. The students will choose one of the topics in which they are most interested, either popular education, social economy, territory, militancy, or gender. They will have to complete a synthesis of the text to be distributed to the group before the class. During the class they will have to give a brief presentation of the text and generate some discussion about the topic.
- Third Module Final Group Presentation: In the evaluation of the third module the students will apply the concepts presented in the first module to the visits completed by the group. They will have to debate the possibility of change that comes from these strategies and social movements.
- Participation: Participation refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening, and active participation in all classes, discussions, excursions, and other activities. It also means appropriate and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of students' participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Assessment:
Pre-departure Assignments 10%
First Module Quiz 20%
Second Module Synthesis and Presentation 30%
Third Module Final Group Presentation 30%
Participation 10%

Grading Scales and Criteria
Grades are awarded in accordance with the system below. Expect to be graded rigorously yet fairly. All grades will take into account the special circumstances of students and the challenges they may face as foreign students.

Grading Scale
94-100% A
90-93% A-
87-89% B+
84-86% B
80-83% B-
77-79% C+
74-76% C
70-73% C-
67-69% D+
64-66% D
below 64 F
Expectations and Policies

- **Show up prepared.** Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- **Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements.** This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner. Any delay in an assignment will be penalized 5 points per day. All the exercises and examinations will be evaluated according to the fulfillment of instructions, organization, analytic quality, depth, argumentation, and evidence presentation.
- **Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer.** You should keep in mind that the lecturers are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- **Comply with academic integrity policies.** No plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical.
- **Respect differences of opinion.** This includes the opinions of classmates, lecturers, and local constituents that you interact with during visits. You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.