Course Description

The Social Movements and Human Rights seminar has been designed to offer academic and experiential knowledge about the quest for social change in Argentina and Latin America. It intends to give students the necessary concepts and elements to enable them to understand and analyze the different social movements and organizations that struggle for their fundamental rights. It also gives an overview of the historical and political background, as well as a solid theoretical framework needed to understand the social phenomenon studied.

The seminar has a strong experiential learning base in which students are the center of their own learning. The class is mostly taught in Buenos Aires, with components in the provinces of Salta, Jujuy and Santa Fe.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify, describe and analyze country-specific information regarding local efforts to achieve social justice through different types of organizations and mobilizations.
- Understand the major drives and changes that these social movements have undergone since the 90’s until the present time, reviewing relations and changes in connection with the State and public policies.
- Analyze different social movements applying some basic concepts of social movement theory.
- Understand the concept and use of Popular Education in the different social movements in Argentina and Latin America.
- Comprehend different strategies to develop a “new economy” with a social face, and the role of different social movements in that direction.
• Define and understand the concepts of Militancy, Decolonizing and Territoriality that are rooted in the practices of Argentinean and Latin-American social movements.

• Understand the relationship between social movements and human rights.

• Compare and contrast new models that are being implemented by community-based social, political and economic organizations.

• Assess the importance of old 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 cases needed. Pre-departure assignments will 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.*

**Pre departure Readings**


**Required Readings**


Ruggeri, A. (2014). “Una aproximación a las empresas recuperadas por sus trabajadores”. In Voces en el Fénix.


Module 1: Introduction to Social Movements

SEM 1: Social movements' definition and main theories. The concept of “decolonizing.”

This class will be devoted to the understanding of the basic concepts and main current theories that study social movements (Collective Action Theory, New Social Movements Theory and Domination and Resistance Processes). We will discuss the definition 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, as well as the concepts of “Identity” and “Visibility/Latency” from the European Theory of Social Movements.

In this class we will also discuss the concept of decolonizing and analyze the implications decolonization has had on social movements in Latin America today.

Required readings


Optional readings


SEM 2: Introduction to Social Movements in Latin America and Argentina. The concept of territory.

Part 1: Introduction to Social Movements in Latin America and Argentina

We will analyze social movements that developed in Latin America and Argentina in the last twenty years, taking into account visible public protests and other visible public demonstrations (road blockades, pickets). We will also consider subjectivity in the meanings of action of social actors. We will also analyze the relationship with policies and productivity at the grassroot level of organizations. It will also address the meaning of the 2001-2002 crisis for social organizations and the changes that have occurred.

Required readings


Part 2: Territory and Social Movements

Grassroots organizing with local people is one of the basic ideas of many social movements in Argentina. The 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. In this class students will learn about the concept of territory and its debates in Latin America about its implication in the analysis of Social Movements.
Required Reading


Optional Readings
- Mançano Fernandes, B. (sf). “Movimientos socioterritoriales y movimientos socioespaciales. Contribución teórica para una lectura geográfica de los movimientos sociales”.


**SEM 3: Potentialities and challenges for social movements in light of the recent ‘turn to the right’**

The elections celebrated in October 2015 were won by Mauricio Macri, candidate of the “Partido Republicano” (PRO), in what marked the first victory of a right-wing party in elections since the return of democracy. In this class we will count with the presence of academic experts in the analysis of the current situation, who will offer us their thoughts on this political shift, the conditions that made it possible and the impact it will have on the struggles of social movements at national and regional level.

Optional readings

**Module 2: Case Studies in Argentina**

During the trip to the north we will study the following topics (required readings will be provided in the Manual for the trip to the North):

- **Campesino and indigenous movements in Northern Argentina:** We will discuss the concepts of “campesino” and “indígena”, and we will also study different social movements that fight for land rights in Argentina.
Required Readings


- Social movements in Northern Argentina: An introduction to social movements in this part of the country. We will discuss its differences and similarities with other Argentinean and Latin-American social movements.

  Required Reading

- Environmental rights and Anti-mining movement: The visit to the “Salinas Grandes” will enable the group to discuss the issue of mining as it relates to cultural, environmental and land rights.

  Required Readings

- Territorial movements: Asamblea Trabajo y Dignidad: The visit to this piquetero movement will be a great resource to discuss territory and the role of social movements.

- Red Puna: We will visit an organization of indigenous and rural communities from the Puna and the Quebrada of Jujuy. It is formed by more than 30 organizations of indigenous communities, farmers, artisans, who together fight to change the reality in which they live.

  Required Reading

- Rosario’s boom: We will have a meeting with members of the Urban Investigations Club, who will introduce us to the current problems faced by Rosario city, specifically the links between soy, real estate boom and drug trafficking.

  Required Reading

- **San Lorenzo**: We will visit the San Lorenzo-Puerto General San Martín Port Complex, on the western shore of the lower course of the Paraná River. San Lorenzo-Puerto General San Martín forms a major commercial terminal for agricultural exports. Traffic at the complex accounts for 50% of the Argentine exports of soybean products.

  **Required reading**

---

**SEM 4: The complex relationship between Social Movements and the State: public policies, assistance programs and social inclusion**

In the last few decades in Argentina, different social movements led the way to processes of resistance and collective action against neoliberal policies. They also fought for specific demands (i.e. unemployed workers, recuperated factories, territorial movements, farmers, indigenous people, etc.). From the 1990s until today, the state responded to these social movements with diverse social policies. In this class we will discuss these policies, as well as the complex relationship between social movements and the state, and the challenges that social movements face in this intricate relationship.

**Required reading**

---

**SEM 5: Students will have to choose between three different classes according to their interests.**

**OPTION A: Social movements and Social Economy**

Building a new economy that is not constructed 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, when humanity is facing a triple crisis context: economic, social and environmental.

This class will debate about theoretical approaches and practical experiences that withhold "new ways of doing economy". In particular, 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 reading


- Ruggeri, A. (2014). “Una aproximación a las empresas recuperadas por sus trabajadores”. In *Voces en el Fénix*.

Optional readings


OPTION B: Political participation, demonstrations and youth organizations

In order to study the forms of political participation and the social demonstrations that took part in Argentina and Latin America we need to incorporate the young as the main protagonists of many of the most dynamic political, social and cultural organizations of the region. This also needs to be framed in a more global phenomenon that took place in the early decades of this century and that relates to various processes of social mobilization that occurred in different regions of the world (North Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America) having youth as its main protagonists. The movements with a more socio-political nature such as the so-called “Arab Spring”, that contributed to the fall of different governments in North Africa; the multiple groups that are grouped under the name of “indignant” in Europe (especially in Spain) and the United States; student organizations fighting for democratization and the improvement of the quality of a commodified and degraded education in Latin America (Chile, Colombia, Mexico); the urban youth mobilized in Brazil; all of these movements have been the most visible in this area, but are not the only ones. There are also groups of indigenous people, precarious workers, sexual minorities, migrants, peasants and cultural centers, among many others, who are active protagonists of the conflicts and mobilizations that take part in their territories of action. The youth of the popular sectors and the peripheries of many big cities have also built groups and associations expressing their unique forms of participation and commitment to the public sphere and the transformation of the reality in which they live.

In this class we will work on these issues based on the Argentine case, relating it to other countries.
Required reading


Optional readings


OPTION C: Popular education, territories and social movements

Popular Education is a concept developed by Paulo Freire in the 60’s and is a paradigm many social movements apply in their daily action. In this class, 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”, “Latency/visibility”.

Required reading


Optional readings


SEM 6: Students will visit Social Movements related to the topics studied in SEM 5.

**OPTION A: Social movements and Social Economy**
Students will visit the recuperated factory “Chilavert”.

**OPTION B: Political participation, demonstrations and youth organizations**
Students will visit the social movement “Hagamos lo Imposible”.

**OPTION C: Popular education, territories and social movements**
Students will visit the bachillerato popular “Maderera Córdoba”.

SEM 7: Theories on Social Movements applied to empirical cases

In this class we are going to review the theories on Social Movements that we have studied, to revise them once again in the light of the cases that were analyzed in this seminar.

**Module 3: Final reflections about Social Movements in an International Perspective**

SEM 8: Social Movements and Human Rights

In this class we will work on some of the main concepts and ideas discussed in the Social Movements and Human Rights Seminar. The idea is to critically examine the current situation of collective action of social movements which are fighting in defense of their territories against extractive activities and violations of human rights. There are several peoples in Argentina affected by the advance of different extractivist companies that practice activities such as mega-mining, hydrocarbon and agri-businesses.

**Required reading**
Optional reading


SEM 9: Social Movement's Final Exam

It will be an oral exam. Students will be divided in groups, and each group will have to present a topic previously assigned by the teachers. Then students will have to answer some other questions related to the themes seen during the seminar, asked by the teachers or by other students.

Student Evaluation and Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure exercise</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of a text</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments

Exercises are expected to be submitted on time. Any delay will be fined with 2 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.

Grading Scales and Criteria

All grades will take into account the special circumstances of students and the challenges they may face as foreign students.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the system below. Expect to be graded rigorously yet fairly. Grades will reflect a combination of quality of performance, progress made, the ability to take into account and assimilate the Academic Director and the teachers’ advice in assessing the work done. An “A” letter grade reflects exceptional work, perfect combination of academic competencies and personal research and analysis. “A” work reflects great ability to integrate field-based investigation and personal reflection into a structured and well-argued paper. A “B” letter grade reflects serious and methodical work as well as a substantial effort at analyzing and understanding cross-cultural issues. A “C” letter grade shows that the work meets the requirements but needs more in-depth reflection and personal involvement. A “D” letter grade is insufficient and clearly reflects lack of work or serious deficiencies.
Pre–departure
This will include the analysis of the text of Petras and the movies The Take and Dignidad de los Nadies. It will take into account the capacity to analyze and reflect upon the reading.

Oral presentation of a text and debate
In some of the classes students will be divided into two groups in order to debate about a text previously assigned by the professor. One group will have to summarize and present the text. Another group will have to criticize the text, using their own arguments or those from other authors.

Final exam
It will be an oral exam. Students will be divided in groups, and each group will have to present a topic previously assigned by the teachers. Then students will have to answer some other questions related to the themes seen during the seminar, asked by the teachers or by other students.

Class participation
An ‘A’ refers to a prefect attendance record, 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.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 64%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 according to the specified requirements.** This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- **Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer.** These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honour by coming to speak.

- **Comply with academic integrity policies** (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

- **Respect differences of opinion** (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the 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 Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.