JMS Special Topics - 04:567:473 - Spring 2019 Syllabus
MEDIA AND STRUGGLES FOR DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Professor: Dr. Regina Marchi
Phone: 848-932-8712
Email: rmarchi@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Mon. 11:15-12:15 and by appoint.
SC&I Bldg. 4 Huntington Ave, room 104

Course Description:
This 10-day [3 credit] course takes students to Guatemala to study the role of media in historic and contemporary struggles for democracy. There are five 3-hour meetings on RU campus before we travel to Guatemala. Students will visit the capital of Guatemala City; the 16th century colonial town of Antigua (a UNESCO World Heritage site), the lakeside town of Panajachel and several Mayan villages. The class will meet with journalists, human rights activists, Indigenous rights associations, women’s collectives and other community groups. We will visit news agencies, community radio and TV stations, the office of the country’s first and only feminist magazine and radio station, and related museums and historic sites. Through readings, films, lectures, and site visits, students will learn about the regional effects of colonization, US military intervention and neoliberal economic policies in the Central American region, as well as about the role of media in local struggles for political autonomy, human rights and democracy. Because this class travels after graduation, “T” grades will appear on spring transcripts until travel is completed, final projects are submitted, and final grades are added to transcripts. Seniors enrolled in this course can still participate in the graduation ceremony.

Travel Dates: May 20 - May 29, 2019

RU meeting dates on Thursdays 2:50 - 5:50 on April 4, 11, 18, 25 & May 2 - SC&I room 114B

Readings:
All readings are on the Canvas course website. To access the website, go to Canvas (https://ltt.rutgers.edu/canvas) and login with your Net ID. The course name appears as: 04:567:473. To resolve any problems with Canvas, please contact Canvas directly at: (877) 361-1134 (available 24/7/365) or email: help@canvas.rutgers.edu; or Canvas Help Desk Live Chat

Requirements:
Mandatory participation in 5 on-campus class meetings and 10-day field experience in Guatemala. Scheduled Facebook postings on course FB page are required (see details below). Students will have weekly on-campus quizzes and a final essay assignment (due two weeks after returning from Guatemala) in which they will produce a journalistic 1500-word article or video piece about what they learned in the course. This should NOT be an overview of everything you did in Guatemala but, instead, a vivid description of one transformative experience or observation, one amazing person you met, or one distinctive phenomenon you noticed (i.e. income inequality; collectivism among Mayan communities; modern-day aspects of colonialism, etc.) The idea is to provide readers with a detailed but concise portrayal of something important that you learned on the trip and feel others should know about. The best articles will be submitted for publication in the Dept. of Journalism and Media Studies 2019 Fall edition of its online magazine Kairos. For examples of previously published student articles in Kairos, see: http://kairosmagazine.rutgers.edu/category/fall-2016/guatemala/

Learning objectives:
• Understand the role of journalism in developing countries (using Guatemala as a case study) and the powerful historical influence of US government and media institutions on Guatemala’s journalistic media and politics;
• Understand the constraints, risks and dangers faced by journalists and grassroots activists in Guatemala and other parts of Central America
• Learn the history and modern legacy of colonialism and neocolonialism in Central America and their impact on the functioning of democracy
• Gain insight into the root causes of poverty in the region and the push factors of immigration from Central America to the USA
• Learn to select a compelling essay topic and write an article for future publication or portfolio, educating the public about Guatemala

Grading: Campus classes: 25%; Quizzes: 25%; Participation/Attendance in Guatemala; 25% Facebook Posts: 5%; Final Project: 20%
A = 100-90; B+ = 89-85; B = 84-80; C+ = 79-75; C = 74-70; D = 69-60; F = 59 and below

Grading of the final essay/article
A = Excellent! The work is publishable with only minor changes.
B+ = Well-written, with appropriate use of facts and sources. The article may need additional material, but is free of factual errors and has no more than three grammar or punctuation errors.
B = Generally good work. Solid writing, but the lead needs work and the story may need more research and detail.
C+ = Acceptable. Awkward phrasing and numerous syntax, grammar or punctuation errors that distract from the article's strengths.
C = Average. Multiple organizational, writing and/or reporting problems. Contains factual errors or insufficient information. Many spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Unimaginative or trite content.
D = Poor work. Shows minimal effort.
F = Completely unacceptable.

*** Rules during our time in Guatemala:

1. When not with the professor, program participants must always travel in the company of at least one other program participant, with larger groups encouraged at night. Each person will have a “buddy.” We are all responsible for making sure that every person in our program always has someone to accompany him/her when they have to go somewhere. Make sure that the professor or TA knows where you are at all times.

2. All program participants are required to behave in a mature and appropriate way at all times, never forgetting that they are representatives of Rutgers University and the United States of America while traveling with this course. This includes dressing professionally when we visit media offices and meet guest speakers (no shorts, flip flops etc.). Any program participant engaging in disruptive, damaging, or illegal behavior of any kind may be sent home immediately. This includes use of illegal drugs and the excessive use of alcohol that causes disruption to our program, such as lateness or absence from class, or creates other problems or disruptions for the participant’s roommate or classmates.

3. Any student sent home for disciplinary reasons will automatically receive an “F” in the course.

COURSE READING AND VIEWING SCHEDULE:

Week 1 April 4

Historical and political overview of the Central American region; Discussion of Monroe Doctrine and US intervention
Discussion of human rights issues facing journalists in Central America
Screening: La Voz Del Pueblo (18 min.) and discussion of challenges facing journalists in the region
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2ZQx34dGZ0 [Ignatian solidarity network]
This week read:

- https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/in-guatemala-family-planning-clashes-with-religion-tradition (PBS news clip on family planning in Guatemala - 10 minutes)
- https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/14/world/americas/guatemala-shelter-fire-trial.html (Story of major sexual abuse case in Guatemala)
- Guatemalan Rebeca Lane is Behind Central America's new Feminist Hip Hop (article)
- See map of Guatemala & Country Overview: https://www.usaid.gov/guatemala/overview
- Optional article about Mayan hip hop in poor, rural areas of Guatemala as a form of expression and political organizing

Tues. April 9 Please attend Rebeca Lane's campus talk "Women, Hip-Hop and Politics in Central America"
Tillett Hall room 246, from 3:20-4:40 pm (free reception afterwards in Lucy Stone Hall where you can speak with Rebeca Lane)

Wed. April 10 Rebeca Lane's RU hip hop performance, Livingston Student Center on campus 8:00 pm (free)

Week 2 April 11 Quiz on last week's readings

Discussion of Guatemalan History and Politics (discussion of the causes and aftermath of the 36-year civil war in Guatemala – 1960-1996)
Screening: *When the Mountains Tremble* and discussion of film. (1 hour 23 minutes) followed by discussion

This week read:

- Selection from *Bitter Fruit: The untold story of the US Coup in Guatemala* "The United Fruit Company"
- Guatemala Fact sheets on: Land Reform; Human Rights; Femicide; Militarization; Gangs (each listed separately in Canvas)

**Week 3 APRIL 18**  
Quiz on last week’s readings

Discussion of popular uprisings, military repression of civil society; School of the Americas; US News coverage of Central America

This week read:

- The Case of Myrna Mack (article)
- Ghosts of Guatemala's Past (article), *The New York Times*

Screening:

First 6 minutes of: Video about uncovering the bones of 200 people in Dos Erres:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CPqQycF1dk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CPqQycF1dk)  
Produced in 2013 by FAMDEGUA [Families of the Guatemalan Disappeared]

School of the Americas - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4eLYXJlZfg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4eLYXJlZfg) (13 minutes - produced by SOA Watch - 1995)

Screening: [Justice For My Sister](https://www.library.rutgers.edu/rul/eres/spr19/marchir_04_567_473_01_template_spr19.html) (about the high rate of femicide in Guatemala and the difficulties of prosecuting those responsible)

**Week 4 APRIL 25**  
Quiz on the readings

Screening: *Mother Tongue* (15 min.) (Documentary about translating genocide documentary into Mayan languages)

In-class screening of *El Norte* and discussion of Central American immigration to US (push factors/pull factors)

This week read:

- *Guatemalan Reader*: "A good place to commit murder," p. 473-479; "Transnationalism and Maya Dress," p. 523-531
- Guatemalan Committee to Protect Journalists: Radio Journalist Murdered in Guatemala (article)
- Guatemala's Journalists Fear for Safety as Press Killings Spread (article)
- Rising Attacks against journalists in Guatemala cause concern. Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas (article)
- Plaza Pública aims to challenge and improve Guatemala's journalistic culture. NiemanLab. (We will visit Plaza Pública in Guatemala)

**Week 5 MAY 2**  
Quiz on last week’s readings

Discussion of Guatemalan cultural norms and behavior expectations when in Guatemala

Orientation about travel safety and health precautions to take in developing countries and important coordinating information for the trip. (Stephanie La Cava from the Rutgers Center for Global Education will share important information)
Screening: *Ixcanul - Volcano* (2015) and discussion of rural Mayan villages, Guatemalan plantation system, traditional gender roles, linguistic isolation, lack of educational opportunities in remote villages

**Suggested Supplemental Material**

To get the most out of your time in Guatemala, it would highly benefit you to watch some of these award-winning films or read these books before we travel. All are available in the RU Library and most have viewing links below. Some are also available free on YouTube.

**Books:**

*I Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* (Verso: 1984)

**Films:**

Slideshow of historic photos of Guatemala: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_pUABlzybY

*Harvest of Empire* (about history of US political and military intervention in Central America and the Caribbean): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEAJWs3GiJU

*Living on One Dollar a Day* (2013): US college students go to Guatemala to live on $1.00 per day, as most rural Guatemalans do
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3gF3DPTcfA&annotation_id=annotation_1421321&feature=iv&src_vid=tmQujWTMuC8

*Bananas: On Trial for Malice* (2009) directed by Fredrik Gertten https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYcaT9l1rbQ

*Granito: How to Nail a Dictator* (2011) directed by Pamela Yates

*Justice for My Sister* (2012) directed by Kimberly Bautista:
www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/eres/spr19/marchir_04_567_473_01_template_spr19.html

*Romero* (1989 film) watch it at:
www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/eres/spr19/marchir_04_567_473_01_template_spr19.html

(Excellent film illustrating the power of Central American landowners and their connections with the military. Although this film is about El Salvador, the dynamics are very similar to this history of Guatemala. There are also many similarities to historic situations of inequality in Nicaragua and Honduras. All of these countries had similar situations of landed elites and wealthy business owners who supported militaries that for decades repressed popular movements struggling for democracy (and are basically still repressing progressive social movement activists today).)

*La Camioneta: The journey of one American school bus* (2012), directed by Mark Kendall
www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/eres/spr19/marchir_04_567_473_01_template_spr19.html

*La Violencia* (2015) directed by Til Frohlich:
http://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/52884/La-Violencia---The-untold-truths-of-Guatemala

*Maria’s Story: Love and Survival in El Salvador’s Civil War* (1991) Produced by Pamela Cohen & Catherine Ryan

*Nicaragua: A Nation’s Right to Survive* (1983). This is a CNN documentary about the School of the Americas (SOA) Available at: http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/nicaragua-a-nations-right-to-survive/

Songs:

Written by Venezuelan band Los Guaraguao (1973), Casas de Carton, speaks of the poverty throughout Latin America. [cover version by Oscar Chavez with photos and lyrics: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08h0KDmY-0g]

Written by Panamanian salsa star Ruben Blades, Homenaje a Monseñor Romero/ El padre Antonio y su monaguillo Andres (1984) speaks of the courage of El Salvador’s Arch Bishop Oscar Romero, who spoke out publicly against the Salvadoran military and was gunned down while giving Mass. (See hand-out of English translation)

Traditional Marimba Music & photos of Guatemala: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cK74uCpNGA

SCHEDULE FOR FACEBOOK POSTS

As part of the course requirements, students must write short Facebook posts about their experiences. On the day before you leave the US, every student will do 1 Facebook post to the official course Facebook page, sharing your thoughts, excitement and expectations about the trip. This can be a post of you at home packing your suitcase or saying good-bye to family/friends, or it can be you checking in at the airport or some other pre-departure activity. The post should include a photo that conveys a moment of your life before leaving for Guatemala.

While in Guatemala, 3-4 students will post to the official course website each day, according to the schedule below. Each student will do 3 posts while in Guatemala. All posts must be shown to the professor first for approval before being posted (to make sure that the spelling of towns, institutions, people's names, and factual information is correct). Each student has been assigned a number based on the alphabetical order of their last name (please see list below). Please do your posts on the dates corresponding to your number.

The following students will post on the course Facebook Page on these dates:

May 20: Students 1, 2, 3
May 21: Students 4, 5, 6
May 22: Students 7, 8, 9
May 23: Students 10, 11, 1
May 24: Students 2, 3, 4,
May 25: Students 5, 6, 7
May 26: Students 8, 9, 10
May 27: Students 11, 1, 2, 3
May 28: Students 4, 5, 6, 7
May 29: Students 8, 9, 10, 11

Itinerary for travel MAY 20-29

Monday, May 20

11:49 am Arrive in Guatemala airport. Get bags, change money before going through customs, and take private van-taxi to Pan American Hotel. (Van will meet the group outside of the main airport entrance. Driver will have sign saying "Rutgers").

1:30-2:00 Check into hotel

2:00-2:50 Group lunch or snack near hotel

3:00-4:30 Tour of National Palace, around the corner from the hotel (has exhibits of Guatemalan history, art and politics)

4:30-7:00 Walk around the Central Plaza ("Plaza Mayor"), the National Cathedral, and the City’s central artisan market ("Mercado Central").

7:00 - 8:00 Free time to relax at hotel before dinner

8:00-10:00 Welcome Dinner (included in cost of trip) and discussion about Guatemala City

10:00 pm Students go to rooms, unpack, relax, do Facebook posts, go to sleep early for busy next day!
**Tuesday, May 21**

- **7:30-8:30** Breakfast (included).
- **9:00-12:00** Meet with journalists from newspapers *El Diario de Centroamerica* and *Siglo Veintiuno* to speak about challenges facing Guatemalan journalists, freedom of expression and censorship.
- **12:30-1:30** Group lunch *Rey de Sol Vegetarian Restaurant*, around the corner from hotel (11a Calle 5-51 zona 1)
- **2:00-3:30** Meet with journalists at *Plaza Pública*, an online investigative news website founded in 2011, focused on writing about human rights and ongoing struggles for democracy. It is housed on the campus of the Jesuit Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City and is part of a hemispheric network of independent, non-profit newsrooms that includes ProPublica in the USA, El Faro in El Salvador, Animal Político in Mexico and others.
- **4:00-6:00** Visit Guatemala's first and only feminist radio station *Voces de Mujeres* and feminist magazine *La Cuerda* to speak with founder and staff regarding the status of women in Guatemala and the importance of feminist media in this strongly patriarchal country. We will meet in the sociology department of the University of San Carlos (USAC), where the radio station and magazine are based. La Universidad de San Carlos is one of the largest and oldest universities in Latin America, established in 1676. It is Guatemala's public university (their equivalent of Rutgers).
- **7:00-8:00** Dinner. Go to Paseo Cayalá for dinner at Vesuvio's Pizza.

**Wednesday, May 22**

- **8:00-9:00** Breakfast at Pan American Hotel (included)
- **9:30-11:30** Visit IGER, the Guatemalan Institute for Radio Education/Instituto Guatemalteco de Educación Radiofónica. Founded in 1971 by Jesuit Priest Franz Tattenbach, IGER uses radio to teach literacy and provide elementary school, high school and college classes and diplomas/degrees via long distance radio learning in remote rural areas of Guatemala where there are no schools. Speak with Dr. Guillermina Herrera and staff. Tour of printing facilities.
- **12:00 - 1:00** lunch
- **1:30-3:00** Visit TV Maya studios. TV Maya was mandated as part of the 1996 Peace Accords that ended the 36-year Civil War. The station offers cultural and political news from a Mayan perspective in multiple Mayan languages. We will speak with station director and other staff.
- **4:00-5:15** Meet with Guatemala's internationally acclaimed feminist rapper Rebeca Lane (Rebeca Vargas Tamayac) in the "Amado" room at the Pan American Hotel. She uses hip-hop music to reach young Central Americans with messages of gender equality and respect for women. She is also active in the *Justice for My Sister Campaign*, which partners with organizations throughout North, Central and South American to prevent violence against women.
- **5:30 - 7:30** Visit Plaza Fontabella
- **8:00 -10:00** Dinner and Cultural activity TBA

**Thursday, May 23**

- **7:00-8:00** Breakfast at Pan American Hotel. Check out at 8:15 am. Be completely ready to get on the van by 8:30!
- **8:30-11:30** Take Atitrans private van to town of Panajachel on Lake Atitlan
- **11:30** Check-in to hotel
12:30-2:00 Lunch at Casa Cakchiquel Cultural Center. View exhibit of historic photos of Guatemala. Built in 1948 by a European countess, Casa Cakchiquel was the first hotel on Lake Atitlán. During the "10 Years of Guatemalan Spring" (short period of progressive democracy under presidents Juan Arévalo and Jacobo Árbenz - 1944-54), Casa Cakchiquel was a hang-out for intellectuals and artists such as Che Guevara, Ingrid Bergman, Aldous Huxley (who called Lake Atitlán "the most beautiful lake in the world"). Today it is a cultural center that houses over 3,000 rare photos of Guatemala's Indigenous history along with a radio station.

2:00-3:30 Walking tour of the town of Panajachel. Visit Radio Panajachel.

3:30-5:00 Visit La Galería, the oldest and largest art gallery in Central America, founded in 1973 by Mayan artist Nan Cuz. Learn about Indigenous art as a communication medium from Nan Cuz's son, Tomas Schafer Cuz.

5:00-8:00 Cultural performance (TBD) or free time to explore town of Panajachel, visit Mayan markets, or swim in hotel pool.

8:30-11:00 Dinner and live music at Circus Bar Restaurant

Friday, May 24

7:30-8:30 - Breakfast at Hotel (included)

9:30 ALL DAY TRIP. Private boat to 3 Mayan villages (San Pedro, San Juan and Santiago Atitlán). Visit markets, churches and central plaza of each town. Visit the shrine of Indigenous folk saint "Max Simon" in Santiago Atitlán; visit to Mayan artist cooperative Galería Maya Gil Yojcom, to speak w/ cooperative leaders and artists Return to hotel 5:30 pm.

5:30-8:00 Free time to walk around Panajachel markets, hang out in cafes and shops, use hotel pool, etc.

8:00-9:30 Dinner at Guajimbos (Live music)

9:30-11:00 Free time to relax at hotel pool or hear music in Panajachel.

Saturday, May 25

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Hotel (included in trip cost)

9:00-11:00 Free time.

11:00 Board van to rural village of Santa Apolonia in the dept. of Chimaltenango (on the way to Antigua)

12:00-1:30 Lunch at El Pedregal bakery and restaurant in Santa Apolonia

2:00-4:30 Afternoon of educational exchange with children at Guadalupe Homes Orphanage, visit to local schoolhouse.

4:30-5:30 Drive to the town of Antigua

5:30 Check-in to lodging

6:30-7:30 Dinner and orientation to Antigua (Breakfast and dinner in Antigua are included in cost of trip)

7:30-9:30 Group goes to Welten Hotel garden for dessert and live music.

MUST be back at hotel by 9:30 pm!

Sunday, May 26
7:00-8:00  Breakfast at Belen Convent  (included)

8:45-10:00  Tour of Antigua, visit Antigua's Cathedral, Parque Central, "El Arco" and other historic sites

10:00-12:00  Visit to Santo Domingo Museum of colonial history (five museums in one: colonial history & artifacts; archaeology; pre-Colombian art; silver museum; colonial pharmacy museum), located in Santo Domingo Ruins Hotel.

1:00-2:00  Lunch at Dona Luisa's Cafe

2:00-3:30  Former editor of the weekly news journal *The Central America Report* speaks with us about state corruption, the legacy of war, and progress & obstacles to the peace process in Guatemala. He is an economist and will discuss the Guatemalan economy and his experiences as a journalist writing about the economic situation in the region.

3:30-6:30  Free time. Optional visit to Jade Museum, the Museum of Chocolate or various local Indigenous craft markets or check out free art exhibit at La Antigua Gallery: Galería de Arte 5a Avenida Norte # 29 (every day 9:00 am - 6:00 pm)

6:30-7:30  Dinner (included)

7:00-9:30  Cultural event TBD. MUST be back at hotel by 9:30 pm!

**Monday, May 27**

7:00-8:00  Breakfast (included)

9:00-12:00  Meet with free-lance journalist who reports for the BBC, the *Miami Herald*, Fox News Latino, *La Opinión* in Los Angeles; *El Diario de Nueva York*, *ReVista Harvard Review of Latin America* and other publications. She is also a Political Specialist for the US Embassy in Guatemala. Learn about life as free-lance journalist or "stringer" in Guatemala.

12:30-1:30  Lunch

2:00-3:00  Visit to online magazine in Antigua, speak with writers and staff

3:30-6:30  Free time. Optional visit to the *Museum of the Ancient Book*, located on the spot where the first printing-house of Guatemala was built in 1660. This museum is considered one-of-a-kind in Latin America and has a replica of the 1660 printing press and 3 exhibition rooms: the “Introduction of the Press in Guatemala,” “Techniques: xylography and lithography,” and “The Speckled Paper Room.” Its collection holds 2,500 rare documents. Professor will take interested students to visit this museum.

6:30-7:30  Dinner (included) and debriefing

7:30-9:30  Possible Live Music at Rainbow Café or at Café No Se. MUST be back at hotel by 9:30 pm!

**Tuesday, May 28**

7:00-8:00  Breakfast (included)

9:00-11:00  Anthropologist will give talk on ancient Mayan calendar system as a communication medium.

11:30-12:30  Lunch on your own

1:00 - 2:30  Visit COCODES (Rural Community Development Council) that trains Indigenous people about their constitutional rights (established as part of the 1996 Peace Accords). Meet with Mayan community leaders. Visit community radio station and learn about the role of radio in community organizing and cultural and linguistic preservation in Mayan villages.
2:45 - 4:30  Take jeep to El Cerro de Santo Domingo (panoramic hilltop view of Antigua) to have afternoon coffee/tea/limeade or ice cream at *El Tenedor Del Cerro Restaurant*

4:30 - 6:30  Free time to explore Antigua (or start to pack bags before dinner)

6:30 - 7:30  Final dinner (included)

7:30 - 9:30  Free time in Antigua or /pack bags for next day's flight

**MUST be back at hotel by 9:30 pm!**

10:00-11:00  (optional) Guatemalan ghost stories

**Wednesday, May 29**

7:00-8:00  Breakfast (included)

8:15 am  Board Atitrans private van shuttle service from Antigua to Aurora airport in Guatemala City for return to US

10:30 am  Check-in to American Airlines for return flight # 2359 (leaving Guatemala at 12:44 pm)

---

**Final article due on June 15 by Midnight**

Each story should include 1.) a written piece of up to 1,500 words; 2.) three to six captioned photographs or a video of up to 3 minutes to help you tell your story; 3.) social media posts and hyperlinks, where appropriate. 4.) All stories must be followed by source lists, and source contact details. 5.) Articles must be double-spaced in 12 pt. font w/ 1-inch margins all around. Your name and page number must appear on the top of every page. Your article must include a catchy title that will grab readers.