

## Performance Matters

# Performance, Protest, and Feminism in Latin America

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The Syllabus is the Thing: Materialities of the Performance Studies Classroom

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Résumé de l'article

How do activists in Latin America fight for change both online and in the streets? This piece narrates a course on Feminist Protest and Performance in Latin America that explores the limits and possibilities of feminist activism in physical and digital spaces. At this critical historical juncture, feminists across the hemisphere are organizing en masse to demand change and justice, to denounce pervasive misogyny and gender violence, and to envision and realize another world. Drawing on a long history of struggle, they are engaging in performance activism across multiple platforms including Las Tesis piece El Violador Eres Tu (The rapist is you), under the hashtags #NiUnaMenos (#NotOneWomanLess) and #AbortoLegalYa (#LegalizeAbortionNow), and in massive physical occupations and protests like #OcupaEscuela (#OccupyTheSchools). They are mobilizing to condemn femicide, to advocate access to legal abortions in public hospitals, and to introduce comprehensive sex education in public schools. Drawing on these interconnected forms of performance and protest, what Marcela Fuentes refers to as “performance constellations,” women and disidencias sexuales are fighting together for the right to live without fear, to make decisions about their own bodies, and to exist in a more just world. This class asks students to learn from Latin American feminist movements and to connect their insights to our intimate and collective experiences. Beyond the syllabus, this piece offers reflections on the philosophy of co-teaching, transnational activism across the Americas, and modes of embodiment that can happen online. We invite students and educators alike to consider what it might mean to “perform well” in a university class focused on pleasure and solidarity.

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## Performance, Protest, and Feminism in Latin America

Cara K. Snyder and Sabrina González



### Online and in the Streets: Feminist Protest and Performance in Latin America

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#### Course Overview

How do activists fight for change, both online and in the streets? This course will explore the limits and possibilities of feminist activism in physical and digital spaces. At this critical historical juncture,

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feminists across the hemisphere are organizing *en masse* to demand change and justice, to denounce pervasive misogyny and gender violence, and to envision and realize another world. Drawing on a long history of struggle, they are engaging in performance activism across multiple platforms including Las Tesis’ piece *El Violador Eres Tu* (The rapist is you), under the hashtags #NiUnaMenos (#NotOneWomanLess) and #AbortoLegalYa (#LegalizeAbortionNow), and in massive physical occupations and protests like #OcupaEscuela (#OccupyTheSchools). They are mobilizing to condemn femicide and misogyny, to advocate access to legal abortions in public hospitals, and to introduce comprehensive sex education in public schools. Drawing on these interconnected forms of performance and protest, what Marcela Fuentes refers to as “performance constellations,” women and *disidencias sexuales* are fighting together for the right to live without fear, to make decisions about their own bodies, and to exist in a more just world. In this class, we will learn from feminist movements and connect their insights to our intimate and collective experiences.

We will begin by establishing a foundation in feminist protest and performance from which our course will build. In the first unit, students will produce a feminist vlog as we consider ideas of space, sex(uality), gender, and nation as they intersect with race and class. Then we will explore women’s movements in the twentieth century, discovering the conflicts and debates that have characterized this activist history on the streets, in the media, and in law and politics. Drawing on course materials and on interactive workshops, students will complete an interview using oral history methods. Finally, students will collectively make and present a creative work that responds to contemporary feminist performances and activism.

### Course Objectives and Learning Goals

- ♀ Gain fluency describing and analyzing women’s movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, including its actors, strategies, and demands.
- ♀ Study the historical antecedents for contemporary feminist performance and activism, both online and in the streets
- ♀ Evaluate how women’s agendas and tactics have changed over time, particularly with regard to issues of labour, reproductive justice, gender violence, and human rights.
- ♀ Explore oral history methods, examine conflict and historical memory in women’s movements, analyze how historical context has shaped the multiple and complex ways in which women have participated in their local as well as global communities.

### Requirements

Throughout the course, you will be expected to learn about Latin American feminisms and engage with your classmates through reading and watching the class material, to write daily assignments and discussion posts, and to develop an oral history project. Your grade for the course will be calculated from a total of 1000 points, as follows:

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Weekly Instagram Post	100	10%
Weekly Discussion Posts	100	10%

<b>Explorations:</b> Oral History Project Creative Response 600 (200 each) 60%	<b>600</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>20%</b>

**Instagram Post** *100 points*

You will create a post on Instagram in response to the class material for the week.

**Weekly discussion prompt** *100 points*

Discussion prompts will be posted every day on our class site, inviting you to delve more deeply into issues raised by the assigned texts and video lectures.

**Explorations** *600 points*

You will complete three project-based assignments. For these assignments, you will draw on course materials, performances, and discussions as well as your own experiences to synthesize what you are learning in class. The three explorations are:

1. Feminist Vlog (200 pts)
2. Oral History Interview (200 pts)
3. Creative Response (200 pts)

**Participation** *200 points*

This grade is based on your general engagement in the course and class activities, including attendance at workshops and talks. Your participation grade will depend on how often you participate; on how active, engaged, and generous a participant you are; and on your commitment to the class's rules of engagement on the class discussion board.

**Content and Discussion**

The history of women's movements has often been a violent one, and feminist activists, writers, and artists have frequently responded to their cultural and political context by using intense language and imagery. Students in this class should expect to read and view sexually explicit material as well as material that includes discussions and depictions of homophobia, transphobia, sexism, racism, sexual assault, suicide, medical abuse, and other kinds of violence and trauma. Because this is an online class where students are accessing material at their own pace, I have not provided notes on specific content; however, if you require such notes as an accessibility measure, please contact your instructor. If you are struggling with the nature of the course's content in any way, please also contact your instructor.

Classes like this one, where we talk about identity and oppression, require us to be especially mindful of the ways in which we speak to and about one another. Our studies include figuring out what assumptions we make and where they come from, and our discussions will raise many questions about sex, race, class, gender, disability, politics, religion, and other issues. You should expect to feel uncomfortable sometimes—that is part of the learning process. Your job as a student is to sit with that discomfort long enough to understand what it might mean. Online or embodied, the classroom should be a space where you can express your thoughts as they develop; explore your responses to

readings and assignments; be honest about what you do and don't know; and take the time to understand the context of texts and ideas before passing judgment on them. We will have to work together to make a shared digital space where all voices, perspectives, and learning processes are respected, and where we can discuss sexist, homophobic, transphobic, racist, and ableist language without using it against members of our community. Sometimes things won't go as well as we might hope. Everyone in the class, including the teachers, should be prepared to critically examine their own language and behaviour. If you have concerns about the way conversations are going, please contact your instructor.

## Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change based on the students and teachers' needs and priorities.

### WEEK 1 || Welcome to Online and in the Streets!

We will spend the first week of class getting to know one another, including participating in embodied activities, and introducing key concepts that we will be working with over the course of the semester. More specifically, we will present frameworks for both performance and feminism in a Latin American context.

#### Read

Syllabus and Co-teaching statement

Ogata-Aguilar, Jumko. 2021. "Unpacking the Term Hispanic and the Homogenizing of Diasporas." *Anti-Racism Daily*. June 30, 2021. <https://the-ard.com/2021/06/30/unpack-the-term-hispanic-anti-racism-daily/>.

Taylor, Diana. 2016. "Framing [Performance]." In *Performance*, 1–42. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

González, Sabrina, and Cara Snyder. 2021. "Towards a Pedagogy of Transnational Feminism When Teaching and Activism Go Online." In *The Radical Teacher*, 121.

#### Watch

"Latin American Feminism Today," in *Spanish with English subtitles* (3:37); "Marina Abramovic: What Is Performance Art?" (1:55); and "The Body as Medium" (1:40).

#### Optional

Schwall, Elizabeth. 2021. "Performance in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 56 (3): 739–50. <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.1548>.

## UNIT I

### Feminist Constellations

We conceived this unit as an introduction of concepts and movements that we will continue using throughout the class. Week 2 establishes the basis for understanding the process of racialization and gender in the Americas and puts students in contact with contemporary paintings, performances, and archives that challenge colonialism and cisheteronormativity. Week 3 questions constructions of feminism as "white" (cisgendered, middle class, heterosexual, global North) by centring Black, trans, lesbian, Indigenous, Latinx, Afro Latinx and diasporic feminisms. Week 4 interrogates how feminist movements are cocreated in physical and digital spaces. Drawing on a long history of protest, feminist activists throughout the Americas are creating a broad network of interconnected performances and agendas to denounce neoliberal policies, misogyny, capitalist oppression, and

gender violence. Performances and political projects that seek to denounce injustice are varied, and as the readings suggest, it is necessary to recognize their diverse forms in order to move away from ableist conceptions of activism and knowledge making. Week 5 introduces you to key concepts that inspire this course: transnational solidarity and transnational feminisms. The readings provide a critical perspective to a solely digital form of activism and address the importance of building solidarity across borders beyond digital platforms. In this week, we encounter the interconnected struggles for justice in the Americas through Marielle Franco and Breonna Taylor. Their murderers show the hemispherical structures of racism and police violence as well as the importance of transnational solidarity among activists, scholars, and students. The protests happening in the streets of the US and Latin America appear not only in social media but also in the classroom, a transnational space that we hope can be part of social change.

## WEEK 2 || The Coloniality of Gender

We begin with materials that establish a historical context and a foundation for understanding processes of racialization and gender in the Americas. This week pushes against Eurocentric notions of gender and sexuality and gives a transnational view of their social constructions. In other words, ideas about sex and gender are highly dependent on context and are saturated with (geo)politics. Lugones's canonical text "The Coloniality of Gender" theorizes Eurocentric capitalism as having the coloniality of power and modernity. Respectively, these two axes of power impose Eurocentric categories of race on the world's population and construct a progress narrative that deems Europeans as "advanced" compared to other "primitive" societies. Lugones underscores how gender and sexual relations are not only saturated with the coloniality of power but also inseparable from racist ideology: particular sex/gender relations are constituted within the colonial/modern gender system and then imposed upon non-Europeans.

The performance of Nao Bustamante, paintings of Christian Bandayán, and music of Ana Tijoux explore such lasting, gendered, and raced implications of colonialism in the Americas. Correa et. al. write about the beauty and urgency of the Trans Memory Archive, and Mongrovejo provides an overview of feminist debates in the Americas that concludes with questions of trans inclusion. Taken together, today's materials explore how feminists in the transnational Americas grapple with the fraught history of racialized gender: categories that are neither "natural" nor neutral.

### Read

Lugones, Maria. 2008. "The Coloniality of Gender." *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise*, 13–33.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-38273-3\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-38273-3_2).

Correa, María Belén, et. al. 2019. "Trans Memory Archive." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6 (2): 156–63.

### OR

Daly, Tara. 2017. "Christian Bendayán: Queering the Archive from Iquitos, Peru." *Feminist Studies* 43 (2): 353–68. \*\*ONLY VIEW THE ART WORKS in this art essay on pages 353–368. You are NOT expected to read the full article.

### Watch

*Indigurrito*, a performance piece by Nao Bustamante. You must enable adobe flash player to watch from your browser: <http://hdl.handle.net/2333.1/m0cfxpz3> (links to an external site).

Tijoux, Ana. 2015. "Antipatriarca." YouTube. June 29, 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoKoj8bFg2E>.



### Optional

Mongrovejo, Norma. 2010. "Itineraries of Latin American Lesbian Insubordination." In *Women's Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship*, edited by Elizabeth Maier and Nathalie Lebon, 187–201. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

### WEEK 3 || Latin American Feminisms: An Overview

Women hold multiple, intersecting identities, including (but not limited to) gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, nationality, religion, and age. It makes sense, then, that Latin American feminist movements are diverse in their demands and activist tactics. Against the notion that white (cisgendered, heterosexual) feminism is universal, this week's texts include pieces that centre Black, trans, lesbian, Indigenous, Latinx, Afro Latinx and diasporic feminisms.

The film *Bixa Travesti* profiles the life and work of self-proclaimed "gender terrorist" MC Linn Da Quebrada. Through her art and performance, MC Linn upends binary configurations of gender, resists anti-blackness, and condemns trans misogyny and misogynoir. Santana's *Mais Viva* (More alive) also addresses stories of Black *travestis* in Brazil and the diaspora. Offering a transnational reading, Santana reflects on how translating the Portuguese *travesti* into the English *trans* would erase the particular history and the class implications of *travestis* in Brazil.

Friedman introduces the *encuentros*, or regional gatherings of women and *disidencias*, as a site of transnational networking for Latin American and Caribbean feminists. Seider briefly introduces the struggles of Indigenous women in their own communities and vis-à-vis the colonial and racist national states that violate the human rights of their indigenous peoples. Tatiana de la tierra's poem, along with selected texts from *This Bridge Called My Back (Esa Puente mi Espalda)*, is part of what is referred to as US-Third World feminism. These authors represent a valuable point of encounter between Latin America and the US. They make visible women of colour (or Latinx in the US), and challenge the idea of women (as heterosexual, middle class, white) from a lesbian perspective that pushes against gender stereotypes of beauty, among others. Like last week, the texts in week 3 overview the range of interconnected issues that converge under the banner of feminism.

### Read

Santana, Dora Silva. 2019. "Mais Viva! Reassembling Transness, Blackness, and Feminism." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6 (2): 210–22.

Friedman, Elisabeth Jay. 2014. "Feminism Under Construction." AND Seider, Rachel. 2014.

"Indigenous Women's Struggles for Justice." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 47 (4): 20–25.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2014.11721807>. \*Both readings are in the same short text.

de la tierra, tatiana. 2017. "Ode to Unsavory Lesbians." *Feminist Studies* 43 (2): 418–19.

Excerpts from Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. "Children Passing in the Streets: The Roots of Our Radicalism" (3–4); Cherry Moraga, "La Guerra" (24–33); Jo Carillo, "And When You Leave, Take your Pictures with You" (78–79).

### Watch

Priscila, Claudia, and Kiko Goifman, dirs. 2018. *Bixa Travesti*. 1:14:00.

### WEEK 4 || Online and in the Streets

How are movements cocreated in physical and digital spaces? What are the conditions necessary to activate networks, both off- and online? What sorts of connections are made possible in the digital

age, and which are foreclosed? Today's materials introduce you to queer and feminist activists, artists, and scholars who have considered such questions in their multi-platformed work.

Marcela Fuentes looks at how bodily performances in the streets (from Ciudad Juarez to Buenos Aires) and social media campaigns work together to create “insurgent collective actions” that denounce state violence, patriarchal power, and neoliberal policies, which disproportionately affect women, travestis, trans, and nonbinary persons. From a disabilities studies perspective, Piepzna-Samarasinha invites us to challenge ableist assumptions of activism as restricted to marching in the streets. Friedman argues that pre-Internet networks of *disidencias* across Latin America enabled the later use of the Internet as an activist tool. Micha Cardenas's work is an example of the multidimensional, speculative ways of activism using digital tools to create alternative futures.

#### Invited Speaker

Marcela Fuentes, Northwestern University

#### Read

Fuentes, Marcela A. 2019. “Together We Are Infinite: Projecting Performance Constellations.” In *Performance Constellations: Networks of Protest and Activism in Latin America*, 107–15. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. 2018. “Preface: Writing (With) a Movement from Bed.” In *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, 15–29. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Friedman, Elisabeth J. 2017. “The Creation of ‘a Modern Weaving Machine’: Bringing Feminist Counterpublics Online.” In *Interpreting the Internet: Feminist and Queer Counterpublics in Latin America*, 57–88. Oakland: University of California Press.

#### Explore

Cárdenas, Micha. n.d. “Redshift & Portalmetal.” Micharoja. Accessed November 1, 2021.

<https://micharoja.itch.io/redshift-and-portalmetal>.

#### WEEK 5 || #MariellePresente: Transnational Feminism and Solidarity

There is much injustice to protest, and we end our first unit with texts that acknowledge this fact. Against facile celebrations of digital activism, Tambe and Thayer articulate the dangers of what they call “spectral transnational feminism”: a disembodied and ephemeral form of transnational organizing resulting from spending cuts, surges in right-wing movements forcing activists to act locally, and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizing solely online does not rise to the challenge of confronting the interrelated forms of violence across the Americas based on race, class, gender, and sexuality. The fifth week's materials draw connections between such forms of violence while highlighting interconnected struggles for justice as well as the transnational solidarity that such figures as Marielle Franco and Breonna Taylor inspire. The documentary *Marielle and Monica*, the performance by Sobre Elas, as well as the statement “On the Imperative of Transnational Solidarity,” written by Black scholars in the US, introduce you to Marielle Franco and invite critical reflection about:

- hemispherical structures of racism and violence by police;
- the importance of transnational solidarity among activists against this violence.

In their panel “No Justice, No Peace,” activists Sadiqua Reynolds, Dr. Cherie Dawson-Edwards, Keturah Herron, Ashanti Scott, and Lonita Baker (one of Taylor's attorneys) draw on their collective



expertise to envision racial justice. “Listen” includes two audiovisual compilations created in homage to Marielle. We encourage you to check in with your body (you may wish to take a walk or engage in movement) as you listen to the music and art produced by activists who say it loudly: *Marielle Presente!*

Silvana Falcón’s “The Globalization of Ferguson” discusses the importance of attending to what happens beyond the classroom and how the news about Ferguson shaped discussion in the classroom. This is a crucial principle that guides our course, which was born out of the protests against gender and racialized violence happening in the streets of Buenos Aires, Argentina, as well as other cities like Louisville, USA. Falcón’s central argument is that we conceive of police brutality in the case of Ferguson not in terms of individual actions by racist police officers but within the multiple and global sites of violence in the region that link police brutality in the US with the violence, for example, perpetrated against students of Ayotzinapa in Mexico. According to Falcón, to confront global violence is necessary to “maximize the counterhegemonic imaginations and actions” among students, and we hope that our class offers that generative counter-hegemonic space.

#### Read

Tambe, Ashwini, and Millie Thayer. 2021. “The Many Destinations of Transnational Feminism.” In *Transnational Feminist Itineraries: Situating Theory and Activist Practice*, edited by Ashwini Tambe and Millie Thayer, 13–36. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/053331647000300202>.

“On the Imperative of Transnational Solidarity: A U.S. Black Feminist Statement on the Assassination of Marielle Franco.” *The Black Scholar*, March 23, 2018.

<https://www.theblackscholar.org/on-the-imperative-of-transnational-solidarity-a-u-s-black-feminist-statement-on-the-assassination-of-marielle-franco/>.

Falcón, Sylvanna M. 2015. “The Globalization of Ferguson: Pedagogical Matters about Racial Violence.” *Feminist Studies* 41 (1): 218–21.

#### Watch

Erdos, Fabio, dir. 2018. *Marielle and Monica*. The Guardian. Uploaded January 4, 2019. Vimeo, 25:09. <https://vimeo.com/309491182>.

Elas, Sobra. 2018. *MARIELLE, PRESENTE! - Manifesto Rosa de Luta*. Uploaded March 16, 2018. YouTube video, 3:25. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icok\\_IXZuNw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icok_IXZuNw).

#### Listen

Poder360. 2018. *Samba-Enredo Da Mangueira Em 2019 Fará Homenagem a Marielle Franco* (Tribute to Marielle Franco). Uploaded October 14, 2018. YouTube, 6:34.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SObzDOug\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SObzDOug_A).

Drama Musica. 2018. *Marielle Presente by Catarina Domenici - A Tribute to Marielle Franco (1979–2018) ENG Subtitles*. Uploaded October 24, 2018. YouTube, 2:11.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMVv-kvJYRY>.

#### Optional

Snyder, Cara, et al. 2020. “No Justice, No Peace: Exploring Breonna’s Law, Transformative Justice [from All Eyes on Louisville: WGST 2019 Fall Social Justice Speaker Series on November 19, 2020]”. Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies at UofL. Uploaded on November 26, 2020.

YouTube video, 1:30:11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqUhfEW9AU8&t=24s>.

## UNIT 2

### Historical Perspectives on Women's Activism in the Southern Cone

This unit aims to give you a historical arc of women's activism throughout the twentieth century. Contemporary feminist movements do not emerge in a vacuum and are the result of a long history of organizing in the factories, in the schools, in the universities, and in the home. Given the diversity within Latin America and the lengthy time period covered in the course, we will not study the full stories of women's activism in the region. Rather, we will take a thematic and chronological approach that will help you understand the trajectory of feminist discourses and practices from a historical perspective. We will therefore look at national histories as examples of broader processes led by women in their fight for justice.

In the first class, we depart from conceptions of motherhood as we explore the intersection between feminism, race, and science. In the second class, we will learn about women and labour movements in the context of populist governments that favoured the working class at the same time they consolidated patriarchal authority. From there, we move to the “revolutionary sixties” in the third class, a period when women and other activists attempted to radically change society by challenging gender norms and sexual behaviours. In the context of US imperial interventions in Latin America, we see the emergence of dictatorial states in the '70s. In the fourth class, we read about women's responses to state violence and the disappearances of their family members, exploring the connections between women's activism and human rights advocacy. In the last week, we return to questions regarding labour and class in a context of neoliberal policies that devastated the region during the 1990s and 2000s.

#### WEEK 6 || Feminism and Eugenics at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

For decades, historians have constructed Latin American ideologies as a result or product of European or US ideas. Under this perspective, Latin American countries are seen merely as repositories of ideas, a laboratory where political projects are practiced. However, when we look at the history of feminism in the region, it is possible to see to what extent Latin American women adapted, re-created, and constructed innovative feminist theory and practice. Without disregarding the imperial power over Latin American countries and the influence of anarchist, feminist, and socialist immigrants who arrived from Europe to South America in the process of state formation, it is crucial to understand how Latin American women contributed to debates and public policies that centred women's bodies and gender inequality.

This week we will look at one specific aspect of the feminism movement during this period: its links with the eugenic movement and *higienismo*. Lavrin's chapter invites us to reflect how did women create an agenda for public health and education based on feminist ideology? What networks and alliances did they construct to promote their agendas? What were the links between reproduction, gender, and race in Latin America?

#### Invited Speakers

Ana Nadalini Mendes, University of Pennsylvania

Jessica Wicks-Allen, Arizona State University

#### Read

Lavrin, Asunción. 1995. *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890–1940*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Introduction (1–14) and either chapter 3:

“Puericultura, Public Health and Motherhood” (97–124) or chapter 5: “The Control of Reproduction: Gender Relations under Scrutiny” (159–92).

#### Optional Watch

Renee, Tajima-Peña. 2015. *No más bebés*. Los Angeles: Moon Canyons Films.

WEEK 7 || Exploring Oral History Methods: Listening to Women & the Interview as Performance  
The readings for this class put you in contact with definitions of oral history as a method for conducting research and as a narrative that is constructed by the source (the person whose oral history is being recorded) and the historian. Portelli’s piece gives an overview of what oral history is and how it’s been used by researchers to tell stories that may be absent from “official” records. Patricia Lina Leavy explains how feminist historians have used oral histories as a way of investigating the experiences of those—including women, dissidents, people of colour, poor people, and the subaltern—who have been excluded from more traditional (i.e., masculinist) research agendas. Borland shares an example of the miscommunication that can happen between interviewee and interviewer, and she offers insight into how working through this miscommunication can build feminist consciousness *through* the research process.

As a storytelling practice, oral history is a performance in which the interviewee uses tone, rhythm, metaphors, and bodily gestures to communicate their story. These readings, along with the documentary by Merle Collins (the only piece in this unit not from the Southern Cone), aim to inform your oral history interview as you consider what questions to include in your interview, how to prepare for a careful listening, and what aspects of the interviewee you use to construct a life story. Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagarde suggests that in order to build feminist leadership, we must understand where we come from. We must know the women who came before us, identify the conflicts they faced, and recognize how they navigated them. In past iterations of this course, the discussions that arose from students’ oral histories proved to be a powerful feminist method to foster dialogues between grandmothers, mothers, daughters (whether chosen or biological), aunts, mentors, and more. It helped students to humanize and empathize with older generations, rather than judge them, and to situate contemporary feminist agendas while acknowledging past struggles.

#### Invited Speaker

Merle Collins, University of Maryland

#### Read

Portelli, Alessandro. 1998. “Oral History as Genre.” In *Narrative and Genre*, edited by Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson, 23–45. New York, NY: Routledge.

Borland, Katherine. 1991. “‘That’s Not What I Said’: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research.” In *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, 63–75. New York: Routledge.

Leavy, Patricia Lina. 2007. “The Practice of Feminist Oral History and Focus Group Interviews.” In *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, edited by Patricia Lina Leavy and Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 149–86. London: Sage.

#### Watch

Collins, Merle. 2010. *Saracca and Nation: African Memory and Re-Creation in Granada and Carriacou*. Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities.

## Optional

Lagarde, Marcela. 2018. *Claves feministas para mis socias de la vida*, 23–24 and 305–307. Buenos Aires: Batalla de ideas.

## WEEK 8 || Eva Peron, Women, and Labor (1940s–1950s)

Eva Peron is probably the most internationally known woman of Argentina. Coming from a working-class family, she became one of the leaders of a political movement that changed Argentine history forever. Not only did she lead the most progressive aspects of the Peronist governments in the 1940s–1950s in terms of social assistance, education, health, and labour, but she also advocated for women’s right to vote, an agenda that socialist feminists had promoted since the 1920s. Doña Maria’s story, an oral history conducted by historian Daniel James, is a wonderful example of the complexities of Peronist gender ideology. As a union leader, Maria Roldán challenged gender expectations involved in protests, debates, and community advocacy in Beriso. At the same time, she defended notions of motherhood and womanhood that reflects women’s domesticity and submission to patriarchal authority.

## Read

James, Daniel. 1996. *Doña Maria’s Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. “The Transcript” (31–84) and chapter 3: “Tales Told Out on the Borderlands. Reading Doña Maria’s Story for Gender” (213–243).

## Optional Watch (in Spanish)

Sabs L. 2013. “Debate Parlamentario Sufragio Femenino Argentina 1947.” YouTube. August 28, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6tqO95moW8&t=1s>.  
Ortizjco. 2012. “Eva Peron’s Final Speech (1951).” YouTube. April 2, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dr7ymWtnHWc>.

## Excerpts from:

Ehrick, Christine. 2015. *Radio and the Gendered Soundscape: Women and Broadcasting in Argentina and Uruguay, 1930–1950*. New York: Cambridge University Press.  
Roseblatt, Karin. 2000. *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920–1950*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

## WEEK 9 || The Revolutionary Sixties

The 1960s were a period of profound change in politics and culture, characterized by the emergence of youth as a new political actor with a revolutionary agenda. In Latin America, activists organized into student unions, peasant organizations, guerrilla units, and art collectives to denounce capitalism, consumerism, and authoritarian governments. Today’s readings put you in contact with those histories from a transnational perspective. Cowan exposes the term “machismo” as a Cold War tactic employed by social scientists and the media in the United States against Latin American revolutionaries. Conversely, in her interview with Mir Yarfitz, Valeria Manzano, author of *The Age of Youth in Argentina*, discusses her research on how and why freedom movements of the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s understood sexual liberation as central to their struggle. These movements led by young activists drew on both local political traditions of organizing during Peronism and the transnational circulation of ideas and cultural objects such as jeans. The film *Elis*, based on the life of Brazilian singer/songwriter Elis Regina, shows her ascent alongside the rise of military rule. Regina is part of a group of artists who spoke out against the dictatorship in Brazil; their movement came to be called *tropicalia*.

Read

Cowan, Benjamin Arthur. 2017. "How Machismo Got Its Spurs—in English: Social Science, Cold War Imperialism, and the Ethnicization of Hypermasculinity." *Latin American Research Review* 52 (4): 606–22. <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.100>.

Yarfitz, Mir. 2015. "The Age of Youth in Argentina: An Interview with Valeria Manzano."

NOTCHES, November 3, 2015,

<https://notchesblog.com/2015/11/03/the-age-of-youth-in-argentina-an-interview-with-valeria-manzano/>.

Watch (Portuguese with English Subtitles)

Prata, Hugo. 2016. *Elis*. Brazil: Bravura Cinematografia and Globo Films.

Optional

Cowan, Benjamin Arthur. 2016. "Sexual Revolution! Moral Panic and the Repressive Right." In *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil*, 72–110. Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

WEEK 10 || State Violence, Motherhood, and Human Rights Activism (1970s–1980s)

The 1970s were a violent period in the history of Latin America. As a response to Latin American revolutionary ideas and practices that manifested in guerrilla, peasant, Indigenous, worker, and student movements, dictatorial governments, supported by the US government, established a regime of state terror to implement neoliberal policies. After the coup d'état against the Peronist government in Argentina and Salvador Allende in Chile (made possible by US military and economic support), the right to strike was prohibited, Congress was abolished, and the media was censored. In this period, thousands of activists disappeared. They were kidnapped and tortured. Their children were kidnapped.

Women were at the forefront of the struggles for justice in the '70s and '80s. Today's class puts you in contact with two examples of how through building networks of solidarity, marching in the streets, and performing quotidian activist tasks, women in Chile and Argentina resisted state violence and advocated for human rights. Brandi Townsend's article and interview explore the links between state violence and women who were tortured during Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile. Townsend provides an example for how historians have utilized oral history methods to read quotidian acts of resistance that challenges the victimization of women. Marysa Navarro examines the role of Madres de Plaza de Mayo in fighting against the dictatorship in Argentina. Gustavo Germano's photography exhibit functions as a powerful media to understand the impact of the absences created by state terror. The videos about Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo along with the performance of Las Tesis *El violador eres tu* allow us to interrogate how art and performances contribute to the recreation of historical memory and the contemporary strategies to advocate for justice.

Invited Speaker

Brandi Townsend, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Read

Townsend, Brandi. 2019. "The Body and State Violence, from the Harrowing to the Mundane: Chilean Women's Oral Histories of the Augusto Pinochet Dictatorship (1973–1990)." *Journal of Women's History* 31 (2): 33–56. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2019.0013>.

Navarro, Marysa. 1988. “The Personal Is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo.” In *Power and Popular Protest*, edited by Susan Eva Eckstein, 241–58. Berkeley: University of California Press.

#### Watch

Hafen, Sarah Grace. 2019. “‘Un Violador En Tu Camino’ by Feminist Collective Las Tesis (English Subtitles).” Uploaded December 1, 2019. YouTube video, 3:18.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSHUS2lehOY>.

Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo. 2019. “Institutional Video of Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo - 2002 - English Version.” Uploaded March 27, 2019. YouTube video, 7:38.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuqT4hH5y9Q>.

#### Explore

Photography exhibits by Gustavo Germano

\*\* Scroll down and click on the Exhibits *Ausencias* (Uruguay, Brasil, Argentina, Colombia) and *Busquedas*. <https://www.gustavogermano.com/porfolio-2/>.

#### Optional

Walsh, Rodolfo. 1977. *Open Letter From a Writer to the Military Junta*. Buenos Aires: Archivo Nacional de La Memoria.

[http://www.jus.gob.ar/media/2940455/carta\\_rw\\_ingles-espa\\_ol\\_web.pdf](http://www.jus.gob.ar/media/2940455/carta_rw_ingles-espa_ol_web.pdf).

#### WEEK 11 || Mujeres Piqueteras and Rural Workers in Argentina and Chile’s Neoliberal Regimes (1990s–2000s)

Today’s readings delve into how neoliberal policies oppressed working-class women in Argentina and Chile as well as the creative ways activists responded to economic crises. Cooperatives, factories ruined by their workers, alternative media, community centres, piquetes, and assemblies are part of this repertoire of protests and grassroots organization that women developed relying on local networks of solidarity. As we enter the third week, focused on contemporary feminist movements, the readings from La Vaca Collective delves into the 2001 crisis and centres the experiences of women, factory workers, and community organizers during this period. Naomi Klein explains the effects of neoliberal policies in Latin America. Heidi Tinsman’s article demonstrates that even despite the exploitative working conditions during neoliberal Chile women challenged the patriarchal household and organized communal networks of care.

#### Invited Speaker

Carolina Flores, Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Universidad Nacional de San Martín

#### Read

Lavaca Collective. 2007. *Sin Patrón: Stories from Argentina’s Worker-Run Factories*. Chicago: Haymarket Books. Excerpts (pp. 8–13, 37–44, 64–85).

Tinsman, Heidi. 2016. “Struggles in the Countryside in Democracy and Dictatorship.” *Radical History Review*, no. 124, 67–77. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-3159970>.

#### Watch

Big Think. 2012. “Naomi Klein on Global Neoliberalism.” Uploaded April 23, 2012. YouTube video, 14:27. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKTmwu3ynOY>.



### UNIT 3

#### *Poner el Cuerpo* in Contemporary Feminist Movements

Unit 3 is titled “Poner el Cuerpo” in Contemporary Feminist Movements. *Poner el cuerpo* (putting the body on the line) is a metaphor that feminists have used for decades in Latin America and the Caribbean to signal the embodied character of activism: perform a song, march in the streets, and sometimes put your body at risk in front of the police. Expanding on the meaning of “poner el cuerpo,” an activist from the Argentine Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTE; Movement of unemployed workers) explains, “To question inequality is not exclusively a ‘mental’ activity and in order to make our voices heard, we have to feel it, and have [this protest] come out of your whole body” (Colectiva Mala Junta 2019, 53). Since the 1980s, Latin American and Caribbean *encuentros* (meetings) have provided physical spaces for thousands, and now millions, of women and dissidents to discuss gender inequality, build collective power, and strategize a feminist agenda for local, national, and transnational arenas. Beyond the *encuentros*, feminists have participated in local organizations and intervened in everyday life “putting their bodies” into transforming popular neighbourhoods, cultural centres, schools, unions, universities, and the workplace.

Centring the body in movements for justice recognizes how women’s bodies are contested spaces and is part of the feminist insistence that “the personal is political.” This slogan emerged in the 1960s in recognition that so-called private matters related to domesticity and bodily autonomy are, in fact, political. With this statement, women’s movements called attention to the ways larger structures of power and inequality are intimately connected to individual problems within marriages, homes, and families. In drawing connections between sexist systems and individual women’s embodied experiences, feminists spurred mobilization on multiple fronts, from housework to reproductive choice. This final unit focuses on feminist performance and protest which asserts their human right to make decisions about their own bodies.

#### WEEK 12 | | #NiUnaMenos (#NotOneWomanLess)

In the context of daily feminicides, on June 3, 2015, a group of journalists and scholars called for a protest to denounce gender violence. It was the first of many protests that would continue in the following years and fuel a vibrant and massive movement online and in the streets in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. The collective scream against machista violence became transnational, uniting women from Buenos Aires to Ciudad Juarez in claims for their right to live a life without fear. Indeed, feminicides expressed a powerful point of contact among feminists in Latin America. The name of the campaign and movement, “Ni una menos” (Not one woman less) took inspiration from Mexican poet and activist from Ciudad Juarez, Susana Chavez. Written from different disciplinary perspectives, today’s readings analyze the phenomenon of femicide in the Americas as well as the creative ways in which activists are performing on- and offline through hashtags and street protests. Along with the academic readings, we chose literary, activist, and musical artifacts that not only expose the violent realities of many women in Latin America but also present a vision of the world with collective action, solidarity, desire, autonomy and joy.

#### Read

Fuentes, Marcela A. 2019. “#NiUnaMenos (#NotOneWomanLess): Hashtag Performativity, Memory, and Direct Action against Gender Violence in Argentina.” In *Women Mobilizing Memory*, edited by Gul Ayse Altinay, María José Contreras, Marianne Hirsch, Jean Howard, Banu Karaca, and Alisa Solomon, 172–92. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda, and Cynthia Bejarano. 2010. “Introduction: A Cartography of Femicide in

the Americas.” In *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas*, 1–42. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bolaño, Roberto. 2008. “The Part About Crimes.” In *2666*, 358–61. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Ni una Menos Collective - Argentina

\*\* Especially for the discussion post you will read the “Carta Organica” within the “About us” section.

Gago, Veronica. 2020. “#We Strike: Toward a Political Theory of the Feminist Strike” and “Eight Theses on the Feminist Revolution.” In *Feminist International: How to Change Everything*, 9-56; 234–48. London: Verso.

Watch (Spanish and English lyrics visible here):

Lane, Rebeca. 2016. “Este Cuerpo Es Mío.” Uploaded November 25, 2016. YouTube video, 3:37. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dT2mTKwXIG8>.

Lane, Rebecca. 2019. “Siempre Viva.” Uploaded September 27, 2019. YouTube video, 5:13. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eacS\\_lvCh7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eacS_lvCh7A).

Lane, Rebecca. 2018. “Ni Una Menos.” Uploaded November 11, 2018. YouTube video, 3:27. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbQ\\_yOlzWTs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbQ_yOlzWTs).

Vivir Quintana ft. El Palomar. 2020. “Canción Sin Miedo.” Uploaded March 7, 2020. YouTube video, 3:48. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLLyzqkH6cs>.

Miss Bolivia, Rebecca Lane, and Ali Gua Gua. 2015. “Libre, Atrevida y Loca.” Uploaded August 30, 2015. YouTube video, 4:25. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0jiE9I0ybE>.

Optional

Hilton, Leon J., and Iván A. Ramos. 2017. “‘Madness Is Contagious’: Language and Violence in the Goodman Theatre’s 2666.” *TDR/The Drama Review*. 61 (2): 166–72.

[https://doi.org/10.1162/DRAM\\_a\\_00654](https://doi.org/10.1162/DRAM_a_00654).

Finnegan, Nuala. 2018. “Translating Femicide: Women of Sand and the Performance of Trauma.” *Performance Matters* 4 (3): 30–48

Segato, Rita. 2021. “Introducción.” In *La guerra contra las mujeres*, 3–23. Buenos Aires. Prometeo.

WEEK 13 || #Abortolegalía: Reproductive Violence and Justice

Since the 1990s, women have advocated for the decriminalization of abortion at the national *encuentros*. Feminists demanded not only bodily autonomy, a life free of violence, and reproductive rights as a public health issue but also the national implementation of integral sex education in the schools. Twenty years later, and relying on the visibility that the Ni Una Menos protests gave to gender violence, projects to legalize abortion were debated in Congress. The green bandanas invaded the streets of Buenos Aires and other cities around the country. For months, scholars, activists, and journalists exposed their arguments and stories in Congress. Thousands of people met in the streets outside the historical building hear the deputies’ statements. For the first time, feminism was massive. In the media, in social media, in the streets, in public transportation, in the schools, and in supermarkets people were debating whether or not the law should be passed. The 2018 law for the legalization of abortion did not pass but the green bandana became a transnational symbol for feminists throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Today’s class material exposes students to how feminists framed the criminalization of abortion and clandestine abortions as a form of state violence and how feminists advocated for their right to decide over their bodies. The articles by LATFEM, a digital native feminist media outlet located in

Buenos Aires, Argentina, and co-founders of the Network of Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Journalists, delve into the stories of women and girls who died by clandestine abortions, the reproductive rights of trans men, and the approval of the law in 2020. *Siete Semanas*, a film by Chilean director Constanza Figari, follows the journey of a young dance student, Camila, who decides to terminate a pregnancy. It is an intimate look into the multiple competing forces that insert themselves into women's reproductive choices.

#### Invited Speakers

Santiago Zemaitis, Universidad Nacional de La Plata

Josefina Vallejos, Colegio San José

#### Read

From LATFEM:

Alcaraz, Flor, Vanina Escales, and Agustina Frontera. n.d. "Sin Ley: Zona de Riesgo." LATFEM. Accessed April 11, 2023. <https://latfem.org/sin-ley/>.

"'Cuerpos Gestantes' y Derecho Al Aborto de Varones Trans: Nuevos Nudos Temáticos Feministas y Disidencias Sexuales." 2020. LATFEM. September 27, 2020. <https://latfem.org/menos-prescriptivismo-mas-articulacion/>.

Alcaraz, Flor. 2021. "La Vida Digna Es Ley." LATFEM. January 15, 2021. <https://latfem.org/la-vida-digna-es-ley/>.

\*The webpages can be translated into English in your browser.

#### Watch

Figari, Constanza. 2016. *Siete Semanas* [Seven weeks]. Chile.

#### WEEK 14 | | Feminist Responses to Systemic Violence

One way that connections between the personal and the political have manifested is through feminist anti-violence movements. These movements exposed the ways in which personalized and systemic forms of aggression are inextricably linked. Interpersonal violence refers to brutalities like rape, domestic violence, and emotional and psychological abuse that occur within privatized relationships. Structural violence refers to injury caused by governments (state violence), institutions, businesses, or individuals who commit harm based on stereotypes. Feminist activists have drawn attention to the systemic violence—rooted in historical processes and in social meanings ascribed to gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and nationality—which undergirds the individualized aggressions that many marginalized populations confront. To identify physical violence, coercive sex, and abuse as gendered violence is to recognize these as acts of power that both define and reinforce sexism and toxic gender norms. Activists in the late 1900s throughout the Americas asserted that rape and intimate partner violence must be considered issues of public concern. In cyclical form, structures of gender-based oppression shape individual existence, and vice versa. The terror of rape, for instance, dictates the terms of girls' and feminized subjects' lives from early on: what they wear, how they behave, where and when they move through the world, and who they interact with, are all impacted by the looming threat of sexual violence. Certainly, this threat is exacerbated for poor people, people of colour, and members of the LGBT+ community. Feminists have fought (and continue to fight) for safety nets, such as shelters and legal reforms. But ultimately, these measures are stopgaps; addressing, preventing, and eliminating sexual violence requires systemic change. Thus, even while feminist movements gave voice to individualized forms of aggression, they also understood that in order to eradicate brutality we must focus on dismantling interconnected systems of oppression which promote, condone, and facilitate misogynist, racist,

homophobic, and transphobic violence.

Diana Taylor presents various Latin American artists (artist-activists) who expose multiple registers of violence as they “summon the tools of performance to fight for political and economic change” (147). These performances include the *escrachas* of the group H.I.J.O.S that denounce the Argentine dictatorship, embodied works like *Earth* by Regina José Galindo that confront the Guatemalan genocide, and satirical videos like *Amnezias* by the Latina performance collective Fulana that make visible US-fuelled violence in the region. Amanda Aguilar Shank describes her experience speaking out against an abusive CEO and seeking accountability through restorative measures. Our optional reading by Adrienne Marie Brown offers a sex-positive spin on #MeToo, focusing less on punishing offenders and more on how to build cultures of consent and pleasure. Finally, today’s film centres Latin American youth as crucial actors in the emergence of Latin American feminisms in the last years. *Lute Como Menina* (Fight like a girl) documents school takeovers in Brazil, led by students fighting for their right to public education.

#### Read

Taylor, Diana. 2016. “Artivists (Artist-Activists), or What’s to Be Done?” In *Performance*, 147–84. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Shank, Amanda Aguilar. 2020. “Beyond Firing How Do We Create Community-Wide Accountability for Sexual Harassment in Our Movements?” In *Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement Ebook*, edited by Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, 27–43. Chicago: AK Press.

#### Watch

Lute como uma menina! 2016. “Lute Como Uma Menina!” Uploaded November 9, 2016. YouTube video, 1:16:17. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OCUMGHm2oA>.

#### Optional

Brown, Adrienne Marie. 2019. “Skills for Sex in the #MeToo Era.” In *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*, 190–229. Chicago: AK Press.

Serafini, Paula. 2020. “‘A Rapist in Your Path’: Transnational Feminist Protest and Why (and How) Performance Matters.” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 23 (2): 290–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549420912748>.

#### WEEK 15 || Feminist Organizing during the Pandemic

The pandemic is still ravaging populations around the world. As in other countries, in Latin America the pandemic exacerbated poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic resources such as medical attention and housing. As Argentine scholar Eleonor Faur put it, the current economic and health crisis in the region had a “feminine and popular face.” As we saw in week 11, women and *disidencias* are not only the ones who more deeply suffered the consequences of the economic crisis, but they are also the ones who put more labour into grassroots organizing by providing food and other resources to sustain their local communities. Facing death and violence, activists are responding with care and collective action to protect life. Today’s readings make visible both the health crisis that disproportionately affected Black, trans, and working-class people in Latin America along with the politics of care and the networks of solidarity created by local leaders in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico.

Read

Destine, Shaneda, Jazzmine Brooks, and Christopher Rogers. 2020. “Black Maternal Health Crisis , COVID-19 , and the Crisis of Care.” *Feminist Studies* 46 (3): 603–14.

Moraes, Carolina, Juma Santos, and Mariana Prandini Assis. 2020. “We Are in Quarantine but Caring Does Not Stop’: Mutual Aid as Radical Care in Brazil.” *Feminist Studies* 46 (3): 639–52.

AND

At least two of the following articles published in LATFEM, a digital native feminist media outlet located in Buenos Aires, Argentina: <https://latfem.org/>. LATFEM are the founders of the Network of Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Journalists. (\*Note: use chrome as your browser and translate the page into English by right-clicking, and selecting the translate option.)

“Defensoras ambientales en tiempos de coronavirus” (Environmental defenders in times of coronavirus)

“Ministerio de putas: cómo Ammar articula con el Estado durante la pandemia” (Ministry of whores: How Ammar articulates with the state during the pandemic)

“¿Qué vidas importan? Preguntas feministas y acciones colectivas en tiempos de violencias en pandemia” (What lives matter? Feminist questions and collective actions in times of violence in a pandemic)

“Hola Profe. La educación en pandemia” (Hello teacher: Education in a pandemic)

“Volver a clases en México: las mujeres cuidan, educan y trabajan” (Back to class in Mexico: Women care, educate, and work)

“Madres solas en pandemia: la ‘super mujer’ no existe” (Lonely mothers in pandemic: The “superwoman” does not exist)

“Puerto Rico: tres jóvenes epidemiólogas reescriben la historia de las ciencias” (Puerto Rico: Three young epidemiologists rewrite the history of science)

## Postscript

### Behind the Scenes

Online and in the Streets was originally conceived as a three-week, on-site class in Buenos Aires, Argentina, set to take place during the fifth anniversary of #NiUnaMenos. The course moved online when COVID-19 made travel impossible. We co-taught our first iterations of the class in 2020 amid protests against police brutality, and our course was influenced by the powerful networked activism surrounding us. Because of their involvement with local movements, students in the US connected more intimately with class material about feminist protest in Latin America. As a class, we began to understand ourselves as part of what Marcela Fuentes calls “performance constellations.” Fuentes’s concept—one we engaged with throughout the class—recognizes the co-constitutive nature of performance and activism occurring in digital and physical spaces that aims to challenge neoliberal, patriarchal, and racist forms of violence. While we acknowledge the limitations of learning about feminist performance and protest in online classes, our course honours embodied knowledge and enacts transnational solidarities and collaboration, two pillars of our co-teaching philosophy. These commitments to transformative teaching are reflected through class materials, interviews with feminist artists, activists, and scholars, and major course projects that we refer to as “experience sets.” Experience sets are project-based assignments, in which we ask students to synthesize course material, discussions, and experiences outside the classroom.

### Co-Teaching Transnational Feminisms Online

Our approach to teaching draws from a genealogy of pedagogues throughout the Americas, including Marxist philosopher Paulo Freire (Brazil), Black feminist scholar and activist bell hooks (USA), and Latin American feminist scholars Julieta Kirkwood (Chile) and Marcela Llargarde (Mexico), to name a few. The *pareja pedagógica* (co-teaching partnership) is a common practice in popular education. In practice, this philosophy of collective teaching used in nonformal education (schools for working-class adults, usually from marginalized populations) means that educators do not plan their classes, teach, and grade students in isolation but along with their partners, in a constant dialogue and process of reflection. The *pareja pedagógica* of this class comprises Sabrina González and Cara K. Snyder. Sabrina González is a feminist historian from Buenos Aires, a non-native English speaker, and a first-generation college student from a working-class family. Her experience as an activist in community centres, student and teachers’ unions, alternative media, and nontraditional schools for adults shape her research on the history of education and her approaches to popular and feminist pedagogies. Cara Snyder, a white, US-born professor of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies has lived and taught in the US, Guatemala, Argentina, and Brazil. Cara’s research and organizing with women and LGBTQIA++ athlete-activists, and their two decades of experience teaching in a variety of settings, including multiple study abroad programs, inform Cara’s embodied approaches to queer, feminist, anti-racist, and anti-imperialist pedagogies.

It is not possible, of course, to consider the full story of women’s activism in the region. As in any class, we have had to make hard decisions about what to include based on our expertise, the scope of our time together, and diversity within Latin America. Our research expertise and lived experiences are geographically situated in what is referred to as the Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay), and our syllabus reflects this bias. For example, there is excellent work coming from Caribbean and Central American artists, scholars, and activists that we were unable to include: José Esteban Muñoz, April Mayes, Ginetta Candelario, Elizabeth S. Manley, Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes, Maja Horn, Jennifer Shoaff, Beverly Bell, and Audre Lorde, to name



a few. We invite students to explore these geographies and activists in their experience sets. As part of performance-based and feminist pedagogies, we want to make explicit who we are and how our situated knowledges and political commitments impact our teaching. This naming of our positions is part of our feminist pedagogy; we ask students to engage in the same practice of self and collective reflexivity.

Here, we must call out the politics of language and recognize that linguistic considerations limited the inclusion of the voices of Latin American actors (in Spanish and Portuguese). The first and many subsequent iterations of this class were taught in English, and, therefore, limited the material we could include (materials had to be available in English or with English subtitles). Yet, the expansion of the class allowed for transnational collaborations with scholars in Latin America and made the incorporation of material in Spanish possible. Since summer 2021, Sabrina González has taught Feminist Protest twice in collaboration with Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In this “Global (Virtual) Classroom,” students from the Argentine university take the course alongside US-based students. Because some students in the classroom spoke Spanish and the professors did the labour of translation, it was possible to include important pieces of feminist theory produced in Spanish (such as the work of Rita Segato).

### **Put Your Body On(the)Line: Embodied Knowledge**

When we envisioned the class as an on-site course in Argentina, we imagined students would be fully immersed in feminist movements during our short time there. Against the idea of a “tourist gaze”—where US students go “abroad” to superficially visit iconic places promoted by the tourism industry—we wanted students to commit to transnational struggles through thinking, feeling, and acting in solidarity. By documenting the anniversary of #NUM, dancing queer tango, organizing a cultural activity with local social movements, and participating in *fútbol femenino* (women’s soccer), students would have to *poner sus cuerpos/as* (put their bodies on the line), a metaphor that Latin American feminists have used for decades to signal the embodied character of activism. While virtual classrooms may not allow for the sort of embodiment we originally imagined, the body is still central in digital spaces. We invited students to *poner sus cuerpos/as/xs/es*, even, and perhaps especially, in this online course.

There were multiple ways in which the body appeared in the class material, in some cases via police brutality, oppression, and state violence against women and Black and trans people. At other moments, the body celebrated, created, and performed, both on- and offline. Together, we explored what happens to our bodies online and how we relate to embodiment in virtual space. The format of a condensed online class necessarily presented limitations for creating a learning community and accommodating students’ diverse needs. Still, we asked that students be active participants in the classroom, that they be present, and that they interact with the class material and the experiences they encounter, dialogue with classmates’ perspectives, and honour the long history of activists who have died fighting for their right to exist. In other words, we encouraged students to engage through rituals of active listening, reflecting, caring, commenting, and researching about Latin American feminist theory and practice.

### **Think-Feel-Act Beyond Borders: Transnational Solidarity and Collaboration**

In this class, students encountered a transnational feminist pedagogy that opened the classroom to the world and were invited to contemplate scales from the intimate to the global. This course also exposed students to asymmetrical flows of power across borders, challenged the fixedness of the

nation-state as a category, and built transnational solidarities in order to take action both on- and offline. Our class enacted transnational dialogues through recorded interviews by the instructors with Latin American and Caribbean thinkers. The interviews were opportunities to conceptualize *with* and not only *about* Latin American actors. Students met scholars, including Merle Collins and Marcela Fuentes, that envision transnational feminism through performance. As a class, we watched and analyzed performances by such artists as Las Tesis and Linn de Quebrada, street performances of #NUM, and feminist music videos. We implored students to stay open, reminding them that even if they did not understand the language, other forms of communication—including costume, face, makeup, and movement—are powerful ways to enact change. Students “read” for these multiple forms of communication in an assignment that asked them to practice oral history. As they interviewed a woman or *disidencia*, they interpreted the interview as a type of performance while also analyzing the content for elements of transnational exchange. Oral history methodologies were a tool to engage questions of scale by drawing connections between the self, the community, the nation, and beyond.

### Conclusion: A Good Performance

We asked students: what does it mean to “perform well” in this class? That depended on the extent to which students were able to engage, to *poner sus cuerpos*, and to think-feel-act in collaboration with our (global) classroom community. At the end of the class, teachers and students reflected together about the process of learning, and students assessed their own performances based on the learning goals. While we acknowledged the challenges of liberatory practices in formal education, we still wanted students to focus on the process more than the final product. Throughout the class, students were encouraged to focus on pleasure, reflection, and creativity. Ultimately, their grade is not their final takeaway; what they take away (and what cannot be captured by a numerical assessment) is what they enjoyed, the ways they learned, and how they connected with intimate histories of oppression and liberation.

As a collective endeavour, the class has been less a product of our behind-the-scenes planning and more the result of a dialogical process between students, teachers, and class material interacting in particular contexts. Every class is a new performance of the syllabus. Students who have thrived in this class are those who actively “claim their education” (to quote feminist writer Adrienne Rich) rather than passively receive it (or actively resist it!). We try to perform horizontalism, but we are still operating in a hierarchical institution where teachers have power over students’ grades. Furthermore, we have encountered students who felt uncomfortable with a pedagogical approach that values horizontalism and flexibility. We ask students to focus on pleasure and creativity, to think-feel-act beyond borders, to “put their bodies on the line” and engage with the histories of Latin American feminisms . . . but not every student will feel pleasure in a three-week online class about feminist protest. Still, there is value in reflecting on our sources of discomfort and using this reflection as an opportunity for growth.