

Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refugee from Nazism

Syllabus Fall 2022

IDH 2930

*You pronounce your name in your language
The language of sun and bread,
the language of your mother
that today is not the one of your daughter*

*Your country,
Resting next to the silence of your memory,
A dormant place,
A winter garden surrounded by gardenias.
Marjorie Agosín, *Traces of Memory**

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Class meets on Mondays in period 6 (12:50 pm–1:40 pm) in [Little Hall](#) 0117

Office hours: on Mondays, before class, 11:45 am–12:45 pm and by appointment, via Zoom (link TBA).

Course description:

We are going to read Leo Spitzer's *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refugee from Nazism* (1998), an account of the history of Jewish refugees' arrival and settlement in Bolivia beginning in the late 1930s and their memories of persecution, displacement, refuge, and migration. Reading the book, we will explore how the Austrian and German Jewish refugees' history of migration linked the histories of Central Europe and Bolivia during the Holocaust. We will ask ourselves the questions that intrigued the author as well: how does one's memory preserve the past and change over time? What is the relationship between memory and history? How does remembering shape historical accounts and how does historical scholarship approach individual and collective memorialization?

Course objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the history of the persecution and emigration of Jews to the Americas from Germanophone Central Europe in the late 1930s
- Students will gain insights into Jewish communal life and individual experience in Bolivia beginning in the late 1930s
- Students will explore the role of religious and ethnic prejudice in the acclimatization and integration of Jewish refugees in Bolivia

- Students will explore the connections and interactions between remembering and documenting the past and the ways in which the interactions between memory and history shape identity on the personal and collective levels

Course policies:

We will dedicate the classes to discussions of the readings. Students are encouraged to ask informed questions during discussions or after class. Informed questions attest to interest in the course material and completion of the required readings listed below in the course schedule. To ensure a high-level learning experience, students will engage their peers and the instructor in conversations and written exchanges that, in addition to being academically driven and critical, will be based on mutual respect and sensitivity toward and appreciation of differences in worldviews and cultural values. The instructor will address the students accordingly and will work to ensure that the classroom is an inspiring place for learning and intellectual growth. (See more about communication below.)

Students may use silenced electronic devices to take notes and refer to the readings during the class. Using phones, computers, tablets, etc. for purposes irrelevant to the scope of the class is counterproductive and disrespectful. Moreover, it can be disruptive.

In addition to regular attendance, completing the readings, and participating in class discussions, students will answer ten short take-home prompts, complete four longer assignments, and develop a paper at the end of the class, which they also present to the class. Deadlines are indicated on the course schedule.

The short prompts will ask students to choose a quote—minimum a sentence and maximum a paragraph—from the readings we are to discuss on the next Monday and explain the significance of the quote, that is why the student chose it. The prompts are available on Canvas and each is due by midnight on the Sunday before the discussion. The presentations will take place on the last two classes of the semester and the final paper is due on the last day of the semester. The four longer assignments will ask students to choose a picture, a children story, words, and a musical piece respectively and explain how they help memorialize, remember, or forget events in the past. Students may refer to their personal experiences or of someone they are personally acquainted or cite a reading that offers an answering the given prompt. In the final paper, students will reflect on the readings.

Attendance:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up quizzes, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. To read the university attendance policies, visit <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. Students are asked to inform the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class. In case prior notification is not possible, the student will contact the instructor about the absence at the earliest possible time. For each unexcused absence, 1% will be deducted from the final grade.

Communication:

Students are required to communicate in writing with the instructor about their absences, make-up work, and requests for extensions of deadlines. They are encouraged and welcome to put in writing any concerns or questions they have regarding the course curriculum. Students will use email and Canvas for written communication with the instructor. Students are also encouraged to speak with the instructor before or after class, during office hours, or by scheduling an appointment regarding these issues or any concerns, ideas, and questions pertaining to the course curriculum. Asking questions is part of the learning process.

To ask for help with technical and technological issues, please visit the Helpdesk website at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>. The Helpdesk can be reached at (352)-392-4357 and is located at the HUB.

Accommodation for students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. To get started with the Disability Resource Center, visit <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access—or any other educational—needs as early as possible in the semester.

Grades and grading

Students' written work will be evaluated based on the rubric accompanying the description of each assignment. In addition, students will be given quizzes and earn points through class participation. Students' work will be graded in accordance with UF grading policy, available from <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

The following grading scale will apply:

Grade	Grade Points	Percentage
A	4.0	93-100
A ⁻	3.67	90-92
B ⁺	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	83-86
B ⁻	2.67	80-82
C ⁺	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	73-76
C ⁻	1.67	70-72
D ⁺	1.33	67-69
D	1.0	63-66
D ⁻	.67	60-62
E	0	0-59

Late work will be accepted to a certain extent; however, the instructor will deduct points for each day of delay. Rubrics will include a policy regarding late work.

The final grade will be computed of the following elements:

Participation in class discussions	10%
Short prompts (10*2 points)	20%
Assignments (4*10 points)	40%
Presentation	10%
Final paper	20%

Online course evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Academic Conduct

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. To read the Conduct Code, visit <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services. <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-%20code-student-conduct-code/>

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process at <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process/>

Required readings:

Spitzer, Leo. *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refugee from Nazism*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.

The book is available from Library West course reserves. Other readings for this course are available electronically via the library or the Internet. To learn how to search the library catalog and access electronic resources, consult this libguide:

<https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/eresources/home>.

Recommended readings:

Elkin, Judith Laikin. *The Jews of Latin America*. Revised edition. Ann Arbor: MPublishing, The University of Michigan, 2011.

Klein, Herbert S. *Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Additional recommended readings are listed below.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

**Please note that we may take more time to discuss certain topics than originally scheduled.

Accordingly, there may be changes in the scheduling and/or the listing of the readings. Any change will be indicated on Canvas and discussed in class.**

Class first meets on Week 2 of the semester, Monday August 29

Week 2 | August 29 Introduction: About *Hotel Bolivia*, the history it reconstructs, and the events it memorializes

Recommended reading to be completed for class:

Albert Memmi, "The Fecundity of Exile," *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy - Revue de la philosophie française et de langue française* XIX, no 2 (2011): 4–6.

Week 3 | *Labor Day: September 5, no class.*

Week 4 | September 12

1st short prompt is due by Sunday, September 11 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 1, pages 3–46

Recommended reading: Milka Zalmon, "Forced Emigration of the Jews of Burgenland: Test Case," available from <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/academic/forced-emigration-of-the-jews-of-burgenland.html>

Week 5 | September 19

2nd short prompt is due by Sunday, September 18 midnight on Canvas

Readings to be completed for class: Chapter 2, pages 47–73

Prompt: Choose a sentence or a longer quote (not longer than one paragraph) from the weekly reading and explain in short its significance to you.

Week 6 | September 26

3rd short prompt is due by Sunday, September 25 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 7–24.

Week 7 | October 3

4th short prompt and 1st longer assignment are due by Sunday, October 2 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 3, pages 75–88

Week 8 | October 10

5th short prompt is due by Sunday, October 9 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 3, pages 88–106

Week 9 | October 17

6th short prompt and 2nd longer assignment are due by Sunday, October 16 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 4, pages 107–122

Week 10 | October 24

7th short prompt is due by Sunday, October 23 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 4, pages 122–140

Week 11 | October 31

8th short prompt and 3rd longer assignment are due by Sunday, October 30 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 5, pages 141–160

Week 12 | November 7

9th short prompt is due by Sunday, November 6 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 6, pages 161–182

Week 13 | November 14

10th short prompt and 4th longer assignment are due by Sunday, November 13 midnight on Canvas

Reading to be completed for class: Chapter 7, pages 183–198

Week 14 | November 21

Discussion of Postscript and oral interviews

Reading to be completed for class: Postscript, pages 199–200

Listen to at least the first part (24:26) of the oral history interview with John Ralph Silva available from the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn85504>

Week 15 | November 28

Presentations

Week 16 | December 5

Presentations

Final paper is due on Monday December 5 in hard copy and electronically on Canvas at the beginning of the class