**MAFL/ Comparative Literature** 704: Seminar in Cultural Studies
Cultures of Resistance and Testimony: Self and Society in Literature

**Dr. Michelle Bolduc**
Curtin Hall 788
Office Hours:   Monday, 1:45 to 3:00pm
               Wednesday, 10:45am to 12pm
               Thursday, 5:00 to 5:30pm

This course explores the notion of testimony as an important aspect of a literature of resistance. We explore how testimony intertwines with questions of writing and truth, and how these expressions form an attempt to posit a literature of testimony as an ethical response to cultural violence. This course will examine the theories and literature of resistance and testimony in a wide-ranging selection of time periods and cultures, from the formation of a philosophical and religious idea of testimony in antiquity from the Greek and Judeo-Christian traditions, to its later development in the theories of Emmanuel Levinas. We will also study the emergence of the literary notion of testimony by analyzing works of poetry, narrative, and film, with a particular focus on Jewish responses to the Shoah, and Latin American and Latino responses to political and social repression.

**Course Objectives:**
In this course, you will:
- learn the fundamental concepts, genres, and contexts of testimonial literature;
- synthesize the tradition of testimonial accounts with theoretical perspectives;
- gain facility in writing critically through critical reviews of articles and formal analytical writing;

**Requirements**

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<td>Participation and in-class work</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Two 3-5 page article reviews and presentations</td>
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<td>One 10-15 page paper, with annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Two 3-5 page mid-semester take-home essays</td>
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If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.
Syllabus

Thursday, January 27 Introduction: Ancient and Medieval Testimonies
February 3 Wiesel (Young; Rosenfeld)
February 10 Shoah video (Ginzburg; Horowitz; Langer, “The Dominion of Death”)
February 17 Levi (Desden; Wiesel; Langer, “Language as Refuge”)
February 24 Spiegelman (Adorno; Haidu; Santner)
March 3 Celan (Celan; Felstiner; Ezrahi)
March 10 Levinas (Derrida, “Adieu” and “Violence”)
March 17 Levinas
March 24 Spring Break
March 31 Levinas
April 7 Levinas (Eagleton)
April 14 Argueta (Beverley “The Margin at the Center;” Nance)
April 21 Menchu (Brittin; Lombardi; Restrepo)
April 28 Alvarez (Bados Ciria; Bueno; Bartow)
May 5 Rivera (De Costa; Jameson)
May 12 Urrea (Yúdice; Denegri; Rice-Sayre)

Paper Due: May 19, 2005 at 5 p.m.

Please note: This syllabus is subject to change.

Required texts


Rivera, Tomas. *...y no se lo tragó la tierra / ...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*, translated by Evangelina Vigil-Pinon. Bilingual edition *Houston, TX*: Arte Publico Press; 1987. ISBN: 155885083X.


Lectures, films, etc.

Saturday 5 February: Play “Precious Stones” (Palestinian/Israeli/ Lesbian), Union Ballroom, 7 p.m.

Monday, 14 March: Rigoberta Menchu, guest lecture, Union Ballroom, 11 a.m.

Tuesday 8 March- Sunday 13 March: Women without Borders film festival

Thursday 31 March: Three Generations of Latin American Women (Chile), panel lecture, Union Wisconsin Room Lounge, 12 -2 p.m.

Friday 8 April- Friday 15 April: Latin American Film Festival, Union Theatre

Thursday 15 April: Tony Kushner, Lecture, Union Wisconsin Room, 8 p.m. $5.00

Monday 2 May: Sisters of the Screen: African Women in the Cinema, film, Union Theatre, 7 p.m.

Select Bibliography in English

**The Theories of Testimony and Modern Subjectivity**


**Testimonial Literature: The Shoah**


Testimonio


The following are questions to keep in mind when you review an article.

1. How is the article structured? (How does the argument progress?)

2. Are there are terms or phrases that appear significant to the argument?

3. What is the argument?

4. On what does the author seem to base the argument? In other words, who are there critics, and what are their arguments, that serve as a foundational base for the argument (even if the author disagrees with them at times)?

5. What are the main points of the article?

6. What evidence does the author bring forth to support the article?

7. What is persuasive about the article?

8. What is not convincing about the article?