

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2021 - 2022

Life Behind Bars: Comparative Perspectives on Carcerality in Latin America and the Middle East

MINT 219 - Fall- 6 ECTS

Course Description

This seminar aims to examine and theoretically engage with the shifts and changes that carceral policies have undergone over the years, and the ways in which prisoners, worldwide, respond to violence and torture. Through engaging with an extensive array of theoretical and conceptual formulations, along with written works by prisoners, the seminar will critically look at carceral realities and policies in their global and present-day manifestations, with a particular focus on those lived and experienced in Latin America and the Middle East.

The cinematic representations of carcerality through a selection of documentaries and fictions by film directors from the two main geographical areas considered will be center-stage. Actually, the film-makers' work constitutes - besides its artistic contribution - a critical archive for the past and present memory of different forms of violence, whose relevance for researchers, policy-makers and human rights activists is not negligible.

This course has been developed in partnership and with the support of UMAM Documentation and Research (UMAM D&R) via the collaborative project the MENA Prison Forum Initiative. Please see here for more information:

- [UMAM D&R](#)
- [MENA Prison Forum](#)
- [UMAM-IHEID CCDP Collaboration](#)

> PROFESSOR

Riccardo BOCCO

riccardo.bocco@graduateinstitute.ch

[Office hours](#)

By appointment

> ASSISTANT

Basil FARRAJ

Basil.farraj@graduateinstitute.ch

[Office hours](#)

By appointment

Syllabus

Despite the various changes that modes of population control and subjugation have undergone over the years, imprisonment remains a central tool used for dealing with, intimidating, and punishing populations worldwide. Indeed, carceral policies have managed to shift the meanings and confines of imprisonment and have ultimately led to the fortification of carceral realities. Carceral regimes continue to devise ever-adapting means to subjugate populations; methods that include torture, violence, and the denial of rights. On the other hand, imprisoned populations have long been devising means to counter the violence and torture to which they are subjected including attempts to keep memory alive, utilizing their bodies as tools for resistance, alongside other creative responses to captivity and to carceral policies.

Academic attention from numerous disciplines has increasingly been interested in examining varying aspects of carcerality. This attention, however, is not solely academic as numerous audio-visual materials have long been produced to tackle carceral experiences in numerous parts of the world, and are in and of themselves essential sources to be analyzed in order to form an adequate understanding of carcerality. This seminar will therefore aim at examining, in a sociopolitical and historical perspective, various experiences of imprisonment and carcerality, particularly in Latin America and the Middle East – two regions with unique historical and current trends of repression and imprisonment – and the ways in which films contribute to our understanding of life behind bars, of torture, violence, resistance, and the construction of memory. In doing so, the seminar will examine both the literature dealing with carceral experiences, theoretically and practically, alongside a thorough examination of several films narrating carceral realities and violence.

Through extensive and critical engagement with themes related to global carcerality, students will gain a deep understanding of ways in which various modes of violence and torture are put in place to manage and punish populations. They will engage with theories and conceptual frameworks that assist in understanding carcerality in its global and practical manifestations. Students will also gain an understanding of the purposes and usages of modes carceral violence and torture, and will engage with the vast array of responses that prisoners continue to devise to counter inflicted violence. Additionally, the seminar aims towards developing an appreciation of, and a critical engagement with, cinematic, artistic productions, and prison literature and their role in bringing to light carceral realities and countering their global rise.

Organization

The course will take place each Thursday from 12.15 – 2.00 pm, starting on the 23rd of September. Attendance to the course is compulsory. Up to 2 absences are acceptable, after which 0.25 points will be removed from your final grade. Prior to each class, students are required to thoroughly read and engage with the assigned course materials and watch the assigned documentaries and movies.

The seminar is taught primarily in English. Questions, interventions, and assignments can be formulated in English or French.

Assignments and Grading

The course's core assignment involves working on a group final project conceived of as a final paper tackling aspects of the seminar's core themes as they relate to carcerality, torture and resistance. This final project must involve engagement with the various theoretical and conceptual

formulations addressed during the semester, and with cinematic, artistic and creative representations of carceral experiences. Information on the particularities of the final projects will be discussed during session 7.

The grade is comprised of the following components:

- 10%: In-class presence and participation.
- 30%: Assigned group presentations reflecting and engaging with assigned reading and movies.
- 60%: final project.

All sessions of the seminar include readings and films. The compulsory readings will be available on the support material webpage, and the movies will be accessible online on a Vimeo webpage.

PART 1

Session 1. September 23rd. **Global Carcerality and Carceral States.**

- Introduction: presentation of the seminar, themes and methods of work, course requirements and final evaluation.
- Global Carcerality and Carceral States

READINGS:

- Khalili, Laleh, 2013, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies*. California: Stanford University Press. (Introduction, Chapters 2 & 3).

Session 2. September 30th. **Theorizing Carceral Power and Violence.**

READINGS:

- Ghanim, Honaida, 2008, "Thanatopolitics: The Case of Colonial Occupation in Palestine." In: *Thinking Palestine*, Ronit Lentin (ed.). London: Zed Books, pp. 65 – 81.
- Mbembe, Achille, 2003, "Necropolitics." In : *Public Culture* 15 (1): 11 – 40.
- Weheliye, Alexander, 2014, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Introduction and Chapter 4).
- Foucault, Michel, 1995 *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books: New York. (Chapters 1 and 2).
- Rhodes, Lorna A., 2001, "Towards an Anthropology of Prisons." In : *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30: 65 – 83.

Further Readings:

- Gilmore, Ruth-Wilson, 2007, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Introduction).
- Puar, Jasbir K., 2017, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Chapter 4).

Session 3. October 7th. **On Memory, Prisons, Torture and Cinema.**

READINGS:

- Lesage, Julia, 2009, "Torture Documentaries." In: *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, vol. 51. <https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc51.2009/TortureDocumentaries/text.html> [to view the images, please follow the article through this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2n8hyjmc>]
- Cooke, Miriam, 2013, "Tadmor's Ghosts." In : *Review of Middle East Studies* 47 (1): 28 – 36.

- Rejali, Darius, 2012, "Movies of Modern Torture as Convenient Truths." In: *Screening Torture: Media Representations of State Terror and Political Domination*, Michael Flynn and Fabiola F. Salek (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 219 – 237.
- Lazrge, Marnia, 2012, "Doing Torture in Film: Confronting Ambiguity and Ambivalence." In *Screening Torture: Media Representations of State Terror and Political Domination*, Michael Flynn and Fabiola F. Salek (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 257 - 271.
- Said, Edward and Gillo Pontecorvo, 2002, "The Dictatorship of Truth: An Interview with Gillo Pontecorvo." In: *Cinéaste* 25(2): 24 – 25.

FILMS:

- LA BATAILLE D'ALGER / THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS by Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966, 120mn. Audio: Arabic and French, subt. English.
Synopsis: Set during the Algerian fight for independence, the film depicts the battle for the control over the capital of Algeria, Algiers, particularly of events taking place in the city's Casbah. The film depicts some of the violence and torture methods used by the French in their fight against Algerian fighters, and in an attempt to squash their revolt.
- LES ESCADRONS DE LA MORT. L'ECOLE FRANCAISE / DEATH SQUADS. THE FRENCH SCHOOL by Marie-Monique Robin, 2003, 60mn. Audio: French, subt. English.
Synopsis: This documentary film tells the story of how the colonial French army taught torture and interrogation techniques developed in colonial-occupation Algeria to other nation states across the world, most particularly in Latin America. It dwells on how films – most particularly the Battle of Algiers – were used to train in torture techniques, and on the ways in which the doctrine of 'dirty war' was developed and spread across the world. It features interviews with first-hand participants (both trainers and trainees) in this process, and in-depth investigative journalistic work.
- SENTENCED / CONDENADOS by Carlos Martinez, 2013, 83mn. Audio: Espanol subt. English
Synopsis: the film is based on a true story. The 9th Unit was the jail where the military dictatorship of General Videla concentrated thousands of political prisoners, pulling apart their leaders into two Wards of Death, to kill them without trial. Not only the prisoners would be murdered by the army, but also their relatives. Along this film there are many more than kidnappings and deaths, the fight for life and dignity is renewed day by day. The will, the wit and humor were weapons of the resistance, beyond the limits of the human understanding.

Session 4. October 14th. **How to Read a Documentary.**

Guest Lecturer: Gabriella ZALAPI, writer and painter, founder of the project "Screenings and Words" for detainees in Geneva prisons.

FILM:

- HUNGER by Steve McQueen, 2008, 91mn. Audio: English.
Synopsis: In Northern Ireland's Maze prison in 1981, twenty-seven-year-old Irish Republican Army member Bobby Sands went on a hunger strike to protest the British government's refusal to recognize him and his fellow IRA inmates as political prisoners. The film director dramatizes prison existence and Sands's final days in a way that is purely experiential, even abstract, a succession of images full of both beauty and horror. *Hunger* is an unflinching, transcendent depiction of what a human being is willing to endure to be heard.

Session 5. October 21st. **On Law, Violence and the Carceral System** (part 1).

READINGS:

- Viterbo, Hedi, 2018, "Military Courts." In : *The ABC of the OPT*, Orna Ben-Naftali, Michael Sbard and Hedi Viterbo (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 264 – 276.
- Gregory, Derek. 2006. "The Black Flag: Guantanamo Bay and the Space of Exception." In: *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 88 (4): 405 – 427.
- Further Reading:
- Daniele, Luigi. 2017. "Enforcing Illegality: Israel's Military Justice in the West Bank." In: *Questions of International Law* 44: 21-40.

FILMS:

- THE LAW IN THESE PARTS by Ra'anán Alexandrowicz, 2011, 106mn. Audio: Hebrew, subt. English. Synopsis: this documentary explores the four-decade-old military legal system in the Occupied Territories. Since Israel conquered the territories in the 1967 War, the Israeli Defense Forces legal corps have created and implemented thousands of military orders and laws, established military courts, sentenced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. This complex system which is invisible to most Israelis is very present in Palestinian daily life and is unique in the entire world. Till today, the IDF legal professionals face judicial and moral dilemmas as they develop and uphold a system of long-term "rule by law" of an occupied population by an occupying army, all under the supervision of the Israeli High Court of Justice. Why does Israel invest so much into the legal infrastructure of the occupation? What is the rationale behind the work of the people charged with the developing and upholding the law in the Occupied Territories? The film tries to answer these questions while also exploring the implications of the very effort to document such a system.
 - LA LOI ET LE DROIT, émission radio « Histoire vivante », interview de J. Mouriquand à R. Bocco sur le film *The Law in These Parts*, 5.12.2014 (écouter le mp3 sur le site vimeo du séminaire).
- THE MAURITANIAN by Kevin Macdonald, 2021, 129mn. Audio: English. Synopsis: based on the NY Times best-selling memoir "Guantánamo Diary" by Mohamedou Ould Slahi, this is the inspiring true story of Slahi's fight for freedom after being detained and imprisoned without charge by the U.S. Government for years. Alone and afraid, Slahi finds allies in defense attorney Nancy Hollander and her associate Teri Duncan who battle the U.S. government in a fight for justice that tests their commitment to the law and their client at every turn. Their controversial advocacy, along with evidence uncovered by a formidable military prosecutor, Lt. Colonel Stuart Couch, uncovers shocking truths and ultimately proves that the human spirit cannot be locked up.
- MY BROTHER'S KEEPER by Laurence Topham, 2021, 21mn. Audio: English. Synopsis: Mohamedou Ould Slahi, a former Guantánamo detainee and Steve Wood, his American guard, reunite in Mauritania 13 years after last seeing each other, rekindling an unlikely relationship that profoundly changed their lives. <https://www.theguardian.com/membership/2021/mar/01/how-we-made-my-brothers-keeper-documentary> (also available on the seminar's video platform).

Session 6. October 28th. **On Law, Violence, and the Carceral System** (Part 2).

READINGS :

- Hajjar, Lisa. 2005. *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza*. Berkeley: The University of California Press. (Introduction and Chapter 6).
- Pelleg-Srych, Tamar, 2011, "The Mysteries of Administrative Detention." In: *Threat: Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel*, Abeer Baker and Anat Matar (eds.). London: Pluto Press, pp. 123-135.

Further Reading:

- Hajjar, Lisa, 2006, "International Humanitarian Law and Wars on Terror: A Comparative Analysis of Israeli and American Doctrines and Policies," in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36 (1): 21-42.

FILMS:

- THE ADVOCATE by Philippe Bellaiche and Rachel Leah Jones, 110mn. Audio: Arabic and Hebrew, subt. English.
Synopsis: Lea Tsemel is Israel's most prominent and controversial human rights lawyer. She defends Palestinians and, for many years, was the only Jewish attorney willing to take on political prisoners accused of having "blood on their hands". Never afraid to fight, Lea is also not afraid to lose a battle. 99% of her clients get convicted. Yet she continues to demand a fair trial for people classified by the state as "enemies."
- THE JUDGE by Erika Cohn, 2018, 76mn. Audio: Arabic subt. English.
Synopsis: When she was a young lawyer, Kholoud Al-Faqih walked into the office of Palestine's Chief Justice and announced she wanted to join the bench. He laughed at her. But just a few years later, Kholoud became the first woman judge to be appointed to the Middle East's Shari'a (Islamic law) courts. The movie offers a unique portrait of Judge Kholoud—her brave journey as a lawyer, her tireless fight for justice for women, and her drop-in visits with clients, friends, and family. With unparalleled access to the courts, the film presents an unfolding vérité legal drama, with rare insight into both Islamic law and gendered justice. In the process, the film illuminates some of the universal conflicts in the domestic life of Palestine—custody of children, divorce, abuse—while offering an unvarnished look at life for women and Shari'a.

Session 7. November 4th. **Presentation of Topics for Final Projects.**
(see below)

PART 2

Session 8. November 11th. **Interrogation, Torture and Global Borrowings (Part 1).**

READINGS:

- Taussig, Michael, 1984, "Culture of Terror – Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture." In : *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (3): 467 – 497.
- Macias, Teresa, 2013, "'Tortured Bodies': The biopolitics of torture and truth in Chile," in: *The International Journal of Human Rights* 17 (1): 113-132.

Further Readings:

- Daka, Walid, 2011. "Consciousness Molded or the re-identification of Torture." In: *Threat: Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel*, edited by Abeer Baker and Anat Matar. London: Pluto Press, pp. 234 – 254.
- Rejali, Darius, 2007, *Torture and Democracy*. Princeton University Press (Introduction).
- Lazreg, Marnia, 2008. *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad*. Princeton University Press. (Introduction).
- Scarry, Elaine, 1987, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press. (Introduction).

FILMS:

- **THE DARK SIDE OF THE WHITE LADY** by Patricio Henríquez, 2007, 102mn. Audio: Spanish, subt. English.
Synopsis: The Esmeralda is the jewel of the Chilean Navy. This superb four-masted schooner is one of the world's three tallest and longest sailing ships. But this gleaming façade hides another, much darker, story. In Valparaiso, its homeport, "The White Lady" is haunted by the painful memory of the Pinochet dictatorship. At that time, the Esmeralda became a torture chamber. It was not until 2004 that 115 survivors could testify in a national report on torture. Today, Valparaiso remains a symbol. From its hills, no resident can ignore the ship's presence. Sergio Vuskovic, Maria-Eliana Comené, Monica Moreno and many others continue to demand that the navy recognize the facts and hand over their tormentors to be judged.
- **TADMOR** by Monika Borgmann and Lokman Slim, 2007, 103mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Amidst the popular uprising against the Syrian regime that began in 2011, a group of former Lebanese detainees decides to break their long-held silence about the horrific years they spent imprisoned in Tadmor (Palmyra), one of the Assad regime's most dreadful prisons. They decide to testify publicly about the systematic torture and humiliation they experienced. To reclaim and overcome this dark chapter in their lives, they rebuild Tadmor in an abandoned school near Beirut. By playing the role of both "victim" and "victimizer," they will relive their survival.

Session 9. November 18th. **Interrogation, Torture and Global Borrowings** (Part 2).

READINGS:

- Hajjar, Lisa. 2019. "The Afterlives of Torture: The Global Implications of Reactionary US Politics." *State Crime Journal* 8 (2): 164 – 174.
- Khalili, Laleh. 2013. *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies*. California: Stanford University Press. (Chapter 4).
- Porter, Lizzie. 2017. "A Legacy of torture: Inside Lebanon's Khiam Jail." *Al-Jazeera*, August 14, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/8/14/a-legacy-of-torture-inside-lebanons-khiam-jail>

Further Readings:

- Viterbo, Hedi. 2014. "Seeing Torture Anew: A Transnational Reconceptualization of State Torture and Visual Evidence." *Stanford Journal of International Law* 50 (2): 281-317.
- Mann, Itamar and Omer Shatz. 2010. "The Necessity Procedure: Laws of Torture in Israel and Beyond, 1987-2009." *Unbound: Harvard Journal of the Legal left* 6 (59): 59-110.
- Law in the Service of Man. 1985. *Torture and Intimidation in the West Bank: The Case of Al-Fara'a Prison*. Al-Haq: Ramallah.

FILMS:

- **GHOST HUNTING** by Raed Andoni, 2016, 90mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. French.
Synopsis: As a result of being jailed in the Shin Bet's Al-Mosccobiya interrogation center at the age of 18, director Raed Andoni has fragments of memories he cannot determine as real or imagined. In order to confront the ghosts that haunt him, Andoni decides to try to rebuild that mysterious place. Responding to a job announcement seeking ex-inmates of Al-Masccobiya who have experience in construction, architecture, painting, carpentry and acting, a large group gathers in an empty yard near Ramallah. Together, they start a journey in which they rediscover the shape of their old prison, try to face the consequences of being

under absolute control, and attempt to re-enact a story that took place inside the center's walls.

- KHIAM 2000-2007 by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, 2007, 105mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.

Synopsis: in 1999, while South Lebanon was still occupied and no images of the detention camp in Khiam were available, Hadjithomas and Joreige met six prisoners to discuss their experience of detention, the relation they developed to art, in order to question the modes of representation. In May 2000, the camp of Khiam was liberated and turned into a museum. During the July 2006 war, the camp was totally destroyed. Today, there is some talk of rebuilding it exactly as it was. Eight years later, Hadjithomas and Joreige met again with the same six prisoners to talk through the liberation and subsequent destruction of the camp. What are the roles of memory, history, reconstitution, imagination and the power of the image? How does one survive in the Khiam detention camp in southern Lebanon? Six former inmates speak out about what it was like, sleep, dream and think within the four walls of an isolation cell, measuring 1.8 m by 80 cm, for six or ten years.

Session 10. November 25th. **Enforced Disappearances, Struggles Over Memory and Memorialization.**

READINGS:

- Gómez Barris, Macarena, 2009, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Chapter 2).
- Ros, Ana, 2012, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapters 1 and 2).

Further Readings:

- Lazzara, Michael. 2006. *Chile in Transition. The Poetics and Politics of Memory*. Florida: The University Press of Florida.
- May Wahbe, Randa. 2020. "The Politics of Karameh: Palestinian Burial Rites Under the Gun." In : *Critique of Anthropology* 40 (3): 323 – 340.
- Menin, Laura. 2019. "'Descending into Hell': Tazmamart, Civic Activism and the Politics of Memory in Contemporary Morocco." In : *Memory Studies* 12 (3): 307 – 321.

FILMS:

- SLEEPLESS NIGHTS by Eliane Raheb, 2012, 133mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Through the stories of Assaad Shaftari, a former high-ranking militia officer, and Maryam Saiidi, the mother of a missing communist fighter, the film digs into the Lebanese civil war wounds and poses the question of whether or not redemption and forgiveness are possible.
- THE OFFICIAL STORY by Luis Puenzo, 1985, 104mn. Audio: Spanish, subt. English.
Synopsis: An Argentine teacher lives in blissful ignorance of the evils perpetrated by her country's government. Over time, however, her students' rejection of the "official" versions of their history leads her to question things herself. Suspecting that her adopted daughter may have been the child of a murdered political prisoner, she attempts to unearth the truth. But her investigation reveals levels of political corruption so abhorrent that the illusions of her past life are irrevocably shattered.
- WAYNON? /VOID by Tarek Korkomaz, Zeina Makki, Jad Beyrouthy, Christelle Ighniades, Salim Habr, Maria Abdel Karim, Naji Bechara, 2013, 78mn. Audio: Arabic subt. English.

Synopsis: Thousands of people who disappeared during the war in Lebanon and its aftermath are still missing today. The government has done nothing to clarify the fate of the missing persons, and the families are still waiting. Waynon is about six Lebanese women representing three generations, each one still waiting for the man in her life who was kidnapped during the Lebanese Civil War and is still missing.

Session 11. December 2nd. **Race, Gender and Sexuality.**

READINGS:

- Razack, Sherene H. 2005. "How is White Supremacy Embodied? Sexualized Racial Violence at Abu Ghraib." In : *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 17 (2): 341 – 364.
- Abdo, Nahla, 2014, *Captive Revolution: Palestinian Women's Anti-Colonial Struggle within the Israeli Prison System*. London: Pluto Press. (Chapter 1).
- Jose-Kampfner, Cristina, 2013, "Las Mujeres Olvidadas: Women in Mexican Prisons." In : *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender and the Prison-Industrial Complex*, Julia Sudbury (ed.). New York: Routledge, pp. 127 – 136.

Further Readings:

- Micallef, Roberta. 2010. "Incarcerated Women, Honorable Women." In : *Policing and Prisons in the Middle East*, Laleh Khalili and Jillian Schwedler (eds.). London: Hurst, pp. 207 – 221.
- Giacaman, Rita, and Penny Johnson. 2013. "'Our Life in Prison': The Triple Captivity of Wives and Mothers of Palestinian Political Prisoners." In : *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 9 (3): 54 – 80.
- 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)." In : *Journal of Women's History* 31 (2): 33 – 56.
- Meari, Lena. 2015. "Resignifying 'Sexual' Colonial Power Techniques: The Experiences of Palestinian Women Political Prisoners." In : *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World*, Maha El Said, Lena Meari and Nicola Pratt (eds.). London: Zed Books, pp. 59 – 85.

FILMS:

- 3000 NIGHTS by May Masri, 2015, 102mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Layal, a young newlywed schoolteacher from Bethlehem is arrested after a speeding Israeli military patrol gravely injures one of her students, provoking her teenage brother to throw a Molotov cocktail at the jeep. Accused of helping him escape, she is incarcerated in an Israeli prison where she discovers that she is pregnant. To her shock, her husband insists she abort the child. She feels terrified and alone. With the help of the women around her, she learns to stand up for herself and fight for her child. She is taken in chains to a military hospital where she gives birth to a baby boy. The child transforms her life and gives her hope. The Palestinian women prisoners go on hunger strike. The prison director threatens to take Layal's child away if she joins the strike. She is torn between her terror of losing her child and the difficult decision she must make. In a moment of truth, she decides to join the strike. The guards are sent in to take the child away by force. Layal and the women barricade themselves inside their cells. The soldiers attack them with clubs and teargas. Layal learns to fight back. She must stay strong for herself, her child, and the day they will be reunited.
- HERE COMES THE RAIN by Bahij Hojeij, 2010, 97mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Kidnapped during the war, Ramez is suddenly released from prison after 20 years and returns to his family profoundly changed. Unable to relate to them, he often wanders in

the streets of Beirut, where he meets a sad young woman whose husband was kidnapped under similar circumstances.

Session 12. December 9th. Life in Captivity: **Prison Literature, Art and Creativity.**

READINGS:

- Gordon, Avery. 2008. "Methodologies of Imprisonment," PMLA 123 (3): 651 – 658.
- Gómez Barris, Macarena, 2009, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Chapter 3).
- Harlow, Barbara. 1992. *Barred: Women, Writing, and Political Detention*. Hanover, University Press of New London. (Chapter 1).

Further Readings:

- Cunha, Manuela. 2014. "The Ethnography of Prisons and Penal Confinement." In : *The Annual Review of Anthropology* 43: 217 – 233.
- Ben Jelloun, Tahar. 2006. *This Blinding Absence of Light*. London: Penguin Books.
- El Guabli, Brahim. 2014. "The "Hidden" Transcript of Resistance in Moroccan Tazmamart Prison Writings." In : *The Arab Studies Journal* 22 (1): 170 – 207.

Prison Art:

- Crafting Resistance at the Modern Records Centre: photos at: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/archives_online/exhibitions/craftingresistance/photos/
- Crafting Resistance: The Art of Chilean Political Prisoners: <https://vimeo.com/250500688>

FILMS:

- CRAYONS OF ASHKALAN by Layla Hotaït Salas, 2011, 55mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Imagination and memory were survival tools for 15 year old Zuhdi Al Adawi, imprisoned in 1975 in Israel's Askalan prison. During his 15 years as a prisoner, Zuhdi transformed his longing for his homeland and family into beautiful drawings he drew in secrecy. In solidarity, his cellmates and their families smuggled in crayons for this young artist and smuggled out more than 70 of his drawings drawn on pillowcases. These colourful drawings come to life in surreal animation sequences integrated throughout this captivating experimental documentary. The film's dramatized prison scenes are re-enacted by the relatives of the imprisoned men, including Zuhdi's former cellmate.
- 12 ANGRY LEBANESE by Zeina Daccahe, 2009, 78mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: For 15 months, 45 inmates worked together to present an adaptation of Reginald Rose's famous stage play 12 Angry Men. The choice of play, which touches upon the themes of forgiveness, self-development, stigma and hope, was no accident. Daccache added monologues, songs and dance routines created by the prisoners to the original text. A documentary that includes rehearsals, drama therapy sessions and interviews, revealing the tremendous dignity and despair of the prisoners.

Session 13. December 16th. **Confrontation and Resistance Strategies.**

READINGS:

- Meari, Lena. 2014. "Sumud: A Palestinian Philosophy of Confrontation in Colonial Prisons." In : *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113 (3): 547 – 578.
- Bargu, Banu. 2014. *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons*. New York: Columbia University Press. (Introduction).

Further Readings:

- Anderson, Patrick. 2004. "To lie down to death for days: The Turkish hunger strike, 2000-2003," In: *Cultural Studies*, 18 (6): 816 – 846.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. (Introduction).
- Farraj, Basil, 2016, *How Palestinian Hunger Strikers Counter Israel's Monopoly on Violence*. Al Shabaka, The Palestinian Policy Network. <https://goo.gl/Xqr8Q2>
- Feldman, Allen. 1991. *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 5).
- Jewkes, Yvonne. 2013. "On Carceral Space and Agency." In : *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention*, Dominique Moran, Nick Gill, Deirdre Conlon (eds.). Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 127-131.
- De Dardel, Julie. "Resisting 'Bare Life': Prisoners' Agency in the New Prison Culture Era in Colombia," In : *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention*, Dominique Moran, Nick Gill, Deirdre Conlon (eds.). Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 183-198.

FILMS:

- HUNGER STRIKE by Ashraf Mashharawi, 2014, 47mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: The documentary is about the experiences of Israeli-held Palestinian political prisoners on an open hunger strike to obtain better detention conditions. Open hunger strikes have often been used in different parts of the world to draw attention to political and humanitarian causes. By reconstructing Ayman Al Sharawna's time in an Israeli jail, the documentary examines the strategic use of individual or group-initiated hunger strikes, what motivates hunger strikers, their survival under sustained pressure, and the mistreatment of detainees. Interviewees include 1980s Irish hunger strikers Pat Shean and Brendan McFarlin, Palestinian prisoners like Samer Al Issawi; plus doctors, lawyers and researchers specializing in human rights and prisoners' conditions.
- BONBONE by Rakan Mayasi, 2017, 15mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: It is thought that wars and conflicts conquer the essence of body and soul, like the heaving of waves on a rough sea. An imprisoned Palestinian from the resistance forces is serving his time in an Israeli jail. Yearning to see his offspring, he contrives a plot with the help of his spouse. Will his attempt pan out as planned? A true story of the sperm traffic from Israeli jails by Palestinian inmates.
- CASEROS. EN LA CARCEL by Julio Raffo, 2005, 73mn. Audio: Spanish, subt. English.
Synopsis: This film depicts the reconstruction of prisoners' lives in the Argentinian prison 'Caseros.' It documents their testimonies of life within the prison's cells, and other locations of the prison. The film was recorded, nearly in its entirety, in the prison site prior to its demolition.
- CHRONICLE OF AN ESCAPE (aka BUENOS AIRES 1977) / CRONICA DE UNA FUGA by Adrian Caetano, 2006, 103mn. Audio: Espanol subt. English.
Synopsis: Labeled a subversive by Argentina's oppressive military regime, soccer player Claudio Tamburrini is kidnapped, blindfolded and taken to a secret prison. Left naked and handcuffed, often tortured without mercy, Tamburrini endures days of pain and humiliation. Eventually he and three fellow prisoners, devise a plan to escape the prison, knowing that failure will likely cost them their lives.

Session 14. December 23rd. **Preliminary Presentation of Group Final Projects.**

GUIDELINES FOR FINAL PAPERS

The idea is to engage with the assigned (and further/suggested) readings and movies discussed in class in relation to the five topics presented below. Part of the task is to encourage you to search for academic sources to supplement the arguments you make in the papers. One idea would be selecting a few themes running through/common to the movies and then link them to broader arguments you are making as part of the final paper.

We encourage you to be creative in writing the paper: for instance, you could include snapshots from the films either as part of an appendix you might want to design, or as part of the paper. This is up to you as a group, and it is encouraged if it serves the broader arguments you are making in the text. The papers should roughly be around 20 pages, submitted in « word.docx » format with a 2.5cm bottom and top margins and 3cm left and right margins. The font size should be 12 and please use 1.5 spacing for your paragraphs. Please, also, include a table of contents and a cover page that includes the title of your paper and your names.

Note: there are multiple movies listed for each session, the minimum required is for you to refer to at least two movies, but you could refer and engage with all of them if it serves the arguments you are making.

List of Topics and Movies:

Theme 1. Sexuality, Violence and the Carceral.

For this theme you could explore the following issues as portrayed by the films, as well as through your engagement with the readings. Other issues are welcome as well.

- Investigating the intersections of sexuality, gender, and violence in prisons.
- The experiences of female prisoners, and sexualized aspects of imprisonment.
- Torture and sexual violence.
- Gendered experiences of imprisonment.
- Depictions of sexuality and violence in films.
- The experiences of prisoners' families, friends, and relatives.

FILMS:

- 3000 Nights by Mai Masri, 2015, 102 mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English. (see above at session 11)
 - Voir aussi l'interview de Maï Masri (Français/English) réalisée à l'IHEID dans le cadre du Festival PFC'E (Palestine : Filmer c'est exister), ainsi que le débat organisé par R. Bocco avec Mmes Soha Béchara (ancienne détenue de la prison de Khiam, Liban) et Manon Schick (directrice de Amnesty International, Berne). L'interview et le débat sont disponibles sur la plateforme vidéo du séminaire.
- SWEET COUNTRY by Michael Cacoyannis, 1987, 149mn. Audio: English.
Synopsis: Anna and Ben are settled in rural Chile in the early 1970's. They are very isolated, and their only real friends are two Chilean sisters, Eva and Monica. When Ben is stranded in Santiago on the eve of the military takeover of 1973, Anna is livid...and this is made worse by the fact that Eva, the ex-personal assistant to Allende's wife, has been arrested by the soldiers of the new Pinochet regime and taken into custody where she is emotionally and sexually defiled. She is released, only to be further harassed by one of her arresting officers, Raoul, who

poses as her protector but wishes to rape her. Meanwhile, Anna becomes involved with a Canadian journalist named Paul, who is compiling information for an extensive journalistic treatment of the coup. Anna and Ben organize an escape for Eva, over the walls of a convent to the safety of an embassy.

- LA NOCHE DE LOS LAPICES / THE NIGHT OF THE PENCILS by Hector Olivera, 1986, 95mn. Audio: Spanish, subt. English.
Synopsis: This film tells the true story of seven teenagers who agitated for reduced student bus fares under two different regimes in Argentina, with tragic results. At first succeeding under the government of Isabel Peron, their protests drew hostile attention from the military regime that overthrew Peron. The ensuing crackdown on student social activists is demonstrated when police break up a school dance wielding swords on horseback. Later, six students are kidnapped in the middle of the night, and the police deceitfully claim ignorance about their whereabouts. Pablo, a seventh member of the group is later arrested and learns that they have been brutally tortured and raped by the authorities. He survives to tell their story, but the six are never found, numbering among the hundreds of students who were kidnapped and are still missing.

Theme 2. Dealing with Imprisonment, Post-imprisonment and Violence.

For this theme you could explore the following issues as portrayed by the films, as well as through your engagement with the readings. Other issues are welcome as well.

- How do former prisoners deal with the memory and experience of violence, torture, and captivity?
- How do prisoners relate to their imprisonment following release?
- How are the experiences of imprisonment, violence, and post-imprisonment, depicted in films and documentaries?
- The question of perpetrators, and torturers.
- Moving beyond prisons, and beyond imprisonment: what thoughts might you have on this, through and beyond the selected movies?).

FILMS:

- C'EST EUX LES CHIENS de Hicham Lasri, 2014, 91mn. Audio : Arabe st. Français.
Synopsis : L'histoire de Majhoul, emprisonné en 1981 pendant les émeutes du pain au Maroc, qui ressort, 30 ans plus tard, en plein printemps arabe. Une équipe de télévision publique, qui réalise un reportage sur les mouvements sociaux au Maroc, décide de le suivre dans la recherche de son passé. Ulysse moderne, Majhoul nous entraîne dans une traversée de Casablanca, dans une société marocaine prise entre tradition et modernité. Odyssée urbaine et cavalcade effrénée, *C'est eux les chiens* nous raconte comment un perdant magnifique tente de regagner sa place entre un passé contrarié et un présent difficile à décoder.
- CONFESSIONS / CONFESIONES by Gualberto Ferrari, 2011, 89mn. Audio: Espanol st. Français
Synopsis: Enquête minutieuse au suspense et à la profondeur d'un roman policier sur l'une des pages les plus sombres de l'Histoire argentine récente. Le réalisateur tisse habilement sa trame en suivant deux personnages: Gustavo Scagliusi, un agent du Batallón 601, organisme suprême des Services de renseignement de l'État-major et principal acteur du terrorisme d'État de la fin des années 70, et Ricardo Ragendorfer, ex-militant guérillero devenu journaliste spécialisé dans les crimes de la répression militaire. Deux confessions en miroir qui évoquent les fantômes d'une époque et construisent une version intime et kaléidoscopique de la dictature.
- LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL by Sobhi al Zobaidi, 2001, 47mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Since 1967, thousands of Palestinians have been incarcerated in Israeli prisons. After the Oslo accords, some were released. These women and men had a difficult time readapting

after years of reclusion. Four men and four women share their difficulties with integration into a new life, their traumas and the tensions that exist in their families within a new Palestinian society.

- **MAFAK / SCREWDRIVER** by Bassam Jarbawi, 2018, 108mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Young Ziad is the star of the Al-Amari Refugee Camp basketball team in the Ramallah outskirts of Palestine. When his best friend is shot and killed in crossfire, his teammates seek revenge, with results that will impact Ziad's life forever. Shot entirely on location in the West Bank with a largely Palestinian crew, the film follows Ziad as he returns home after 15 years in an Israeli prison. Hailed as a hero, with high expectations to settle back quickly into work and love, he is lost in a world he barely recognizes. Effectively capturing this unsettling inability to distinguish reality from hallucination and the haunting of memory, *Screwdriver* immerses us in a distinctly Palestinian story while addressing the universal trauma of reintegration after incarceration.
- **THE LONG NIGHT** by Hatem Ali, 2009, 94mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: the fiction is amongst the boldest and most unique feature length dramas in the conditional oeuvre of Syrian cinema. Four prisoners are about to be released after serving 20 years as political detainees. About to return to society, they grapple with complications that have developed in their absence: new towns, new ideologies but most of all, new family dynamics. Questions arise as to what extent their political dissidence was worth their separations from families and the losses their loved ones have endured. While some stand fast to their choices, others look to turn a new page. Made in 2009, the film is yet to be released in Syria, despite being a production ostensibly supported by the regime. The film, while reflecting a short era of reconciliation and reduced censorship attempted by Bashar Al Assad, remains highly relevant today for its treatments of forced loyalty signatures, arbitrary judgements, and systematic torture.

Theme 3. The Figure of the Disappeared, Struggles over Memory, and Carcerality

For this theme you could explore the following issues as portrayed by the films, as well as through your engagement with the readings (but also other issues are welcome as well) :

- How is the figure of the disappeared dealt with, and depicted, in the selected documentaries?
- What present-day struggles over memory, and in relation to enforced disappearances, are taking place in the Middle East and Latin America?
- How do enforced disappearances relate to broader carceral violence and torture?
- The question of women prisoners giving birth in prisons during Latin American dictatorships: how is this represented and discussed?

FILMS:

- **ARGENTINE. LES 500 BEBES VOLES DE LA DICTATURE**, de Alexandre Valenti, 2013, 93mn. Audio : Français.
Synopsis : Durant les années noires de la dictature en Argentine, de 1976 à 1983, des militaires au pouvoir séquestrent des femmes enceintes, les font accoucher dans des maternités clandestines, les assassinent et s'approprient leurs bébés comme butin de guerre. 35 ans plus tard, un procès emblématique s'ouvre à Buenos Aires, fruit de l'inlassable combat des grands-mères de la place de Mai. Elles ont réussi à retrouver 107 de ces enfants et continuent leur traque.
- **LANTERNS OF MEMORY** by Jean Chamoun and Maï Masri, 2009, 52mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.

Synopsis: this documentary explores the fate of the thousands of people who disappeared during the Lebanese civil war. Through the story of Wadad Hilwani whose husband was kidnapped in 1982, the film focuses on the struggle for truth and justice that continues until today, almost thirty years after Wadad founded the Committee of the Families of the Missing and Kidnapped in Lebanon.

- MALAKI. SCENT OF AN ANGEL by Khalil Dreifus Zaarour, 2010, 76 mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.

Synopsis: the film focuses on families who have lost a loved one during and after the Lebanese civil war. It examines the trauma of six different families and the pain of uncertainty. What happened to their husbands and sons? Are they alive or dead? Beyond the political implications, the film tells of broken family bonds, loss, doubt, expectation and the pain related to their disappearance. The film plays on the notion of reality and fantasy blurred because the reality of the families is unbearable.

- MI VIDA CON CARLOS by German Berger-Hertz, 2009, 83mn. Audio: Espanol.

Synopsis : En 1973, el abogado y periodista Carlos Berger fue asesinado por el régimen de Pinochet. En tres días, 75 presos políticos fueron «secuestrados, torturados y ejecutados y, en muchos casos, sus cuerpos desaparecieron; como en el caso de mi padre». Germán Berger, el hijo, no ha sabido mucho de su padre, el cual murió antes de que él cumpliera un año de edad. La familia sólo hablaba de Carlos como un icono político, nunca como persona, como un hermano, un esposo o un humanista. *Mi vida con Carlos* es la búsqueda personal, por parte del hijo, de la memoria de su padre asesinado, revisando y revalorando la reciente historia y el presente de Chile a través de las vidas de una familia concreta. Es la historia de un drama familiar que refleja el drama de todo un país.

- CAUTIVA by Gaston Biraben, 2005, 113mn. Audio: Spanish, subt. English.

Synopsis: in 1994 Argentina, Cristina Quadri, a teen from a well-to-do family, leads a charmed life. But when she's summoned in front of a judge one day, she learns the shocking truth of her real parents' disappearance during Argentina's "Dirty War" of the 1970s. Her actual name is Sofía Lombardi, and now she must live with her real grandmother, a total stranger. With her life forever changed, Cristina works to uncover the deceit that for years kept her from the truth.

Theme 4: Creativity and Confrontation Behind Bars.

For this theme you could explore the following issues as portrayed by the films, as well as through your engagement with the readings. Other issues are welcome as well.

- In which ways do prisoners confront and resist carceral authorities and policies? Which methods of confrontation are depicted in the documentaries? How do they relate to broader struggles against the carceral system?
- What has been said and discussed academically about resistance practices (for instance, hunger strikes)? How are resistance practices discussed in the academic literature? Are such discussions adequate for our understanding of confrontation behind bars? What might cinematic depictions add to this theme?
- What circulations of confrontation practices have taken place/take place across multiple imprisonment locations? Can you see similarities amongst the selected films, and across time?
- What can be said about prison literature, writings, communication, and creative productions by prisoners as acts of confrontation? What do these written documents reveal about carceral realities, and meanings/anticipations of freedom?

FILMS:

- 12 ANGRY LEBANESE by Zeina Daccache, 2009, 78mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English. (see above session 12)
- THE EYES OF THE BIRDS / LES YEUX DES OISEAUX by Gabriel Auer, 1983, 80mn. Audio: Français subt. English)
Synopsis: It's Uruguay, 1980. In Montevideo's Libertad ('Freedom') Prison, communist-red clothing is banned on visitors and children's pictures of birds are not allowed, either. Birds symbolise flight and choice and freedom, and the military regime is not disposed to such thinking. Libertad is a military prison full of political prisoners: Tupamaro leaders, union organisers, teachers, academics and other opponents of the right-wing regime. The prison has a deserved reputation for human rights abuses, including torture, and accordingly its inmates and their families eagerly await an inspection by a Swiss delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross. But soon after its arrival, the delegation finds itself in a bind. It has only just managed to gain entry to the prison after six long years of negotiation, and the leader of the team is aware that if the inspectors are too overtly critical of the prison, they will never be allowed back and the human rights abuses will continue unabated. The team's concerns escalate when it learns that the supposedly confidential meetings that it is having with individual prisoners are being monitored and recorded. After the Red Cross delegates leave, more bodies are carted away under the cover of night. It is a grim picture of a brutal regime; anything of value to the prisoners is simply waiting to be crushed before their eyes. The portrait painted of the Red Cross is barely more sympathetic; it is portrayed as pompous, inconsequential, out-of-touch and impotent. The prison itself is clean and orderly, with all the bugging devices and cosy stairwells that an authoritarian regime could wish for, and with the most unlawful acts and excesses ordered or sanctioned by those in positions of power.
- SHAHERAZADE'S DIARY by Zeina Daccache, 2013, 80mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: The women inmates of Lebanon's Baabda Prison relate their personal experiences and feelings about patriarchy as they prepare and present the first theatre performance staged inside an Arab women's prison. It was filmed during and after the ten-month 2012 drama therapy/theatre project in the prison. It features the women inmates. In the film, the women reveal stories of domestic violence, traumatic childhood, failed marriage, unhappy romance and deprivation of motherhood. The film follows the women as they rehearse for the show and intermingles scenes from the live performance with testimonials and backstage antics.
- SCHEHERAZADE IN BAABDA by Zeina Daccache, 2012, 92mn. Audio: Arabic, subt. English.
Synopsis: Zeina Daccache develops social justice theatre projects with marginalized communities through an organization she founded and runs, Catharsis - Lebanese Center for Drama Therapy. Her work with prisoners has effectively motivated policy change. Daccache sets these productions in the actual prison spaces, inviting the audiences into the world of the imprisoned. She also films a performance of each play and releases a dvd, sharing the product publicly and broadening the reach of the work. At a women's prison in Baabda, she directed Scheherazade in Baabda, where she makes bold use of the prison space as a part of the dialogue, blurring the divisions between insider and outsider, and obliging the audience to consider "the prisoner" as relatable, present, and human. It denounces antifeminist laws and social frameworks responsible for the imprisonment of many women. By engaging with place and audience, her projects disrupt existing narratives of these sites and of the people living there.

Theme 5. Circulation of Knowledge and Violent Practices: Israel, Latin America, and the USA.

For this theme you could explore the following issues as portrayed by the films, as well as through your engagement with the readings. Other issues are welcome as well.

- What can be said about the circulation of violent practices and carceral knowledges across borders?
- How have such circulations taken place, and in which ways did they assist in creating and fortifying carceral realities?
- The circulation of torture practices, and their cinematic depictions across geographical locations.
- How do the movies 'Death Squads' and 'The Battle of Algiers' relate to one another in their discussion of the circulation of violent practices?
- What does 'the Lab' show about the proliferation of transnational sharing of violent technologies? How are 'captive' bodies presented and treated as part of this phenomenon?

FILMS:

- DEATH SQUADS. THE FRENCH SCHOOL by Marie-Monique Robin, 2003, 60mn. Audio: French, subt. English. (see above at session 3)
- THE GATEKEEPERS by Dror Moreh, 2013, 95 mn. Audio: Hebrew, subt. English.
Synopsis: For the first time ever, six former heads of the Shin Bet, Israel's secret service agency, agree to share their insights and reflect publicly on their actions and decisions. Intimately interviewed, they shed light on the controversy surrounding the Occupation in the aftermath of the Six Day War.
- THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS by Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966, 120mn. (see above at session 3)
- THE LAB by Yotam Feldman, 2013, 59mn. Audio: Hebrew, subt. French.
Synopsis: Since 9/11, the Israeli arms industries are doing bigger business than ever before. Large Israeli companies develop and test the vessels of future warfare, which are then sold worldwide by private Israeli agents, who manipulate a network of Israeli politicians and army commanders, while Israeli theoreticians explain to various foreign countries how to defeat civil and para-military resistance. All based on the extensive Israeli experience. The film reveals The Lab, which has transformed the Israeli military occupation of Gaza and the West Bank from a burden to a marketable, highly profitable, national asset.
- TORTURE MADE IN USA by Marie-Monique Robin, 2009, 85mn. Audio: French.
Synopsis: This film shows how torture has become an instrument of American policy in its fight against 'terrorism' while raising questions over responsibility for war crimes.