



Unit 2 Freedom Introduction

Media flourished in Argentina in the 19th century, but by the 20th century, government interference was weakening the free press. In the 1940's the military government monopolized the media. President Perón and his wife Evita manipulated the press and radio for their own political agenda and eventually most newspapers were taken over by the government. During the Process of National Reorganization (*El Proceso*), the junta condemned anyone considered to be a “subversive”, ousted foreign correspondents, and arrested or disappeared many journalists. Under state control, the media became a vehicle for promoting anti- Marxist and anti-subversive rhetoric while ignoring reports of disappearances, kidnappings and other atrocities. Fear prevailed in Argentina, and people believed that if someone disappeared, he must have done something wrong.

Essential Questions for Lessons I-III

- How do governments protect freedom of speech and freedom of the press? How do governments abuse freedom of speech and freedom of the press?
- How are freedom of the press and freedom of speech protected in the United States? What are examples of limitations on these freedoms? Who do you think should not have freedom of speech? Why?
- Is there censorship in the United States? Should there be? Under what circumstances should a government impose censorship?
- How do governments manipulate their citizens? Why do governments repress their citizens?
- How do governments maintain public secrecy?
- How do writers and artists express their most important sociopolitical views?
- Under what circumstances are people censured? Exiled?

Objectives

Students will:

- brainstorm human rights issues, censorship, freedom of speech
- read and discuss Chapter 1 of *Lexicon of Terror* by Marguerite Feitlowitz
- complete assignment sheets
- present biographies or literature reviews of censored or exiled Argentinians to the class.

Lesson I Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press

A. Materials

- a. Bill of Rights
 - i. <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/landmark-cases/freedom-of-the-press/>
 - ii. <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-i/the-freedom-of-speech-and-of-the-press-clause/interp/33>

B. Activity Sheets

- a. Unit 2 Lesson I Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press

C. Suggested Resources

- a. Listening
 - i. "Maria Hinojosa: One-on-One with Robert Cox- the Hero of Argentine Journalism." <https://player.fm/series/maria-hinojosa-one-on-one/robert-cox-the-hero-of-argentine-journalism> Maria Hinojosa interviews Robert Cox about repression in Argentina, 1976-1983.
- b. Reading
 - i. Parker, Adam. "Fighting back: Bob Cox would not be censored during Argentina's Dirty War." *The Post and Courier*. 11 May 2015. https://www.postandcourier.com/features/arts_and_travel/fighting-back-flight-of-jewish-argentines-jacobo-mintzer-recalls-mentor/article_be863f18-20ef-5399-87f3-832757950a49.html
 - ii. Walsh, Rodolfo. "Open Letter From a Writer to the Military Junta." *History is a Weapon* 24 Mar 1977. www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/walshopenletterargjunta.html

D. Assessments

- a. Activity sheet responses
- b. Discussion

E. Extension Activities

- a. Assign above suggested listening and reading resources for homework assignment with discussion to follow.

Instructions for Lesson I Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press

Set the tone for a study of restrictions of freedom of speech in Argentina during *El Proceso* by initiating a discussion about rights and freedoms in the United States and around the world.

Step 1

Divide students into small groups. Generate notes and discussion about freedom of speech and censorship in both the United States and globally. Students will note their ideas on *Unit 2 Activity Sheet I Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press*.

Step 2

Reconvene groups and share student responses to questions about freedom of speech and the press. The following terms may be useful during the debriefing.

First Amendment to the United States Constitution 1791 Alien and Sedition Acts 1798 The Sedition Act of 1917 The Alien Registration Act or Smith Act of 1940 The Communist Control Act of 1954 McCarthyism	obscenity libel and slander perjury blackmail threats creating dangerous situations words to incite fighting or lawlessness crime solicitation child pornography
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Step 3

Generate a conversation about terms of verbal manipulation such as *spin doctor*, *spin meister*, *propaganda* and *double speak*. Spin includes: vagueness, avoiding the question, misdirection, diversion, selective facts, hiding information, giving an insincere apology. Give examples of how and when spin is used and of famous spin masters. (Politicians, Olivia Pope in *Scandal*, Mike Flaherty, the Deputy Mayor in *'Spin City'*)

Lesson II If You Want to Hide it, Put a Spin on it

- A. Materials
 - a. Feitlowitz. Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. Oxford University Press, 1998. Chapter One and, page 357.
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/f/feitlowitz-terror.html>
- B. Activity Sheets
 - a. Unit 2 Lesson II If You Want to Hide it, Put a Spin on it
- C. Suggested Listening
 - a. Mercedes Sosa & Horacio Guarany (1972) – “Si se calla el cantor.” Video (3:04)
<https://youtu.be/xm9sIAW39o0> Lyrics English/Spanish “If the singer is silenced, life stops’
 - b. Anna Banchik. “Censorship in Argentina” Mission Justice: Argentina. 6 July, 2010.
<http://missionjusticeargentina.blogspot.com/2010/07/censorship-in-argentina.html>
- D. Assessments
 - a. Activity Sheet responses
 - b. Discussion
- E. Extension Activities
 - a. Create your own current event news report with “spin.”
 - b. Listen to “Cancion a Alicia en el país.” https://youtu.be/lq010_NGcXE . Charly Garcia and his group Serú Girán sing about Argentine reality in Canción de Alicia en el país/Alice in Wonderland. They cleverly used metaphors from Alice in Wonderland to outwit censors.

Instructions for Lesson II If You Want to Hide it, Put a Spin on it.

Step 1

Homework

Assign homework *Chapter 1 A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*, by Marquerite Feitlowitz, in order to prepare students for an upcoming discussion about censorship and exiled Argentine journalists and writers. Students will note key vocabulary, people, places and events. They will select and analyze important quotes that reveal the junta’s ideology and methodology as well as peoples’ reaction to *El Proceso*.

Note to the teacher

Read a passage aloud from Chapter 1 to get a sense of the junta’s ability to control words and the author’s choice of words to express her views.

Brutal, sadistic, and rapacious, the whole regime was intensely verbal. From the moment of the coup, there was a constant torrent of speeches, proclamations, and interviews; even certain military memos were made public. Newspapers and magazines, radio and television all were flooded with messages from the junta. The barrage was constant and there was no escape: Argentinians lived in an echo chamber. With diabolical skill, the regime used language to: (1) shroud in mystery its true actions and intentions, (2) say the opposite of what it meant, (3) inspire trust, both at home and abroad, (4) instill guilt, especially in mothers, to seal their complicity, and (5) sow paralyzing terror and confusion. Official rhetoric displays all of the traits we associate with

authoritarian discourse: obsession with the enemy, triumphal oratory, exaggerated abstraction, and messianic slogans, all based on "absolute truth" and "objective reality."

How did the junta influence the Argentine people?

What is the author's attitude toward the junta? How do you know? Which words express her attitudes?

Step 2

In class

Review homework; share and discuss students' selected important quotes and other responses. Conclude with a discussion of the following quote by General Jorge Rafael Videla, 1976:

"The aim of the Process is the profound transformation of consciousness."

Lesson III The Censored and the Exiled

A. Materials

- a. Marjorie Agosin: "The Arpilleras of Chile. Facing History and Ourselves"
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/arpilleras-chile-marjorie-agosin>
- b. Cortázar, Julio. "House taken Over".
<https://www.shortstoryproject.com/story/house-taken-over/>
- c. Galeano, Eduardo. *Days and Nights of Love and War*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.
- d. Partnoy, Alicia. *The Little School: Tales of Disappearance and Survival*. San Francisco: Midnight Press, 1998. Also see *On Being with Krista Tippett*. 15 Apr 2010.
Web.<https://onbeing.org/programs/mercedes-doretti-laying-the-dead-to-rest/>
<https://onbeing.org/author/alicia-partnoy/>
Interview with Mercedes Doretti, forensic archeologist. Includes works Alicia Partnoy. Partnoy reads *Testimony* (17:00). Select poems about life, death, survival and available English and Spanish.
- e. Proyecto Desaparecidos- <http://www.desaparecidos.org/arg/victimas/eng.html>
- f. Timmerman, Jacobo. *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number*. From the Archives: Prisoner Without a Name By PEN Canada. 24 April 2013
<http://pencanada.ca/tag/jacobo-timmerman/>
<http://pencanada.ca/archives/jacobo-timmerman-in-this-prison-where-i-live/>
- g. Valenzuela, Luisa. *The Censors*. Willimantic: Curbstone Press, 1988.

B. Activity Sheets

- a. Unit 2 Lesson III The Censored and the Exiled

C. Suggested Readings and videos

- a. Facundo Cabral
 - i. Achtenberg Emily. "Facundo Cabral_ A Musical Tribute." *NACLA*. 15 July 2011
<http://www.sreyes.org/music/Facundo%20cantor%20de%20la%20paz.MP3>
 - ii. Cabral, Facundo. "No Soy de Aqui, No Soy de Alli."
<https://youtu.be/Ts097KhDzOc>
 - iii. Garsd, Jasmine. "Argentine Music Icon And Peace Activist Facundo Cabral Killed In Guatemala." *NPR AltLatino*. 9 July 2011
<http://www.npr.org/sections/latino/2011/07/09/137730266/argentine-music-icon-and-peace-activist-facundo-cabral-killed-in-guatemala>
 - iv. Renderos, Alex and Tracy Wilkinson. "Argentine Singer Killed in Guatemala Ambush." *Los Angeles Times*. 10 July 2011 <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/10/world/la-fg-guatemala-singer-killed-20110710>

D. Assessments

- a. Activity Sheet responses
- b. Discussion
- c. Presentations

E. Extension Activities

- a. Learn about the life and death of musician Facundo Cabral.
<https://www.newser.com/story/123037/facundo-cabral-renowned-argentine-folk-singer-murdered-in-ambush.html>
- b. Tribute to Murdered Argentine folk star Facundo Cabral.

<https://nacla.org/blog/2011/7/15/facundo-cabral-%25E2%2580%2593-musical-tribute>

- c. Listen to Cabral, Facundo. No Soy de Aqui, No Soy de Alli. Video

Instructions for Lesson III The Censored and the Exiled

Writer Marguerite Feitlowitz’s contention that the whole regime was intensely verbal is contrasted by strict government censorship imposed by the junta from 1976 to 1983. In April, 1976, one month after the coup, General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez oversaw a book-burning ceremony in the courtyard of an army base in Córdoba in the presence of journalist and military personnel. Included in the list of authors whose books were burned were Gabriel García Márquez, Pablo Neruda, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Eduardo Galeano and Paulo Freire.

Step 1

Share the above information with students and generate a discussion about the following statement:

Menéndez said, “Just as this fire now destroys material pernicious to our Christian way of being, so too will be destroyed the enemies of the Argentine soul.”

Feitlowitz notes that this is reminiscent of Hitler’s book burning during World War II. Discuss other historic examples of book burning such as Itzcóatl burning Aztec codices, Bishop De Landa’s destruction of Maya codices, the Spanish Inquisition, Quin Dynasty, book burning in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, George Orwell’s *1984*, Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*, Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Ann of Green Gables*, etc.)

Step 2

Present students with a list of censored, imprisoned or exiled writers and other artists. If the class is large, divide the class so that some students research and present biographical information (A) and others read and share responses to writings of selected exiled authors (B).

- A. List of censored, imprisoned or exiled writers. Other artists are listed by occupation.

Disappeared, Imprisoned or Killed	Exiled	
Héctor Ernesto Demarchi Haroldo Pedro Conti Jorge Money Héctor Germán Oesterheld Alicia Partnoy Enrique Raab Roberto Santoro Paco Urondo Rodolfo Walsh see <i>Nunca Más</i> for an additional list of names http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_001.htm	Norma Aleandro, actor Hector Alterio, actor Julio Cortázar Robert Cox Antonio Di Benedetto Eduardo Galeano Juan Gelman	Facundo Cabral, musician Federico Luppi, actor Tomás Eloy Martínez Osvaldo Soriano Mercedes Sosa, musician Jacobo Timmerman Luisa Valenzuela

B. Selected Readings (some readings have strong content)

<p><i>Days and Nights of Love and War</i> by Eduardo Galeano</p> <p>~I Close My Eyes and Am in the Middle of the Sea (19)</p> <p>~Buenos Aires, May 1975: Oil Is a Fatal subject (20)</p> <p>~Ten Years ago I Attended the Dress Rehearsal of This Play (21)</p> <p>~The System (75)</p> <p>~Buenas Aires, November 1975, I like to Feel Free and Stay Here if I Want (75)</p> <p>~The System (75)</p> <p>~The System (87)</p> <p>~The System (108)</p> <p>~Buenos Aires, May 1976: Is He Dead? Who Know? (117)</p> <p>~Buenas Aires, May 1976: A Bomb on the Desk (123)</p> <p>~Buenas Aires, June 1976: the Earth Swallow Them (132)</p> <p>~I Had Never Heard about Torture (134)</p> <p>~The System (Content Warning) (135)</p> <p>~Buenas Aires, July 1976: When Words Cannot Be More Dignified than Silence It is Time to Keep Quiet (143)</p> <p>~Street War, Soul War (160)</p> <p>~Street War, Soul War (161)</p> <p>~News (165)</p>	<p>~<i>House Taken Over</i> by Julio Cortázar</p> <p><i>The Little School</i> by Alicia Partnoy</p> <p>~A Beauty Treatment</p> <p>~Benja’s First Night</p> <p>~Telepathy</p> <p>~The Small Box of Matches</p> <p>~Toothbrush</p> <p><i>The Censors</i> by Luisa Valenzuela</p> <p>~The Best Shod (9)</p> <p>~The Censors (25)</p> <p>~Papitos’ Story</p> <hr/> <p>Note to the teacher</p> <p>Other possible readings:</p> <p>Comic series</p> <p><i>El Eternauta II</i> by Héctor Germán Oesterheld.</p> <p>Music lyrics</p> <p><i>Los Dinosaurios</i> ~Charly Garcia</p> <p><i>Los Hermanos</i>~ Atahualpa Yupanqui (Héctor Roberto Chavero Aramburu)</p> <p><i>Hombres de Hierro/Men of Iron</i> ~León Gieco</p> <p><i>Solo a Diós le Pido</i> ~ Mercedes Sosa</p> <p><i>Venas Abiertas</i>~ Mercedes Sosa</p> <p>Testimonial</p> <p><i>Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number</i> by Jacobo Timmerman.</p>
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C. Review presentations and initiate concluding remarks about human rights, freedom of speech, censorship, and exile.

D. Listen to poet Marjorie Agosín discuss how people find a voice when a society censors them. “Marjorie Agosín: The Arpilleras of Chile. Facing History and Ourselves”

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/arpilleras-chile-marjorie-agosin>

Note to the teacher

Marjorie Agosín's overview of the experience of being exiled is excellent background for teachers preparing to teach about exiled writers. Selected clips of this 53 minute discussion would be appropriate for prompting class discussion or writing assignments: *The Exile Writer and the Literary Imagination in the Americas*. University of New Mexico Latin American & Iberian Institute. 7 Mar. 2014. <https://youtu.be/ILWgNc77sF4>.

