

## Teaching about the Brazilian Military Dictatorship (1964–85)

*James N. Green*

During the twenty years that I have taught Brazilian history at Brown University, by far my favorite seminar course has been “Politics and Culture during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship,” which I have offered almost every year. The seminar, which is listed as an upper-division course, also usually includes several graduate students. Drawing from my own research agenda, which in part has focused on this period in Brazilian history, the course features an intensive consideration of the historiographic debates about the nature of the regime, the internal dynamics within the armed forces, and the processes that led to the slow-motion decade-long return to democratic rule, among other questions. Because the economy had a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of its citizens and became a source of legitimacy for the regime, the course pays close attention to the dictatorship’s economic policies, especially the efforts to control inflation in the mid-to-late 1960s, the effects on society of the dramatic increase in the gross domestic product between 1968 and 1973, known as the “Brazilian economic miracle,” and the results of the crises that ensued after the oil price shock of 1973–74.

Most students learn nothing, or nearly nothing, about Brazil in middle or high school. Therefore, they bring little knowledge about the country (including the military regime) to the seminar or have only vague, general notions about the dictatorship, which are usually based on analogies with periods of authoritarianism in other countries. An additional challenge in teaching this seminar is aiding

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students in analyzing the contradictions and complexities of a regime that carried out repressive policies against the opposition while simultaneously retaining certain political rituals associated with a democracy, such as keeping the Congress open most of the time, allowing for an opposition political party, and carrying out periodic elections. Students are almost universally surprised to discover, for example, that the regime's violent repression of the radical opposition coexisted with the fact that large swaths of the population supported the regime.

Moreover, because Brazil went through profound changes during the two decades of military rule, an important theme in this course is understanding historical contingencies and the ways in which the regime's policies had many unintended consequences, despite the generals' attempts to carefully control politics, the economy, society, and culture. For example, the elimination of Brazil's traditional parties and the creation of a pro-government party (National Renovating Alliance, ARENA) and an opposition political party (Brazilian Democratic Movement, MDB) in 1965 was an attempt to sever the population's historic links with popular political organizations. The maneuver worked for a time as the military channeled government resources to ARENA politicians to help their electoral victories. However, as opposition to the military grew in the mid-1970s, the two-party political system ended up creating a situation in which, by 1974, voting became a plebiscite in which the public could express opposition to the dictatorship. Although the generals in power decided to impose a law eliminating the two existing parties in 1980 and allow for politicians to organize new political parties, this divide-and-conquer strategy, designed to split up the opposition, eventually backfired. Whereas the reformulated Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) swept gubernatorial elections in 1982, the party reorganization law also led to the formation of the Workers' Party, which eventually coalesced into the main political opposition party. Over the same period, the PMDB transformed into a party associated with politicians' personal self-interest in enriching themselves while in office. The seminar examines this and other examples of unintended consequences of the dictatorship's policies throughout the semester.

The seminar syllabus outlines the extensive required weekly readings of primary documents and secondary sources, as well as the viewing of feature-length films and documentaries. The seminar also includes guiding students on how to use over sixty thousand US government documents about Brazil available through the Opening the Archives Project at Brown University.<sup>1</sup> Finally, biweekly Brazilian biography assignments allow students to create a character whose life history coincides with the events taking place in Brazil during the dictatorship.

Since Brown students have significant leeway in choosing which courses they can take, there are usually thirty or more students visiting the introductory meeting of the seminar to decide whether they want to enroll. To pare down its size and weed out less-dedicated students, the first hour consists of a detailed discussion of the course content, emphasizing the heavy reading load, which is designed to scare

students away from the course. The excessively detailed syllabus serves a similar purpose. In earlier versions, I also limited the seminar to those students who had taken at least one other course about Brazil, visited or lived in the country, or were from a Brazilian background. Here, the criteria were meant to ensure that participants had at least some previous knowledge of Brazilian history and culture. In recent years, I have dropped this requirement since I have found that most students, including the first-year enrollees whom I allowed to slip into the course, were as serious and engaged as graduating seniors and able to quickly immerse themselves in the course's content as easily as those with more extensive familiarity with Brazil. Most of the international students from Brazil who take the seminar later conclude that the experience of learning about their country's history while abroad, together with those who initially knew little about their homeland, enriched their own understanding of this period.

The course uses Thomas E. Skidmore's classic work *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–85* as the underlying chronological narrative. While the volume is somewhat dated so lacks any discussion of recent debates among historians about how to interpret the twenty-one years of military rule, the clear chronological narrative and analysis of the country's political economy throughout the book seem to reassure students without deep background knowledge of late twentieth-century Brazil. Over the years, I have found it useful to assign a student to lead discussions about Brazil's political economy every week to focus on how the military dictatorship's economic policies had a direct impact on the overall direction of the regime. The ongoing issues of inflation, wage adjustments, labor unrest, trade agreements, and the foreign debt, along with a detailed study of the years of the Brazilian "economic miracle" (1968–73), link macroeconomics to macropolitics and help students make sense of the ways in which the generals enjoyed support during years of significant growth and lost backing of large sectors of the society as the economy started to decline in 1974.

A counterpoint to the well-documented involvement of Washington in the overthrow of the João Goulart government (1961–64) and the bipartisan US support of the new military regime is an examination of the decentralized and loosely coordinated campaign of clergy, exiles, academics, and "friends of Brazil" in the United States, who engaged in multiple activities to denounce the dictatorship, especially its use of torture and repression to sustain itself in power. My book *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* documents these efforts; it is supplemented by *A Mother's Cry*, a personal account of the arrest and torture of Marcos Arruda, a trained geologist and revolutionary opponent of the regime, told from the different perspectives of his mother, his family, and his own experiences while under custody in 1970 and 1971 and subsequently in exile in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

The radicalized student movement and the decision by several thousand youths to take up arms against the regime are two interwoven themes that attract

significant interest. Victoria Langland's comprehensive history of student activism, focusing on the protest movement in 1968 and its legacy, and my biography of Herbert Daniel, medical student turned guerrilla fighter, capture the ethos of members of a generation who imagined that they had the power to bring down the military regime through revolutionary politics and the armed struggle.<sup>3</sup>

In previous iterations of this course, students observed that too much attention was given to the radical opposition to the dictatorship, given the fact that those who engaged in revolutionary contestation were a small percentage of Brazilian youth. Bryan Pitts's recent work, *Until the Storm Passes*, partially addresses that problem with the course content design. Pitts looks at the legal opposition to the generals in power that was largely aggregated in the Brazilian Democratic Movement.<sup>4</sup> The study examines how congressional politicians responded to the wave of authoritarian measures and political maneuvers that the armed forces employed to stay in power for more than two decades. Although Skidmore tells this story in general terms, Pitts offers details that deepen students' comprehension of the role those traditional politicians played in challenging (and collaborating) with the regime.

Culture and film are two additional important components of the course. Although it is a demanding requirement, students view and write brief essays about seven films seen outside the classroom. The first, *Vidas Secas* (*Barren Lives*; dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1963), a classic of the Cinema Novo movement, represents the ways in which the poverty-stricken Northeast was employed by the Left to demonstrate why structural reforms (*reformas de base*) prior to the 1964 coup were urgent, and by the Right (as well as by US journalists and policymakers) as a location where communist subversion might prevail. *O dia que durou 21 anos* (*The Day That Lasted 21 Years*; dir. Camilo Tavares, 2013) documents US support for the 1964 coup. Three feature films, *O que é isso, companheiro* (*Four Days in September*; dir. Bruno Barreto, 1997), *Marighella* (dir. Wagner Moura, 2019), and *O ano em que meus pais saíram de férias* (*The Year My Parents Went on Vacation*; dir. Cao Hamburger, 2006), portray different aspects of the armed struggle, in the first two cases, and everyday life under the dictatorship, in the third. Two additional documentaries capture the ambivalences of the experience of exile and return.<sup>5</sup> *Tropicália*, a new musical genre that burst onto the music scene in 1967 during a São Paulo song festival, is the subject of a book and a documentary, and students are also provided with a twenty-five-item song list linked to publicly available YouTube recordings (with an English translation of most of the lyrics), so that they can listen to the music that Brazilian youth consumed in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Finally, a documentary film study of the gender-bending theater group Dzi Croquettes (*Dzi Croquettes*, dir. Tatiana Issa and Raphael Alvarez, 2009) captures the ambiguities of the liberalization process, when content thought morally "subversive" managed to circumvent state censors' control.

Many students taking courses on Brazil do not have enough fluency in Portuguese to conduct research in that language. Thus the Opening the Archives Project offers a wealth of government documents from the US National Archives, presidential libraries, and other institutions about the relations between Brazil and the United States in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Detailed indexing and a searchable database provide access to over sixty thousand documents that students can use to explore hundreds of topics for final research papers. One suggested approach to this material is to analyze the ways in which US government legislators, bureaucrats, and policymakers understood the nature of the Brazilian dictatorship and how to respond to it.

A particularly original aspect of the course is the Brazilian biographies assignment. At the beginning of the semester students create a character and move that personality through the years of military rule, beginning on the eve of the coup and ending as the country returns to democratic governance. They make website entries every other week describing how their character interacts with the political, social, and cultural events taking place, and usually students enthusiastically engage in this creative exercise. In fact, I have to remind students that Brazilian biographies is supposed to be a short assignment, as many embark on wildly imaginative (and sometimes lengthy) story-telling adventures. By creating and placing their characters amid mundane or momentous events, students seem to engage more deeply with the content of the weekly readings and with an overall goal of the course—to understand life under authoritarian rule and the diverse ways it affected different people.

Finally, the seminar is designed to be student led. The syllabus presents some of the historiographical debates related to each week's themes through basic questions to guide the reading. But the success of the seminar resides with the student leaders, who prepare their own questions and orient the discussion of the readings and films. The professor reserves the right to intervene in the debates to add points, ask follow-up questions, or answer students' queries. The array of approaches that the student leaders bring to the weekly seminar sessions further enhances the quality of the classroom discussion. In anonymous evaluations, the seminar is almost universally ranked as among the best courses that students have taken while at Brown University.

### **Syllabus: Politics and Culture during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship, 1964–89**

This seminar focuses on the political, social, economic, and cultural changes that took place in Brazil during the military dictatorship that ruled the country from 1964 to 1985. We will examine the context in which the generals took power; the role of the US government in backing the new regime; the political, social, economic, and cultural transformations that occurred during this period; and the process that led to redemocratization.<sup>8</sup>

This is going to be a fun and extremely challenging seminar. Join us if you want to delve into the reality of Brazil during the dictatorship, use your creative



Figure 1. 1964 military coup d'état, Rio de Janeiro. Fundo Correio da Manhã, Arquivo Nacional.



Figure 2. Student protests, Rio de Janeiro. Fundo Correio da Manhã, Arquivo Nacional.



Figure 3. LGBT movement, São Paulo, May 1, 1980. Photo by Fernando Ochoa. Author's archive.



Figure 4. Signs from demonstration in front of the Brazilian embassy, Washington, DC. Photo by Harry Strharsky. Author's archive.

energies, expand your intellectual horizons, read intensely and critically, view films analytically, carry out interesting research, and write elegant prose. Otherwise, I would suggest you not take this course. You must do all the readings prior to the seminar (an average of 220 pages per week), participate in all seminar sessions, lead seminar discussions, view seven films outside the classroom, write short reflections on the films, and write a final research paper based on Opening the Archives documents. You cannot get an A in this class unless you excel in all aspects of the seminar.

### *Learning Goal*

This seminar is designed to afford students the opportunity to read, think, discuss, and write critically about various interpretations of the history of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–85) and understand the political, social, economic, and cultural context in which it took place. This will include learning or strengthening the following skills:

- How to read historical narratives (secondary sources) carefully and critically to understand different scholars' arguments and their interpretations of history;
- How to articulate a wide-ranging understanding of the complex interplay of diverse economic, social, political, and cultural phenomena in a specific historical moment;
- How to view and think analytically about the ways that films are used as a means of communicating specific narratives about a given culture and its historical context;
- How to understand and interpret documents and other material (primary sources) produced contemporaneously to a period under investigation as a means of understanding political, economic, social, and cultural events;
- How to construct an argument about the meaning of primary sources through persuasive essays about their significance that can shed light on our comprehension of this period in Brazilian history.

### *Race, Gender, and Inequality*

This course is structured around understanding the history of the Brazilian military dictatorship through the analytical lenses of race, gender, class, and socioeconomic inequality and how systems of power are structured and reproduced. This will be apparent in the documents we will analyze, as well as in the readings, lectures, and films. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which the US government intervened in the politics of Brazil, as well as how US citizens, Brazilian exiles, and others opposed these imperial policies. The final research paper, using US government documents found on the Opening the Archives website, will allow students to analyze internal State Department debates about US policies toward Brazil before and during the two decades of authoritarian rule to understand unequal power relationship between the United States and Brazil.

### *Academic Integrity*

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University Academic Code. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work. All outside sources, whether quoted word for word or paraphrased, must be duly cited and footnoted.

### *Course Workload and Expectations*

The total of in-class hours and out-of-class work for all full-credit courses is approximately 180 hours over the length of a semester. In this class, students seeking to maximize their learning can expect to spend: 42 hours in class (3 hours per week for 14 weeks); 91 hours reading for class (approx. 7 hours per week for 13 weeks); 20 total hours viewing 6 assigned films outside the classroom and writing response papers; 6 hours writing your Brazilian biography postings; and 21 hours researching and writing the final paper. Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.

### *Required Readings*

These books make be purchased at the campus bookstore. They are also on 24-hour reserve in the library.

- Dunn, Christopher. *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Green, James N. *Exile within Exiles: Herbert Daniel, Gay Brazilian Revolutionary*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Green, James N. *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Langland, Victoria. *Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and the Making and Remembering of 1968 in Military Brazil*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Pitts, Bryan. *Until the Storm Passes: Politicians, Democracy, and the Demise of Brazil's Military Dictatorship*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023.
- Sattamini, Lina Penna. *A Mother's Cry: A Memoir of Politics, Prison, and Torture under the Brazilian Military Dictatorship*. Introduction by James N. Green; translated by Rex P. Nielson and James N. Green; epilogue by Marcos P. S. Arruda. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Skidmore, Thomas E. *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–85*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Green, James N., Victoria Langland, and Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, eds. *The Brazil Reader: History, Culture, and Politics*. 2nd edition. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.
- Assigned articles, documents, and films are on the website.

*Recommended Readings*

These books are on reserve in the library on 24-hour reserve. They are noted elsewhere in the syllabus as excellent additional secondary sources for the material we will study and are recommended for the enthusiast.

- Alves, Maria Helena Moreira. *State and Opposition in Military Brazil*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.
- Dunn, Christopher. *Contracultura: Alternative Arts and Social Transformation in Authoritarian Brazil*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
- McGowan, Chris, and Ricardo Pessanha. *The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova and the Popular Music of Brazil*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.
- Serbin, Kenneth P. *From Revolution to Power in Brazil: How Radical Leftists Embraced Capitalism and Struggled with Leadership*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019.
- Serbin, Kenneth P. *Secret Dialogues: Church-State Relations, Torture, and Social Justice in Authoritarian Brazil*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000.
- Skidmore, Thomas, E. *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964: An Experiment in Democracy*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Especially pages 205–330.
- Veloso, Caetano. *Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by Isabel de Sena. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

*Course Assessment*

1. 30% Active participation in seminar discussions, including leading sessions.
2. 10% *Brazilian biographies* entries (six short postings on the website) (6 pages).
3. 30% Reflections on seven assigned films seen outside the classroom (total of 12 pages).
4. 30% Final paper based on documents in the Opening the Archives Project website or on an original research topic (12–15 pages).

**Note:** Graduate students taking this course should meet with me to discuss additional expectations.

*This course requires a heavy reading load (an average of 200 pages a week), significant writing, and other out-of-classroom assignments. If you think that you cannot keep up with the reading for all seminar sessions, the writing, and the other assignments, you should not take the class. (It also should not be your fifth class; there is simply too much work for this seminar.)*

### 1. **Seminar attendance and participation (30% of the final grade)**

This is an advanced seminar. Active participation in the discussions about the readings is essential for success. Along with another person, you will be required to lead the discussion of the assigned readings (chapters, articles, and documents) of

seminar sessions. Some students will also lead the Economic Forum Discussions. If you are hesitant or shy about contributing to or leading the seminar discussion, you must talk to me so that we can find ways to encourage your active participation and leadership in the weekly meetings.

## 2. **BB Brazilian Biography (10% of the final grade)**

Between the first and second class, you will create a character, give her/him a name, identity, profession, political perspectives and then follow that person throughout the twenty-one years of the dictatorship. We will then divide the class into two groups: Group I (Last name A–L); Group II (Last name M–Z). Every other week you will post a brief account on the *Canvas website in the Discussion Section* about how that character interacted with the changing social, economic, political, and cultural changes that took place in the period about which we will have prepared for classroom discussion. You may be as creative as you wish, as long as your character's actions, life story, changes, etc. have some logic to them, and are plausible within the context of Brazilian culture and society. You will have a total of six entries during the semester related to your character. The questions listed in the syllabus about each time period are merely guidelines for thinking about how your character might have responded to the society around her or him during that moment in Brazilian history. Feel free to use your imagination and go beyond those suggestions. You should also consider interacting with other characters in the class. You may bring other people into your narrative, including other characters created by other members of the seminar. Brazilian Biographies is designed to be a fun exercise that will allow you, through your character, to imagine yourself in Brazil during the time covered in this seminar. The entries do not have to be too long, as we want people in the class to follow them. You should not spend too much time on this assignment. When it is your week to post an entry, you will also give a one-minute oral summary of the posting to the other members of the seminar.

## 3. **Out-of-class film viewings (30% of the final grade)**

During the semester, you will view seven different films about Brazil in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and write a two-page reflection about each one. They will be available on the website. Your reflections should not be summaries of the films, but rather your thoughts about how they relate to the themes of the seminar. You should send them to me. They should be in Word.

The films are:

- *Vidas Secas (Barren Lives)*, dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1963.
- *O dia que durou 21 anos (The Day That Lasted 21 Years)*, dir. Camilo Tavares, 2013.
- Two of three: Option A: *O que é isso, companheiro (Four Days in September)*, dir. Bruno Barreto, 1997; Option B: *O ano em que meus pais saíram de férias (The Year My Parents Went on Vacation)*, dir. Cao Hamburger, 2006. Option C: *Marighella*, 2019, dir. Wagner Moura.

- *Uma noite em 1967 (A Night in 1967)*, dir. Renato Terra and Ricardo Calil, 2010.
- *Dzi croquettes*, dir. Tatiana Issa and Raphael Alvarez, 2009.
- One of two: Option A: *Diário de uma busca (Diary of a Search)*, dir. Flávia Castro, 2010; Option B: *Fico te devendo uma carta sobre o Brasil (I Owe You a Letter about Brazil)*, dir. Carol Benjamin, 2019.

#### 4. **Opening the Archives project or research paper with an original theme (30% of the final grade)**

**Option A:** Over the last decade, teams of Brown University students have been involved in a multi-year project to digitize, index, and make available to the public US government documents on Brazil from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. These include US State and Defense Department documents held at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, and materials in the Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, and Ford Presidential Libraries. To date we have made available 60,000 documents on the Opening the Archives website: <http://library.brown.edu/openingthearchives/>. We have a long-term goal of digitizing, indexing, and making available to the public 100,000 US documents about Brazil.

For your final seminar project, you will choose a topic related to the Brazilian military dictatorship and then seek out documents in the Opening the Archives Project database that deal with that issue. While the focus of your research should be the primary sources in the State Department, Defense Department, or Presidential Libraries archives, you will need to do some additional research with secondary sources to augment the analysis of the documents that you choose. Your topic may vary from looking at how the US embassy understood a particular moment in Brazilian history to seeing how the mechanisms of diplomacy functioned.

We will have a brief in-house training session about how to use the Opening the Archives database. You will need to present a very brief statement of your research topic along with excerpts from at least one of the documents to me. The final papers should be *12 to 15 pages long, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, with an original title, page numbering, and Chicago Manual of Style footnoting for a historical paper*. The best papers will be published on the website. Two examples will be posted on the website during the semester.

**Option B:** You may choose a research topic related to the period of the Brazilian military dictatorship or regarding its legacy in the aftermath of authoritarian rule, which draws on primary and secondary sources, has a clear argument, and offers a new or original study of a specific theme. You should send me a short research proposal, with the topic, a summary of the idea, and primary and secondary sources you are considering. The final papers should be *12 to 15 pages long, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, with an original title, page numbering, and Chicago Manual of Style footnoting for a historical paper*. The best papers will be published on the website. Two examples will be posted on the Canvas website during the semester.

*Seminar Schedule*

## Week #1 An Introduction to the Course

- Brief introduction of students and professor: your background, concentration, interests, and the answer to the question: Why are you taking this seminar?
- Outline of course expectations; review of the syllabus; explanation of Brazilian Biographies, film viewings and reflections expectations, Opening the Archives Project research paper.
- What do we know about the topic of the seminar? How can we systematize our knowledge? How are we going to learn together? How do we read a chapter, an academic article, or a primary document? View a film?
- *Mini-lecture: Brazil's "Experiment in Democracy": 1946–64*
- *Historiographic Debate:* What kind of democracy did Brazil have in the post-World War II period? What were the legacies of Vargas and their relationship to the 1964 coup d'état?
- Assignment of seminar discussion leader teams

Out of classroom film viewing of *Vidas Secas*. Two-page reflection paper. (Double-spaced, original title, student's name).

Please send in Word with your last name and the short film title as the file name: e.g., Green—21 Years).

*Recommended Film Article No. 1:* Randall Johnson and Robert Stam, "The Cinema of Hunger: Nelson Perreira dos Santos's *Vidas Secas*." In *Brazilian Cinema*, Randall Johnson and Robert Stam, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 120–27.

## Week #2 Jânio, Jango, and Radical Politics (1961–64)

## Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate:* Was the coup inevitable? If so, why? If not, why not?

Discussion of *Vidas Secas*. To what extent did the discussion about the hunger and poverty in the Brazilian Northeast politicize Brazilian youth in the early 1960s and create a "discourse" about the nation's problems and their solutions?

*Economic Forum No. 1:* What economic problems did Goulart's government face?

*Economic Forum Discussion**Secondary Source Readings* (92 pages):

- Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule*, chapter 1, 3–17.
- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, introduction and prologue, 1–18.
- Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 1–60.

*Primary Documents* (approx. 24 pages):

- Document No. 1: Jânio Quadros, "Brazil's New Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 40, no. 1 (1961): 19–27.

- Document No. 2: Tad Szulc, “Northeast Brazil Poverty Breeds Threat of a Revolt,” *New York Times*, October 31, 1960.
- Document No. 3: Editorial, “The ‘Fidelists’ of Brazil,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1960.
- Document No. 4: Tad Szulc, “Marxists Are Organizing Peasants in Brazil: Leftist League Aims at a Political Army 40 Million Strong,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1960.
- Document No. 5: Leonard Gross, “How Red Is Brazil,” *Look Magazine*, May 21, 1963.

Recommended Reading (for the enthusiast):

- Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964*, 205–330.

Out of classroom viewing of *The Day That Lasted 21 Years* (2013), director Camilo Tavares.

Two-page film reflection sent to me.

See Document No. 6 for US State Department documents cited in documentary. (Double-spaced, original title, student’s name.) Please send in Word with your last name and the short film title as the file name: e.g., Green—21 Years.

BB *Brazilian Biographies #1* (Group I and II): Name, social class, race, gender, origin, profession, political ideology, family history, etc. What is your character’s attitude to the Goulart regime?

Week #3 The 1964 Coup d’état

Seminar Discussion

(Readings and *The Day That Lasted 21 Years*)

*Historiographic Debate*: Was the role of the US government in supporting the coup essential for its success? What do we call the new regime? Is it a military dictatorship, a civilian-military dictatorship, a fascist regime, an authoritarian regime?

Discussion of *The Day That Lasted 21 Years*. To what extent does the focus of attention on US participation in the 1964 military coup obscure the role of Brazilians?

*Economic Forum No. 2*: What were the economic problems facing the new regime government? (Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 29–38).

*Economic Forum Discussion*

*Secondary Source Readings* (94 pages):

- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, chap. 1, 19–48.
- Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, chap. 2, 18–45.
- Article No. 1: W. Michael Weis, “Government News Management, Bias and Distortion in American Press Coverage of the Brazilian Coup of 1964,” *Social Science Journal* 34, no. 1 (1997): 35–55.

- Article No. 2: Jan Knippers Black, “Lincoln Gordon and Brazil’s Military Counterrevolution,” in *Ambassadors in Foreign Policy: The Influence of Individuals on U.S.-Latin American Policy*, ed. C. Neale Ronning and Albert P. Vannucci (New York: Praeger, 1987): 95–113.

*Primary Source Documents* (approx. 45 pages):

- Document No. 6: “Brazil Marks Fortieth Anniversary of Military Coup,” National Security Archive Documents 1–7. Retrieve from <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB118/index.htm>
- Document No. 7: Clarence W. Hall, “The Country That Saved Itself,” *Readers Digest*, November 1964, 35–59.

Recommended Reading (for the enthusiast):

- Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil*, 3–28.

BB *Brazilian Biographies* #2 (Group I and II): What is your character’s attitude to the new government? What changes have taken place in her/his life?

Week #4 Castelo Branco and Institutionalizing the Dictatorship (1965–66)

Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate*: Was Castelo Branco really a “moderate”? Does the “moderate/hard-line” binary work in analyzing the military regime?

*Economic Forum* No. 3: What is Skidmore’s assessment of the economic situation during the Castelo Branco government?

*Economic Forum Discussion*

*Secondary Source Readings* (176 pages):

- Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 46–65.
- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 49–75.
- Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 61–106.
- Green, *Exile within Exiles*, 1–54.
- Pitts, *Until the Storm Passes*, 1–32.

*Primary Source Documents* (approx. 24 pages):

- Document No. 8: “Institutional Act”
- Document No. 9: “The Inaugural Speech of Castelo Branco.”
- Document No. 10: “Ambassador Juracy Magalhães Comments on the Revolution of 1964.”
- Document No. 11: Senator Wayne Morse’s speeches in the *Congressional Record*.

Recommended Reading (for the enthusiast):

- Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil*, 29–79.

For next week, please write on TWO films (total of three pages):

Film No. 3: Option A: *O que é isso, companheiro* (*Four Days in September*), dir. Bruno Barreto, 1997.

Recommended Reading: *Film Article No. 2*: Valerie Elbrick Hanlon, “They’ve Got Your Father,” *Washingtonian*, April 1998, 70. See also James N. Green, “Kidnappings of Diplomats and Revolutionary Politics in Authoritarian Brazil: The Tale of Two Films,” in *Latin American History at the Movies: The Sequel*, ed. Donald Stevens (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2022).

Option B: *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation*, dir. Cao Hamburger, 2006.

Recommended Reading: *Film Article No. 3*: Karen Backstein, review of *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation*, *Cinéaste* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 54–55.

Option C: *Marighella* (2019), dir. Wagner Moura.

Recommended Reading: *Film Article No. 4*: James N. Green, “Kidnappings of Diplomats and Revolutionary Politics in Authoritarian Brazil: The Tale of Two Films,” in *Latin American History at the Movies: The Sequel*, ed. Donald Stevens (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2022).

BB *Brazilian Biographies* #3A (Group I, Last name A–K): What is your character’s attitude to the 1965 elections? What changes have taken place in her/his life?

Week #5 Costa e Silva: Hard-liner or More of the Same? (1967–69)

Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate*: Was Costa e Silva “hard-line” in relationship to Castelo Branco or is this a false dichotomy (hard-line/moderate)? How has the dictatorship changed?

Discussion of *Four Days in September/The Year My Parents Went on Vacation/Marighella*. How is the revolutionary left that chose the armed struggle portrayed in these three different films?

*Economic Forum No. 4*: What is Costa e Silva’s new economic policy?

*Economic Forum Discussion*

*Secondary Source Readings* (203 pages):

- Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 66–104.
- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 77–136.
- Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 107–66.

- Green, *Exile in Exiles*, 55–83.
- Pitts, *Until the Storm Passes*, 33–52.

*Primary Documents* (approx. 6 pages):

- Document No. 12: “Institutional Act No. 5.”
- Document No. 13: ALN, MR-8 “Text of Manifesto from Kidnappers of U.S. Ambassador,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1969.
- Document No. 14: Editorial, “Terror in Brazil,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1969.
- Document No. 15: Joseph Novitski, “Brazil to Free Fifteen to Win Release of U.S. Envoy,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1969.

Recommended Reading (for the enthusiast):

- Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil*, 80–100.

For next week: *Film No. 4: Uma noite em 1967 (A Night in 1967)*, dir. Renato Terra and Ricardo Calil, 2010.

BB *Brazilian Biographies* #3B (Group II, Last name L–W): What is your character’s attitude toward the student movements of 1968, Institutional Act No. 5, the forced retirement of professors from the university? What has changed in her/his life?

Film reflection on *Uma noite em 1967 (A Night in 1967)*, dir. Renato Terra and Ricardo Calil, 2010.

Week #6 Tropicália and the Brazilian Counterculture (1967–71)

Seminar Discussion

(Discussion of the readings and *Uma noite em 1967*)

*Historiographic Debate*: Does it make sense to understand Brazilian music of the 1960s as polarized between politically engaged music and “alienated” or nonpolitical music? If so, why? If not, why not?

*Secondary Source Reading* (228 pages):

- Dunn, *Brutality Gardens* (entire book)

Primary Documents:

- CD No. 1: A selection of music from the 1960s and 1970s (24 songs). A sheet with the words and translations of most of the titles along with links to performances is on the website. Enjoy!

Recommended readings (for the enthusiast):

- Veloso, Caetano. *Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by Isabel de Sena. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

- McGowan, Chris, and Ricardo Pessanha. *The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova and the Popular Music of Brazil*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

BB *Brazilian Biographies #4A* (Group I): What is your character's relationship to Brazilian popular music, *tropicália*, the Beatles, hippies, the contracultural, and US music?

Week #7 Médici: "Years of Lead" and the "Economic Miracle" (1969–73)

Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate*: How can we characterize the Médici government? What was life like for "ordinary people" during these years?

*Economic Forum No. 5*: What were the economic bases for the "miracle"? Was the "economic miracle" essential for the legitimacy of the Médici government?

*Economic Forum Discussion*

*Secondary Source Readings* (230 pages):

- Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 105–59.
- Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 167–214.
- Green, *Exile within Exiles*, 84–153.
- Pitts, *Until the Storm Passes*, 53–80.
- Article No. 3: Kenneth P. Serbin, "The Anatomy of a Death: Repression, Human Rights, and the Case of Alexandre Vannucchi Leme in Authoritarian Brazil," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30, no. 1 (1998): 1–33.

Recommended Reading (for the enthusiast)

- Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil*, 101–38.
- Serbin, Kenneth P. *Secret Dialogues: Church-State Relations, Torture, and Social Justice in Authoritarian Brazil*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000.

BB *Brazilian biography #4B* (Group II): How does your character relate to the armed struggle/terrorist movements, the economic situation, the Médici government?

Recommended viewing of *Brazil: A Report on Torture* (dir. Saul Landau, 1971).

*Warning*: This film was shot in Chile in 1971 with former political prisoners released in exchange for the freedom of the kidnapped Swiss ambassador. (You will encounter some of the characters—Dedora, Marcos, Jean Marc—in seminar readings.) They describe and demonstrate the methods of torture they endured in Brazil. Many students find these enactments upsetting, so you should view the film with

these considerations in mind. *It is not required viewing*, but recommended if you can tolerate the graphic descriptions of torture.

#### Week #8 The International Campaign against the Dictatorship, Part I:

Torture, (1969–73)

Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate:* To what extent did the international campaign against the dictatorship have an effect (or not) on the regime's human rights policies? For those of you who watched *Brazil: A Report on Torture*, how effective do you think it is as a means of raising interest in the situation in Brazil?

Brief in-seminar training on how to use the Opening the Archives database and discussion of other possible research paper topics

*Secondary Source Readings* (194 pages):

- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 137–232.
- Sattamini, *A Mother's Cry* (introduction, 1–99).

*Primary Documents* (12 pages):

- Document No. 16. Ralph Della Cava, "Torture in Brazil," *Commonweal*, April 24, 1970, and exchange with Lincoln Gordon.
- Document No. 17. Lincoln Gordon, "Letter to the Editor," *Commonweal*, August 7, 1970, and Ralph Della Cava, "Reply."

View for next class: *Film No. 5: Dzi croquettes*, dir. Tatiana Issa and Raphael Alvarez, 2009.

Recommended Reading: *Film Article No. 5:* David William Foster, review of *Dzi Croquettes*, *Chasqui* 39, no. 2 (2010): 243–44.

BB *Brazilian Biographies* #5A (Group I): What is your character's relationship to news of torture and repression in Brazil?

Week #9 Spring Break: No class

#### Week #10 Geisel: The Slow-Motion Return to Democratic Rule (1974–79)

Seminar Discussion

(Discussion of readings and the film *Dzi Croquettes*)

*Historiographic Debate:* How do we understand the return to democratic rule? Was it a top-down process initiated by the military or a bottom-up process reflected in the electoral defeat of ARENA in 1974 and the emergence of new social movements? Or was it a combination of both? If so, what was that dynamic? How did the MDB manage to channel much of the legal opposition to the regime?

*Dzi Croquettes*: What does this film tell us about changes in notions of gender and the process of liberalization in Brazil under Geisel?

*Economic Forum No. 6*: What are the factors that lead to Geisel's economic woes? How does he address them?

*Economic Forum Discussion*

*Secondary Source Readings* (215 pages):

- Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 160–209.
- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 233–92.
- Green, *Exile within Exiles*, 154–205.
- Pitts, *Until the Storm Passes*, 81–124.

*Primary Documents* (approx. 10 pages):

- Document No. 18: Editors, *Nós Mulheres*, “Second-Wave Brazilian Feminism,” in *The Brazil Reader*, 479–80.
- Document No. 19: Aguinaldo Silva, “LGBT Rights and Democracy,” in *The Brazil Reader*, 481–83.
- Document No. 20: Various authors, “The Movement for Political Amnesty,” in *The Brazil Reader*, 484–85.

Recommended Reading (for the enthusiast):

- Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil*, 139–251.

BB *Brazilian Biography* #5B (Group II): What are your character's attitudes toward the *abertura* process? How did she/he vote in the 1974 elections?

Week #11 The International Campaign against the Dictatorship, Part II: Beyond Torture (1971–79)

Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate*: To what extent did the shift in US policy toward Brazil actually have an effect on the internal politics in Brazil? What other issues were raised?

*Secondary Source Readings* (163 pages):

- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 233–320.
- Sattamini, *A Mother's Cry*, 100–176.

*Primary Documents* (approximately 20 pages):

- Document No. 21 (A–D): Selections, *Brazilian Information Bulletin*, 1971–75.
- Document No. 22: Richard M. Morse, Thomas E. Skidmore, Alfred Stepan, Stanley Stein, and Charles Wagley, Letters to the Editor: “Brazil: The Sealed Coffin,” *New York Review of Books*, November 27, 1975.

- Document No. 23: *Brazilian Labor Information and Resource Bulletin*, 1980.

*Film No. 6: Option A: Diário de uma busca*, dir. Flavia Castro, 2010; Option B: *Fico te devendo uma carta sobre o Brasil*, dir. Carol Benjamin, 2019.

Week #12 Figueiredo: Liberalization, Strikes, and a Return to Democracy (1979–85)  
Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate*: Was political *conciliação* (conciliation), including the 1979 Amnesty Law, the only way to achieve an exit from military rule? What was the role of the strike wave on the return to democracy? What is the nature of the transition to democracy?

*Diário de uma busca*, dir. Flavia Castro, 2010; *Fico te devendo uma carta sobre o Brasil*, dir. Carol Benjamin, 2019. What is the relationship of these films to the process of democratization, reconciliation, and memory?

*Economic Forum No. 7*: What is the relationship between Brazil's economic situation and the process of *abertura*?

*Economic Forum Discussion*

*Secondary Source Readings* (128 pages):

- Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 210–55.
- Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 215–48.
- Green, *Exile within Exiles*, 206–66.

Week #13 The Citizens' Constitution and the Legacies of the Military Regime  
Seminar Discussion

*Historiographic Debate*: Why is the Constitution of 1988 called the Citizens' Constitution? What are the progressive provisions in the constitution? What changed, and what stayed the same? How are the legacies of the dictatorship still manifested in Brazil? In what ways were the Constituent Assembly and the Constitution democratic?

*Secondary Source Readings* (130 pages):

- Pitts, *Until the Storm Passes*, 125–80.
- Article No. 4: Daniel McDonald, "Making the 'Citizen Constitution': Popular Participation in the Brazilian Transition to Democracy, 1985–1988," *The Americas* 79, no. 4 (2022): 619–52.
- Article No. 5: Jorge Zaverucha, "The 1988 Brazilian Constitution and Its Authoritarian Legacy: Formalizing Democracy While Gutting Its Essence," *Journal of Third World Studies* 15, no. 1 (1998): 105–24.

- Article No. 6: André Pagliarini, “‘De onde? Para onde?’: The Continuity Question and the Debate over Brazil’s ‘Civil’-Military Dictatorship,” *Latin American Research Review* 52, no. 5 (2017): 760–74.

**James N. Green** is the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Professor Emeritus of Latin American History and Professor Emeritus of Brazilian History and Culture at Brown University, where he directed the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (2005–2009) and the Brazil Initiative (2012–2022). He is the author of four monographs and coeditor of eight collections on Brazilian history. The former president and executive director of the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA), Green currently serves as the president of the board of directors of the Washington Brazil Office (WBO), a nonpartisan advocacy group and think tank that works with Brazilian social movements and non-government organizations in developing international articulations of their sociopolitical agendas.

### Notes

1. The collection is available online through the Brown Digital Repository, <https://library.brown.edu/create/openingthearchives/en/>.
2. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*; Sattamini, *A Mother’s Cry*.
3. Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*; Green, *Exile within Exiles*.
4. Pitts, *Until the Storm Passes*.
5. *Diário de uma busca (Diary of a Search)*; dir. Flávia Castro, 2010); *Fico te devendo uma carta sobre o Brasil (I Owe You a Letter about Brazil)*; dir. Carol Benjamin, 2019).
6. Dunn, *Brutality Garden*; *Uma noite em 1967 (A Night in 1967)*; dir. Renato Terra and Ricardo Calil, 2010).
7. Opening the Archives: Documenting US-Brazil Relations 1960s–80s, <https://library.brown.edu/create/openingthearchives/en/>.
8. Please acknowledge the source of ideas from this course syllabus are used in preparing and teaching a seminar about the Brazilian dictatorship.

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- Green, James N. *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Langland, Victoria. *Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and the Making and Remembering of 1968 in Military Brazil*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Pitts, Bryan. *Until the Storm Passes: Politicians, Democracy, and the Demise of Brazil’s Military Dictatorship*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023.
- Sattamini, Lina Penna. *A Mother’s Cry: A Memoir of Politics, Prison, and Torture under the Brazilian Military Dictatorship*. Introduction by James N. Green; translated by Rex P. Nielson and James N. Green; epilogue by Marcos P. S. Arruda. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Skidmore, Thomas E. *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–85*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.