

**SPAN 240: Testimonial Literature**  
**Nicole Caso**

This course provides the opportunity for students to engage critically with texts that serve as a public forum for voices often silenced in the past. Students will also learn about the broader context of the hemisphere's history through the particular experiences of women from Bolivia, Guatemala, Argentina, Mexico, and the U.S.-Latino community, including Rigoberta Menchú, Domitila Barrios de Chungara, and Cherríe Moraga. We will read testimonial accounts documenting the priorities and concerns of women who have been marginalized for reasons of poverty, ethnic difference, political ideologies, or sexual preference. The semester will be devoted to analyzing the form in which their memories are represented textually, and to the discussion of the historical circumstances that have led to their marginalization. Some of the central questions that will organize our discussions are: how to represent memories of violence and pain? What are the ultimate effects of mediations of the written word, translations to hegemonic languages, and the interventions of well-intentioned intellectuals? How best to use writing as a mechanism to trace a space for dignity and "difference"? We will integrate films that portray the issues and time-periods documented in the diaries and testimonial narratives to be read - including "Men With Guns", "El Norte," "Historia oficial," and "Rojo amanecer." Conducted in English.