



**PHILOSOPHY**  
department

# SANTIAGO AMAYA

UNIVERSITY OF THE ANDES

“Forgiveness as Politics”

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**MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2024**

**2:00–4:00PM**

A&H Building, Room 0426. Snacks will be provided.

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Forgiveness plays a role regulating interpersonal relations—typically, those that occur within the private domain of our lives. Yet, the practice has a distinctive political dimension. The dimension is not limited to so-called political acts of forgiveness, for instance, when a state accepts the apologies issued by another state (Govier 2023) or cases of presidential pardon (Minow 2019; Smith 2023). Even in interpersonal cases, there is politics in forgiveness.

I begin by describing a set of cases, informed by experiences of forgiveness occurring in the Colombian conflict, but also in other parts of the world. Then I turn to the main argument. I argue that genuine forgiveness requires in these cases certain kind of political arrangements, which are normally brought about by the presence of third parties. The presence of these parties can alter the processes of apologizing and forgiving, shifting the power imbalances that first led to the transgression. After showing why these cases challenge some widespread views about the dyadic nature of forgiveness, I argue that the lessons derived from these allegedly “marginal” cases generalize to more mundane situations of forgiveness.

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