

LAS 6938/4935 Critical Indigenous Studies

Fall 2025

Monday 4:05-7:05

Instructor: Dr. Carmen Martínez Novo

Classroom: Grinter 376

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Office hours: Monday 3-4, Thursday 2-3 or by appointment

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Preferred method to contact instructor is via e-mail. Please, make appointment for office hours too.

Course description:

This course proposes the label “critical indigenous studies” for research that aims to question romantic, essentialist and/or other unrealistic representations of indigenous peoples and their cultures, histories, experiences, and livelihoods. We will analyze the writings of indigenous and non-indigenous scholars who contribute critical perspectives on different aspects of the indigenous experience. The class will primarily focus on the Andes (Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia) and Mexico. Because critical indigenous studies propose a hemispheric and diasporic approach, the course will examine those dimensions as well.

Course goals:

- Teach nonessentialist, critical, and indigenous-produced literature on the indigenous experience with a focus on Latin America.
- Foster a hemispheric/global conversation on indigenous issues centered in the Latin American intellectual tradition.
- Consider classic and more recent bibliography on the indigenous experience in Latin America and beyond.

Student learning outcomes:

- Students who pass this class,
- will be aware of trends in indigenous studies, classic and current.
- will be able to assess a body of literature and identify debates within it (This is a useful skill for writing MA thesis and Dissertation proposals, grants, thesis and articles)
- Will improve their writing skills with an emphasis on content, clarity, and conciseness.

Materials:

Required

-Waskar Ari. 2014. *Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization and Bolivia's Indigenous Intellectuals*. Duke UP. **This book is available as an e-book in the UF Libraries.**

-Rudi Colloredo Mansfeld. 1999. *The Native Leisure Class: Consumption and Cultural Creativity in the Andes*. Chicago UP. **This book must be purchased or scanned in the library.**

-Joanne Rappaport. 2005. *Intercultural Utopias: Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Duke UP. **This book is available as an ebook in UF Libraries.**

-Pavel Shlossberg. 2015. *Crafting Identity: Transnational Indian Arts and the Politics of Race in Central Mexico*. Arizona UP. **This book is available as an ebook in the UF Libraries.**

The rest of the readings will be made available through canvas.

Components of course grade:

-Class attendance and participation: 10 % (attendance 6%, participation 4%)

-Leading a class discussion for one day: 10 %

-Midterm take home essay: 35 %, 5 pages typed, double spaced, font 12 p.

-Final take home essay: 45 %, 7-10 pages typed, double spaced, font 12 p.

Grading scale:

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Course schedule:

8/25

Please, read the syllabus carefully. The instructor is at an editors' workshop organized by the American Council of Learned Societies in Washington D.C. and cannot attend the first session. She will be in class in the next working session. Please, download from UF libraries and read the assigned chapters from the book scheduled for September 5.

9/1

No class. Labor Day.

Indigenous histories

9/8

Waskar Ari. 2014. *Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization, and Bolivia's Indigenous Intellectuals*. Duke University Press. Available in UF libraries as an ebook.

- Chapter 1 "Building the Indian Law and a Decolonization Project in Bolivia."
- Chapter 2 "Nation Making and the genealogy of the AMP indigenous activists."
- Chapter 3 "The beginning of the decolonization project."

9/15

Ari. *Earth Politics*.

- Chapter 4 "Against cholification."
- Chapter 6 "Against whitening"
- Conclusion

Theoretical dialog: settler colonialism/internal colonialism

9/22

-Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui. 2020. "Sociology of the image: a view from Andean Colonial history." In *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa: On practices and discourses of decolonization*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

-Patrick Wolfe. 2006. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4).

Urban indigenous people

9/29

Julianne Muller. 2020. Webs of fiesta related trade. Chinese imports, Investment and Reciprocity in La Paz, Bolivia. *Critique of Anthropology* 40(2): 238-263.

Kathy Fine-Dare. 2016. "Hidden Histories of Indigeneity in Urban Andean Ecuador. Transubstantiation, Ceremony and Intention in Quito." *Anthropological Forum* (26)4: 376-396.

Fragile Livelihoods

10/6

Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld. 1999. *The Native Leisure Class. Consumption and Cultural Creativity in the Andes*. Chicago UP.

- Prologue: "Andean Livelihoods in a Global Economy."
- Chapter 2: "Outsider's Wealth."
- Chapter 3: "Useless Things."

10/13

Colloredo-Mansfeld

- Chapter 4: "Otavalo's transnational archipelago."
- Chapter 6: "The Native Leisure Class."

Hemispheric dialog: indigenous education between colonialism and decolonization

10/20

-Brenda Child. 2018. The Boarding School as a Metaphor. *Journal of American Indian Education* 57(1): 37-57.

-Carmen Martinez Novo, 2014. "The tension between western and indigenous knowledge in Intercultural bilingual education in Ecuador." In *The Education of Indigenous Citizens in Latin America*, edited by Regina Cortina, Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Questions for first essay distributed

10/27

First essay due

Intercultural Politics

11/3

Joanne Rappaport, 2005. *Intercultural Utopias. Public Intellectuals, Cultural Experimentation and Ethnic Pluralism in Colombia*. Duke UP.

-Introduction

-Chapter 1. Frontier Nasa: The Dilemma of the Indigenous Intellectual.

-Chapter 2. Colaboradores: The Predicament of Pluralism in an Intercultural Movement

11/10

Rappaport

Chapter 4. Interculturalism and lo Propio.

Chapter 7. Imagining a Pluralist Nation.

Hemispheric dialog: Critical Latinx Indigeneities

11/17

-Luis Urrieta Jr. 2016. "Diasporic community smartness: *saberes* beyond schooling and borders." *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 19(6): 1186-1199.

-Shannon Speed. 2016. "States of Violence: Indigenous Women Migrants in the Era of Neoliberal Multiculturalism." *Critique of Anthropology* 36(3): 280-301.

Indigenous arts and authenticity

11/24

Pavel Shlossberg. 2015. *Crafting Identity: Transnational Indian Arts and the Politics of Race in Central Mexico*.

-Introduction

-Chapter 1 Judgement Days I : Indian Tales at the Concurso Artesanal.

-Chapter 2 Judgement Days II: Pastorela Tales in Tócuaro.

12/1

Shlossberg

- Chapter 3 Indian Arts and Exile
- Chapter 5 Indian Arts, Connoisseurs and Collectors
- Chapter 6 Indian Arts, Scholars and Museums

Questions for second essay distributed

12/8

Second essay due

COURSE POLICIES

Logistics

Students should be familiar with canvas and should check their UF e-mail for instructor's messages. Instructor will be sending announcements and distributing texts through the canvas system.

Students should **read the texts assigned for the day before attending that class**. This is very important because we intend to have a **participatory class** with an inclusive academic environment where **all feel free to express their informed opinions**. Students should be ready to participate, ask questions, engage in group discussion, based on the assigned readings for that day and on readings from previous days.

Attendance

Attendance is extremely important in this class. Students are allowed up to one unexcused absence without a repercussion in grades. Each additional absence will be reflected in a deduction of 2 points from the class attendance and participation component of the final grade.

Unexcused tardiness of 15 minutes or more or leaving class early will be counted as an unexcused absence unless the student has a documented reason for starting late or leaving early.

Excused Absences:

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit "reasonable cause for nonattendance" by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays.

Students should hand their assignments according to the instructions and by the deadline. Students may be given extra time to complete assignments after they provide documentation

of justified cause for the delay. If there is no justified cause for delay, 2 points will be deducted from the assignment per day of delay.

Class etiquette

While differences of opinion are valued and encouraged, discussion and debate must take place in a **civil and respectful** manner. Personal attacks or other acts of denigration will not be tolerated in this class.

Students are encouraged to participate, but they should also **be mindful of class time**. They are encouraged to **stay on point and to make their interventions as concise and clear as possible** so that everybody has an equal chance to participate in the conversation. The **instructor may prioritize giving the word to those who have spoken less and may interrupt students whose time is up**.

Artificial intelligence:

Artificial intelligence in its various forms can be used as a tool or method, but cannot be used to have AI plagiarize the work of others and then pass it as the student's work. When a student uses artificial intelligence in an assignment they must disclose and explain the use of AI as part of their research methodology.

UF POLICIES

- **[Students with Disabilities Act](#):** The Dean of Students Office coordinates needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066.*
- **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator.
- **Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Work submitted for credit by UF students should not include any form of plagiarism,** cheating or unauthorized aid. Unless an assignment is explicitly identified as collaborative, all work should be completed independently. Students should understand and follow the [Student Honor Code](#) that they signed upon enrollment at the University of Florida: *"I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."*

UF HELPING RESOURCES

- **Latin American and Caribbean Collection at UF Libraries:** Specialized staff support use and enjoyment of the 500,000 volumes, 50,000 microforms, thousands of current and historical serial titles and digital resources in [this world-class collection](#). LACC library staff provide expert help in online searches for research and study materials.
- **Academic Writing, Grammar and Style:** The [UF Writing Studio](#) is committed to helping University of Florida students and faculty meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. We support independent learning and scholarship by providing one-on-one consultations, workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate), and faculty retreats focusing on publishing original research. Students and faculty at all levels and in every discipline are welcome!
- **Technical difficulties with E-learning in CANVAS:** Contact the [UF Help Desk](#) at Learning-support@ufl.edu or (352) 392-HELP, then select option 2.
- **Personal Challenges:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with general wellbeing are encouraged to inform the instructor and utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling Center and Student Mental Health both provide confidential counseling services at no cost for enrolled students. Resources are also available for students seeking to clarify career and academic goals and to deal with academic challenges.
 - [University Counseling Center](#), 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling.
 - Student Mental Health, [Student Health Care Center](#), 392-1171, personal counseling.
 - Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
 - Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.
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THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTICE

APENDIX

INSTRUCTIONS TO LEAD ONE CLASS SESSION

Students will be responsible for **leading the discussion of the readings one day of their choice**. The presentation may be visual, written (in a power point or with other presentation technology), and oral.

The presentation may contain the following elements:

1. Context for the reading: information on the topic or geographical location of the reading
3. Brief summary of the main points of the reading
4. Discussion of points in the reading that need further explanation
5. What is significant or interesting from this reading? What have we learned from this reading that can be of value to us?
6. Criticisms of the reading: What is unclear in the reading? Point to inconsistencies and contradictions in the argument. What do you disagree with and why?
7. Connect the reading to the student's own background if appropriate. How is what is discussed in the reading illuminated by the students' personal experience (this includes personal and academic experience)
8. Questions for class discussion.