Race and Ethnicity in Modern Latin America

Instructor: Professor Carlos Aguirre
Office Hours: Mondays, 10-12 am; Wednesdays, 11-12 am.
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Course Description

In 1977, the authors of a book on inequality in Peru argued that "the problems of ‘race’... are of only peripheral significance in Spanish America." Today, very few analysts would agree with such statement. Recent scholarly trends, as well as current developments in the region, have combined to bring race, ethnicity, and related issues to the forefront of political as well as academic debates. The "problems of race" are far from insignificant, and any attempt to understand contemporary Latin America from a historical perspective should take into account the evolution of racial ideas and practices in the region. This colloquium attempts to examine the social, cultural, and political constructions of race and ethnicity in modern Latin America and their connections with the processes of class, gender, and national formation in the region.

Requirements

Attendance and participation (20%).

Attendance is mandatory. More than one unjustified absence will automatically be penalized with one letter grade. Participation is evaluated on the basis of the student’s engagement with the discussions in class.

Weekly reading reports: 20%

Students will write 2-3 page reports, due at the beginning of each class, about the assigned readings. These reports should include: a) a short summary of the reading(s), highlighting the main arguments presented by the author(s) under review; b) a critical assessment of their contribution to the topic under discussion; and c) at least three stimulating questions for discussion in class.
Paper proposal (due on week 3): 10%.

This will consist of one page describing the topic of the paper, the research question that the student seeks to address, the sources to be used, and a tentative bibliography. Although late proposals will be accepted, they will not receive any credit.

Final research paper (12-15 pages): 50%.

Students will choose a topic related to the course and use the best and up-to-date bibliography available to write a paper on it. Ideally, students should incorporate primary sources. I will be available for consultation on paper topics and bibliographical assistance.

Readings:

All books are available for purchase at the UO Bookstore, and will be placed on reserve at Knight Library. Articles and book chapters will be available through Blackboard.

Schedule of Sessions and Readings

**Week 1:** Introduction / Videos and discussion: “Race: The Floating Signifier” and “Mirrors of the Heart”

**Week 2:** Indians and the Nation-State in Nineteenth-Century Andean Societies


**Week 3:** Race, Nation, and Science / **PAPER PROPOSALS DUE**


**Week 4:** Representations of Indians and the Making of Indigenismo in Spanish America


**Week 5:** Deconstructing Mestizaje

Readings:

Marisol De la Cadena, “Are Mestizos Hybrids? The Conceptual Politics of Andean Identities,”

Week 6: Brazil and the Myth of Racial Democracy

Readings:


Week 7: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

Readings:

Marisol de la Cadena, “‘Women are more Indian’: Ethnicity and Gender in a Community Near Cuzco,” in Brooke Larson et. al. eds. Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes. At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

Week 8: Indigenous Social Movements

Week 9: Bolivia: Race, Ethnicity and Nation in the Construction of a New Society

Readings:

“Cocalero” (Video)

Week 10: Wrap-up session; general discussion of research papers. No readings assigned.

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Tuesday, March 16, 5 pm.