

Comparative Literature 250g

Cultures of Latin America



This course explores the hybrid makeup of culture in Latin America by looking at the vital interplay between the indigenous and the “foreign” – European, African, North American, Asian – in writings and images of the region. What do literary and visual works from various periods and parts of the world say about culture in Latin America, or about its diverse cultures? To what extent do these works construct Latin America as its own peripheral cultural entity or as an integral part of the West? How do Latin Americans represent themselves, or represent others, and how do others represent Latin Americans? How is cultural production from, or about, Latin America read or viewed around the world? What are the effects of variously underscoring or disregarding the concept of Latin America when thinking about the region’s cultures in the context of globalization?

We will seek to answer and evaluate these and other questions through the comparative study of texts by such authors as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Esteban Echeverría, Charles Darwin, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Herman Melville, Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, Clarice Lispector, and Gabriel García Márquez; paintings by Miguel Cabrera, Wifredo Lam, and Carmen Herrera; photographs by Martin Gusinde, Tina Modotti, and Sebastião Salgado; and films by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Wong Kar-wai, and Lucrecia Martel. We will conclude our study of Latin America by reading Valeria Luiselli’s *Tell Me How It Ends*, an essay about migrant children in the United States, along with Michael Bazzett’s new English verse translation of the *Popol Vuh*, the great Maya epic written down in the sixteenth century.

Prof. Roberto Ignacio Díaz

Lecture: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00-1:20 p.m.

Discussion Sections: Fridays 9:00, 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m.