



USC University of Southern California

History 498: **Race, Gender, and U.S. Empire**
Spring 2021

4 units

Tuesdays, 2 – 4:50pm

Online

Professor Joan Flores-Villalobos (you may refer to me as Prof. Flores)

Office: Remote

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11am-1pm and by appointment

Email: jfloresv@usc.edu

For technical issues, contact ITS at (213) 740-555 or consult@usc.edu

For Blackboard issues, call (213) 740-5555 and press Option 2 or email blackboard@usc.edu

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

Course Description

This seminar will begin by thinking theoretically about U.S. empire, considering the relationship between its tactics of power and categories of race, gender, and class, with a primary focus on Latin America. We will focus on a different case study each week, beginning with “westward expansion” on the U.S.-Mexico border, zooming in on 1898 in Cuba, and learning about Cold War interventions in Guatemala. This course is thus not an exhaustive survey of U.S. foreign or diplomatic relations, but a zoomed-in look at how imperial power worked on the ground and the afterlives of these imperial relationships. Rather than a top-down view, our focus will be on the “colonized”—those who experienced, suffered, resisted, and/or collaborated with U.S. imperial power. Though we will be focusing on Latin America, we will seek to think about U.S. empire broadly and your essays may address other regions of the world.

Learning Objectives

1. Compare and contrast the ideologies and tactics of U.S. empire across different geographic contexts

2. Interpret the imperial “commodity chains” that structure everyday consumption in the U.S.
3. Critique the aftereffects of the U.S.’ imperial interventions
4. Formulate a policy recommendation using primary and secondary sources related to U.S. empire

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

You will need access to a computer and a stable internet connection. USC recommends using a Mac or PC made in the last four years, with 4GB+ of memory and installed with at least Windows 7 or OSX 10.6. Your computer should have an internal or external webcam and microphone. You should use Chrome or Firefox as your browser (Safari and Internet Explorer do not work as well). You might also make use of your phone to connect to class through the “Blackboard Student” app.

You should have some familiarity with Blackboard, Google Docs, and Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides. Nevertheless, we will go over the use of this software in class.

USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university’s equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

Email and Communication Policy

I will contact you by email to update you on class assignments, due dates, and the weekly module expectations. Please check your email regularly!

Email is by far the best way to contact me. I will answer quickly during regular business hours and within 24 hours in almost every other case. I ask that your emails be short and direct. For extended questions about the class material, I will refer you to my virtual office hours.

You can expect grading and feedback within 7 days of any assignment.

Required Materials

All readings will be provided online through Blackboard.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Posts (8)	30%
- Class Discussion Leader	15%
- Class Presentation on Puerto Rico	15%
- Midterm: Proposal and Bibliography	20%
- Final Essay	20%

Discussion Posts: will answer the prompts on Google Classroom and should be ~200 words long, sometimes shorter (I will not be counting words, this is just a general guideline). They are due AT NOON BEFORE OUR ZOOM MEETING. These will be graded on basic completion and engagement—if you submit a post that responds to the prompt and fits the general word length, you will get an easy A. These are meant primarily to spur discussion during class. You are allowed to miss one of these posts without any grade penalty.

Class Discussion Leader: You will be in charge of leading discussion one day during the semester. This entails two extra bits of work: giving a short presentation at the beginning of class and preparing at least four questions for discussion. It does not mean you have to lead the class for the entire two hours, but you do have to start us off by

- (1) giving an overview of the week's topic
- (2) summarizing the reading's main points
- (3) pointing out one important piece of evidence used in the reading
- (4) [optional] connecting the reading to another case study, if appropriate
- (5) kicking off the discussion with two questions

I will be available to meet with you ahead of time if you need any assistance and will provide you simple, short additional readings to guide you if you are unfamiliar with the subject. We will pick these during the first week of class. I will provide a rubric for grading on Google Classrooms. During the week you are discussion leader, you do not need to submit a Discussion Board Post.

Class Presentation on Puerto Rico: On our second to last week of class, we will engage with a great piece of public scholarship called “The Puerto Rico Syllabus,” a compendium of sources that helps people understand the debt and sovereignty crisis on the island. Each student will pick a different section of the syllabus, browse its material, and present to the class for 10-15 minutes about their findings. This need not be an overly formal presentation—it is meant mostly to share the workload of understanding this big resource and to think through its complexities together. I will provide a rubric for grading on Google Classrooms.

Midterm Proposal and Bibliography: Your midterm will be due Saturday, March 20. It consists of a 1-page abstract and annotated bibliography for your final essay. The abstract must include your choice of final essay prompt (from the options below), your general theme, and your tentative thesis or argument. Your annotated bibliography must include 1 primary and 3 scholarly secondary sources that you will use in your final essay, only one of which may be drawn from class material. Each source must be cited in Chicago style. The annotation for each secondary source should include a summary [main argument, main piece of evidence] and a commentary on why the source is useful for your final essay. For a primary source, explain what the source is, its historical context, its main “point,” and why it is relevant to your final essay.

Final Essay: Your final essay is due Monday, May 10 at 11:59pm. You have three options:

- (1) Produce a 5-6 page foreign policy proposal for the U.S., either addressing an entire region or regarding a specific nation or event (so, for example, it can be something broad like the “Good Neighbor Policy” or deal more narrowly with Puerto Rico’s debt crisis). It does not have to be focused on Latin America.
- (2) Present a 5-6 page “expert witness” testimony memo regarding the asylum case of a fictional migrant, discussing the mitigating historical conditions that structure the migrant’s case for asylum and suggesting a recommendation for their case.
- (3) Write a 5-6 page op-ed for a top-tier publication (such as *NACLA* or The Washington Post’s *Made by History*) that historicizes a current event with a connection to U.S. empire. It does not need to focus on Latin America.

Late Assignments

For discussion posts, submitting an hour or so late will not hurt your grade at all, but they **MUST** be in at least half an hour before we meet for Zoom discussions at 2pm. The deadline is there only so I can have time to review your posts before we meet virtually and thus enhance our discussions. There is **NO** late submission on posts after we have already met on Zoom. You will receive a 0 if no post is submitted before class.

Obviously, there is no “late” submission for class presentations, but if you will not be able to present on your assigned day, please let me know with plenty of time so I can reshuffle our plans!

For the essays, you have a 24-hour grace period for late submissions, **NO QUESTIONS ASKED**. Anything beyond that, you must speak with me first to consider an extension and I am almost always happy to oblige. If I don’t receive any communication from you, you will be marked 10% (out of 100%) down for every day the assignment is late after the first 24 hours.

Attendance Policy

We will meet synchronously on Zoom every week, unless otherwise specified in the syllabus. I will expect you to complete the reading and discussion posts before we meet. Though attendance is not a direct part of your grade, if you miss two or more synchronous virtual meetings, you will lose an entire letter on your final grade (from A to B, from B- to C-, etc.) **UNLESS YOU PREVIOUSLY DISCUSS IT WITH ME**. I am willing to work with you whatever the particular circumstances might be, but you have to maintain communication. I am not looking to punish anyone during this extremely difficult time, but I do value our coming together prepared to discuss and learn.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79

C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Classroom Norms and “Netiquette”

Please contact me early in the semester if any of these “netiquette” policies present an issue.

When we meet on Zoom, I will encourage and expect (though not require) you to have your video on. You should keep the audio muted until you are invited to speak.

All our synchronous sessions will be recorded and made available asynchronously on Blackboard. These recordings are private within our class community and should not be shared outside of it. They will be deleted at the end of the semester.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for **DSP** (<https://dsp.usc.edu/>) and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) dspfrontdesk@usc.edu.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://adminsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety>.

[safety](#). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

STATEMENT ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, and stalking are not tolerated by the university. All faculty and most staff are considered Responsible Employees by the university and must forward all information they receive about these types of situations to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for assisting students with supportive accommodations, including academic accommodations, as well as investigating these incidents if the reporting student wants an investigation. The Title IX office is also responsible for coordinating supportive measures for transgender and nonbinary students such as faculty notifications, and more. If you need supportive accommodations you may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly (titleix@usc.edu or 213-821-8298) without sharing any personal information with me. If you would like to speak with a confidential counselor, Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) provides 24/7 confidential support for students (213-740-9355 (WELL); press 0 after hours).

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Class Schedule

Tuesday, January 19: Introductions

- Take quick survey
- In-class: "How to Hide an Empire"

Tuesday, January 26: The Myth of the Frontier

- Greg Grandin, Introduction and Chapter 1, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (Metropolitan, 2019)
- **Discussion Board Post #1**

Tuesday, February 2: Writing the History of Imperial Violence at the Border

- Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: A Borderlands Massacre and the Violence of History* (Penguin, 2008) [~40 pages]

- Discussion Board Post #2

Tuesday, Feb 9: The Turning Point of 1898 in Cuba

- Read: Ada Ferrer, "Rustic Men, Civilized Nation: Race, Culture, and Contention on the Eve of Cuban Independence," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (1998) [24 pages]
- Browse: 4 short Primary Sources
- Discussion Board Post #3

Tuesday, Feb 16: "Banana Republics"

- Read John Soluri, "Banana Cultures: Linking the Production and Consumption of Export Bananas, 1800-1980," from *Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas* (Duke, 2003) [30 pages]
- Discussion Board Post #4

Tuesday, Feb 23: Settler Colonialism in Hawaii

- In-class visit from Dr. Ashanti Shih

Tuesday, March 2: The Good Neighbor Policy

- [primary source] Franklin Roosevelt's Address at Chautauqua, 1936
- Read Allen L. Woll, "Hollywood's Good Neighbor Policy," *The Latin Image in American Film*, rev. ed. (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1980), pp. 53-75.
- Watch at least one Inter-American Affairs Propaganda Film (15 mins or less)
- Discussion Board Post #5

Tuesday, March 9: The Cuban Threat

- Read Louis Perez, "Revolution and Response," from *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Georgia, 1990)
- Susana Peña, "'Obvious' Gays and the State Gaze: Cuban Gay Visibility and U.S. Immigration Policy during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16 (2007): 482-214.
- Discussion Board Post #6

***** Midterm due Saturday, March 20**

Tuesday, March 16: The Cold War in Guatemala

- Watch: *Where the Mountains Tremble* (1983, 1hr 23mins)
- Browse Primary Sources individually
- Discussion Board Post #7

Tuesday, March 23 (Wellness Day, no class meeting)

Tuesday, March 30: The Neoliberal Model

- Excerpt from Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, The United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (Holt, 2006)
- Read 3 Primary Sources
- Listen to Planet Money podcast, "The Chicago Boys," Parts I and II (1 hour total)

- Discussion Board Post #8

Tuesday, April 6: NAFTA and Globalization in Ciudad Juárez

- Jessica Livingston, "Murder in Juarez: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Global Assembly Line," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 25 (2004): 59-76 (18 pages)
- Watch *Maquilapolis* (2016, 68 minutes)
- Discussion Board Post #9

Tuesday, April 13: No class meeting/Individual Meetings/The War on Drugs

- [optional] Suzanna Reis, *We Sell Drugs: The Alchemy of US Empire* (UC Press, 2014)

Tuesday, April 20: The Case of Puerto Rico

- "The Puerto Rico Syllabus" [sections divided by student]
- Short presentations in class

Tuesday, April 27 (Last day of class)

- Wrapping up

*** Final Essay due May 10th at 11:59pm