

COLT 250g: Cultures of Latin America

Summer 2021 / Session 050 / MWF 1:00pm-3:50pm PST / Online



Frida Kahlo, "Raíces" [Roots], 1943

How do we define Latin American Culture? Latin America is neither a discreet geographic expanse nor is it a coherent political organization. Latin America is also very linguistically diverse; beyond Spanish and Portuguese, there are hundreds of indigenous languages spoken—with many hundreds more lost to the violent processes of colonization, and its enduring legacies. What then, is this thing we call Latin American culture? And what does it mean for a book, or a film to be Latin American? In this course we will explore the complicated contours of Latin America through the lens of its hybrid cultures. This hybridity rests on the violent interplay between the categories of the indigenous and the “foreign”—how the European conquest, the African slave trade, and North American interventions have come to shape not only Latin American history, but also the region’s complex cultures. To better understand these processes, we will undertake a comparative analysis of Latin American literature, art, film, theory, and new media works *from and about* Latin America. We will discuss works by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Clarice Lispector, Jose Martí, Rigoberta Menchú, Alejo Carpentier, Edwidge Dandicat, Alfonso Cuarón, Raquel Salas Rivera, Valeria Luiselli, among others. The course will consist of lectures, presentations, small group discussions, and asynchronous activities such as film screenings and reading responses.

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