Hybridity. Transculturation. Borderlands. Creolization. These are a few of the key cultural theories that emerged from the confluence of indigenous, European, African, and Asian peoples across Latin America. In this course, we will analyze how the conquest and colonization of Latin America led to the production of ethno-racial categories, which, in the wake of the region's independence and modernization, were reconfigured into theories through which we read Latin American literature and culture today. Attending to the ongoing problem of “race” in Latin America today, this course will focus on three intersecting themes. First, we will analyze the construction of racial categories in Latin America in light of the region’s formation; Second, we will explore how these categories became disembodied from actual peoples and submerged under the rubric of Latin American cultural and literary theory. Third, we will consider what happens when discourses about “culture” in contemporary Latin America encode racial and gender difference. Overall, this a reading and writing intensive course designed both for students who specialize in Latin American literature and culture and for students who have a developing interest in contemporary Latin American thought, literature, and culture. The course will be conducted in English.