

**From Postcolonialism to Decoloniality:
Latin American and Caribbean Aesthetics in the Before and After
Fall 2022
Tuesday, 2:00 - 4:50 pm
THH 105**



Vencedor #2, Daniel Lind-Ramos

Spanish 650: Topics in Spanish and Latin American Literature and Culture

Instructor: Natalie L. Belisle, PhD

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Office: Taper Hall 156N

Office Hours: Thursdays 11:30 - 1:30 pm via Zoom, by appointment (link on Blackboard)

Course Description

Arguably, Latin American and Caribbean Studies currently find themselves in what can be called a “decolonial moment”. But how did we get here? And what does decoloniality mean precisely for *us* as aesthetic, cultural, and literary theorists ensconced in the walls of the U.S. academy? This seminar will trace the evolution toward the “decolonial turn” by way of a sweeping survey of its disciplinary antecedents—anticolonial theory, postcolonial studies, and its close relative, subaltern studies—in dialogue with Latin American/ist and Caribbean/ist critique, literature, and aesthetics. In particular, the course will intervene upon to three noteworthy themes in the field:

1. Within Latin Americanist scholarly circles, postcolonialism has incited well-documented debates concerning its conceptual and historical applicability, given that Latin America’s emancipation long predated the decolonization of Anglophone and Francophone colonies, from which postcolonial studies developed in the 1980s. These claims, however, partially rest on a particular idea of “Latin America” as “Spanish America”—an idea that ignores the vicissitudes of neo/colonial domination, whereby countries in the region passed through the hands of various European and North American imperial powers at different moments in time. Taking into account the relationally of Latin American and Caribbean—beyond pure linguistic boundaries—the course will also consider, as Walter Mignolo has observed, the Mediterranean and trans-Atlantic moorings of Latin American/ist anticolonial and postcolonial knowledges.
2. In light of this latter point, the course will examine the geopolitics of knowledge production to interrogate the stakes of disciplinary terms and methodologies in the constitution of Latin American and Latin Americanist anticolonial, postcolonial, and subaltern thought. Thus, we will analyze the *location* from which such knowledge is produced—particularly taking into account how Latin Americanist academic critique produced within Global North both dialogues with and, in many cases, eclipses both the lived anti/neo/post/decolonial experience of the Latin American Global South. In doing so, our discussions will note intersections and divergences between Latin Americanist academic knowledge and the anti/post/decolonial claims of Latin American, Caribbean, and trans-Atlantic literary, cinematic, and cultural texts.
3. Lastly, this course will attend to the time-lag between, on the one hand, revolutionary praxis and, on the other, [high] theory (and aesthetics), which differentiates postcolonial studies as [an identitarian] *discourse* from the world re-making, decolonizing impulse of anticolonial theory. This distinction putatively sets the stage for decoloniality as a theory rooted in reparative practice that endeavors to move beyond the exhaustive and exhausted trope of resistance. Amidst today’s insistent calls to decolonize seemingly everything—including epistemologies, structures, and systems that are fundamentally colonial in their origins, our primary concern here will be to understand what decoloniality means in relation to contemporary Latin America and Caribbean aesthetics.

Readings

Required books

Theory and Cultural Criticism

John Beverly, *Subalternity and Representation* (electronic version available at USC Librari)

Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (ISBN-10: 0415336392)

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (ISBN-10: 5400519326)

Walter Mignolo, *Local histories, Global Designs* (electronic version available at USC Libraries)

Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (electronic version available at USC Libraries)

Fiction

Horacio Castellanos Moya, *Insensatez* (ISBN-10: 483103141)

Rita Indiana Hernández, *La mucama de Omicunlé* (ISBN-10: 841629108X)

Laila Lalami, *The Moor's Account* ISBN-10 (0804170622)

René Philoctète, *Massacre River*, ISBN-10 (0811217256)

Yoss, *Se alquila un planeta* (may be difficult to find; Spanish copies will be placed on Blackboard)

* All books can be found on Amazon. Required essays and book chapters are posted Blackboard.

Assignments and Grading

1. Attendance and Participation (15 %)

2. Weekly Discussion Questions (15 %)

Starting week 2, students will submit a total of ten (10), 150-200 word discussion questions based on the day's assigned reading to course's Blackboard. Due by 12:30 pm on the day of class. For reference on what makes a good discussion question, please read Kyla Wazana Tompkins "Some Notes on How to Ask a Good Question..." (posted on Blackboard).

3. Presentations (25%)

Structured as a conference paper spanning 12 -15 minutes (6 - 7 pages double spaced, Times New Roman), the presentation should provide a critical summary and your theoretical intervention on the day's assigned text. This is also an opportunity for students to begin conceptualizing their final essays. Please submit your presentation in the designated Blackboard folder on your presentation day.

4. Final Essay (45 %)

The final project for the semester is 15-20 page scholarly essay that offers an original, theoretical intervention and close reading of any texts from the semester or a concept emerging from the texts.

A note on language: All work for this course will be conducted in Spanish. Students from departments and programs outside of CSLC's Comparative Literature and Spanish and Latin American Studies track may submit their final papers in English.

Class Calendar

Week 1, August 23: Terms of coloniality: Before and After

Fernando Coronil, "Elephants in the Americas?: Latin American Postcolonial Studies and Globalization"

Román de la Campa, "On Latin Americanism and the Postcolonial Turn"

Abraham Acosta, "Thresholds of Illiteracy"

Week 2, August 30: Intellectual decolonization

Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence" and "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth*

Jean Franco, "Liberated Territories"

Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, *Memories of Underdevelopment* (film available on Kanopy, via USC Libraries)

Week 3, September 6: Theory's praxis?

Homi Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory", "Signs Taken for Wonders" and "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" in *The Location of Culture*

Silviano Santiago, "The Space in Between"

Week 4, September 13: Post-creole angst

Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction", "Part II: The Reinvention of América: 1800-1850" and "From the Victoria Nyanza to the Sheraton San Salvador" in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*

Lucrecia Martel, *Žama* (film available on Kanopy, via USC Libraries)

Week 5, September 20: De/authorializing histories

Gayatri Spivak: "Can the Subaltern Speak?", "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography",

John Beverly, *Subalternity and Representation* (Introduction, Chapters 1 -3)

*Recommended: The Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, "Founding Statement"

Week 6, September 27: Border knowledges

Walter Dignolo, *Local histories, Global Designs* (Introduction, Chapters 1-5)

*Recommended: Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad del poder y clasificacación social"

Week 7, October 4: Trans-Atlantic reinscriptions 1

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufraios* (selections)

Laila Lalami, *The Moor's Account*

Week 8, October 11: Trans-Atlantic reinscriptions 2

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios* (selections)

Laila Lalami, *The Moor's Account*

Week 9, October 18: Yo, No

Horacio Castellanos Moya, *Insensatez*

Alberto Moreiras, "Introduction: Conditions of Latin Americanist Critique" and "The Aura of Testimonio" in *The Exhaustion of Difference*

Week 10, October 25 Postcolonial spirals

René Philoctète, *Massacre River*

Week 11, November 1: The day after

Iván de la Nuez, "Cuba y el día después"

Yoss, *Se alquila un planeta* (selections on BB)

Week 12, November 8: Post's identity—the particular, specific, the universal

Edouard Glissant, "The Open Boat" and "Distancing Determining"

Peter Hallward, "Preface", "Introduction", "Postcolonial Theory" and "Excursus I: A Postcolonial World?" in *Absolutely Postcolonial*

Santiago Castro-Gómez, "¿Qué hacer con las universalizaciones occidentales?: Observaciones en torno al 'giro decolonial'"

Week 13, November 15: Decolonial Unsettling / Decolonial Repair

Sylvia Wynter, *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being* (entire class)

Rocío Zambrana, "Decoloniality as Reparations" in *Colonial Debts* (Group A)

María Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism" (Group B)

Recommended: Nelson Maldonado Torres, "El Caribe, la colonialidad, y el giro decolonial" and María Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System"

Week 14, November 22: Trans-colonial spirals

Rita Indiana Hernández, *La mucama de Omículé*

Week 15, November 29: Wrap-up, Final Paper Topics

**FINAL ESSAYS DUE Thursday, December 15 by 5:00 pm in
Blackboard folder**

General Policies

Wellness and Safety

Given the unusual circumstances in which we find ourselves, this course will prioritize the safety, health, and well-being of students and the class, above all else. Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC's COVID-19 policy. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. *If you feel ill at any point during the semester with cold or flu-like symptoms, please do not attend class.*

Forms of Address

Your chosen name and pronouns are respected in this class. Since it is still not standard to list pronouns on university rosters, please enable me to respect your specific pronoun identification by submitting this information to me via email, if you'd prefer, before classes start or as early as possible after that. If your chosen name does not match the name in the university's registration system, please inform me in a similar manner. My pronouns are she/her/hers.

Online Office hours

Until we are in the clear from COVID-19 variants, I will hold weekly, scheduled office hours on Zoom by appointment every Thursday from 11:30 - 2:30 pm until the last week of class. Please follow the link available on Blackboard under the "Office Hours" section to schedule office hours during the weekly block of available time. If you have another class that conflicts with the regular office hours, please email me to schedule an appointment at an alternative date and time.

Communication

Please allow me 24 hours to respond to your emails during the week (from Monday through Friday). During the weekends, I will respond to emails within 48 hours. In order to protect your privacy, I only respond to messages sent from your official USC account (*YourNetID@usc.edu*), as I cannot verify your identity with other email providers. Please use professional language and forms of address in your communications to me.

Students with Accessibility Needs

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS), each semester. As stated on the OSAS web site, "according to the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA 2008), an individual with a disability is someone who experiences or lives with an impairment that *substantially* limits one or more major life activities, or who is regarded as, or has a history of being regarded as, an individual with a disability." If you believe that you have a need or diagnosis that falls under this definition, please visit the DSP office sooner rather than later to receive accommodations. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from SAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. All accommodations will be kept confidential. DSP is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for SAS is (213)

740-0776. For more information, please visit the OSAS web site at <https://osas.usc.edu/about/our-purpose-and-practice/>

Statement on Academic Integrity

Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Please make sure to review the rules of citation and attribution in the Chicago Manual of Style or the MLA Handbook, the two authoritative citation manuals for the humanities.

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.