Course Syllabus
ANSC 135 GS, Summer 2021
Indigenous Peoples of Latin America: Race, Politics, and Identity
Professor Nancy Postero

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Course Description:
This course will trace the centuries-long contestations between indigenous peoples and the groups that have tried to dominate, assimilate, or “develop” them. Questions of race, ethnicity, and identity have been, and continue to be, crucial to these struggles. While indigenous peoples in the Americas have been subject to marginalization, domination, and exploitation since the arrival of Europeans, they have also employed a wide range of strategies to resist and rework these powerful forces. This course takes up issues relevant across Latin America by focusing on the case of Ecuador, where indigenous organizations have been critical political actors.

We begin by examining the “Conquest” and its legacies: what the first contacts meant to both the Europeans and the Native Americans, how it was resisted and modified by indigenous actions, and the continuing debates -- 500 years later – about the legacies of racism, colonialism, and domination. What discourses or ways of thinking about and representing indigenous peoples emerged during that period and how do they continue to influence lives and politics today? The second section considers how Latin American states have tried to incorporate indigenous groups into the national project. We will look at efforts to assimilate them through state programs, assimilation, and mestizaje (cultural mixing) as well as arguments by opponents of these ideas. We ask how the category of “indigenous peoples” arose, and trace the emergence of multiculturalism during the neoliberal period. What were the effects of this new form of managed inclusion? The third section considers the intersections between race/ethnicity and gender. How are these categories performed? In the fourth section, we consider how indigenous peoples are incorporated into local and global economies, especially development models based in extraction of natural resources. In the final section, we look at the ways diverse indigenous peoples negotiate the complex forces facing them today. As they have gained political power across the region, they have proposed alternatives to neoliberalism, capitalism, and extractivist development models, often calling for decolonization in the process. What does decolonization mean and how might it transform the societies in which indigenous groups live?

Course Requirements:
1. Readings and class meetings: All readings will be uploaded to a Canvas site in advance of the seminar period, and hard copy readers will also be available. Students are expected to read all the required readings prior to our class meetings, and participate in class discussions.
2. **Learning Community**: This will be a small class, and one in which collegiality and openness are critical. I will suggest guidelines for creating a safe and open learning community, and we will collectively agree to the expectations.

3. **Individual student responsibilities**: Each student will make a presentation of one of the readings to the class, outlining the argument, and facilitating discussion by providing some questions for the group. In addition, students will submit a 3 page critical response paper to one of the readings.

4. **Core Group Projects**: Students will be grouped into 4-5 small core groups, and each group will choose a particular topic to focus on for the seminar. At the end of week 3 (Quito) and week 5 (Shuar), groups will make presentations of their topics to the whole class. These presentations will link class readings to the guests and experiences of the seminar in Ecuador.

5. **Grades** will be calculated as follows:
   - Participation in Class: 30%
   - Reading Presentation: 20%
   - Critical Response Paper: 20%
   - Group presentation: 30%

**Class and Readings Schedule:**

**Week One (Quito): Colonial Beginnings**

**Class Meeting 1: Colonization and Invasion**

**Class Meeting 2. Representations of Otherness**

**Film**: Couple in a Cage
Class Meeting 3: Discussion of Excursion to Monument of the Middle of the World & Ethnographic Museum

Week Two (Quito): From Race to Multiculturalism

Class meeting 4: Mestizaje and Multiculturalism

Class Meeting 5: Indigenous Movements

Guest Lecture: CONAIE: the Struggles of urban Indigenous people: Intercultural health initiatives in Ecuador

Week Three (Otavalo): Gender and Performance

Class Meeting 6: Gendering Race

Class Meeting 7: Performing Decolonization?
3. Veterans at Standing Rock: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j28i9Jrjj4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j28i9Jrjj4)

Week Four (Otavalo): Political Economy and Extractivism
**Class Meeting 8: Class and Indigeneity**

**Class Meeting 9: Extractivism**

**Class Meeting 10: The Texaco Case**

**Week Five (Cuyabeno): Contemporary Indigenous Activism**

**Class Meeting 11: Indigenous Experiences of Extraction**

Meet with Shuar leaders to discuss their experiences with petroleum extraction.

**Class Meeting 12: Decolonization and Buen Vivir**