

Fall 2025
Dept of Hispanic Languages and Literature
College of Arts and Sciences
Stony Brook University

HUS 150: Indigenous Cultures of Latin America

This course satisfies the **SBC** categories: **GLO, HUM, DIV**

3 credits
Meeting Time: Mo/Wed 2pm-3:20pm
Meeting Location: Javits Lecture Hall 109

Modality: In person
Mode of Instruction: Lecture

Course Description:

An introduction to the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America in the past and present times, focusing on culture, arts, social movements and politics.

Course Prerequisites: None

Instructor Information

Joseph M. Pierce (Cherokee Nation citizen) Associate Professor and Director, NAIS Initiative
Office Hours: Mondays 12-2pm (and by appointment)
Office Location: HUM 1139

TA: Valentina Pucci
Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm
Office Location: HUM 1088

Course Materials

Other than the required materials (book) below, all course materials will be posted on Brightspace.

Required Course Materials:

Jessica Hernandez, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes Through Indigenous Science*, North Atlantic Books: Berkeley, CA, 2022.

Course Learning Objectives

GLO

- Identify the diverse Indigenous communities of Latin America and their migrations.
- Analyze the relationships between Indigenous cultures and majority or settler societies.

HUM

- Identify major concepts of Indigenous epistemologies from Latin America.
- Review theoretical background of decolonial thought and praxis.
- Describe the historical development of Indigenous resistance movements in Latin America.
- Discern the social and political effects of colonialism regarding economic, environmental, cultural, and political activities.

DIV

- Assess the development of colonialism as a system of power.
- Examine structural inequalities created and sustained by colonialism and Indigenous methods of resistance.
- Analyze texts by underrepresented writers and examine the challenges they represent to traditional power relations, socio-racial hierarchies and cultural privilege.

Required Course Activities

Quizzes (6 total)

To gauge your understanding and mastery of course materials, we will have 6 quizzes, at the end of a course unit (Part I, II, III, IV) as well as for part of the *Fresh Banana Leaves*. These will be multiple choice and short answer, and will ask you to identify Indigenous communities, locations, names, or other basic information; others will ask you to analyze cultural production like stories, art, and political organization.

+Graded 1-10

Discussion Board (10 total)

For each class day, you will post a reflection on the core thesis, question, or examples used in one reading. For some readings we will include a prompt, which you should respond to, but if no prompt is given, you are responsible for posting a reflection on the reading. You are expected to post a total of 10 reflections over the course of the semester.

+Graded Complete/Incomplete, total of 10 posts

Keyword Essay (1 total)

Select a keyword that we have studied this semester (i.e. Indigenous, Abiyala, dispossession, Rights, Latin America, etc.) and write a 500-word essay that contextualizes the development of the concept, its major proponents, how it has evolved over time, and its main goals in the field of culture, politics, and art.

+Graded 1-10

DUE: November 12, 2025 via BS

Attendance Policy

More than three absences during the course of the semester will result in the reduction of a letter grade (i.e. from an A- to a B-). There is no need to email about excused vs. unexcused absences, all of them count toward this limit. Please do not email doctor's notes.

Grading scheme

A95-100; A-94-90; B+89-86; B85-83; B-82-80; C+79-76; C75-73; C-72-70; D+69-65; D54-58; F0-57 [I do not round grades, up or down. Do not ask, please.]

Course Schedule

Part I: Indigenous, Abiayala, Dispossession, Rights

Week 1. **Indigenous and Abiayala**

August 25. **Indigenous**

Course Introduction

Yásnaya Aguilar Gil, “We Were Not Always Indigenous,” *Adi Magazine* (2022)

August 27. **Abiayala**

Emil’ Keme, “Invisible No More. Abiayala and Indigenous Liberation,” *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* (2023)

Ailton Krenak, “Of Dreams and the Earth,” in *Momentum: Art & Ecology in Contemporary Latin America*, eds. Katzenstein, del Carmen Carrión, and Turner, New York: MoMA, 2024, pp. 565-569.

Week 2. **Dispossession**

September 1. No Class. Labor Day Holiday.

September 3. **Dispossession**

Giovanni Batz, “The Four Disposessions: Invasion, Historical Maya Displacements, and Extractivist Violence in Guatemala” *LASA Forum* 55:1 (2024): 16-21.

+Practice Quiz

Week 3. **Rights?**

September 8. United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

September 10. United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

Week 4. **“Latin America” and Race**

September 15. **“Latin America”**

“The Colonial Foundations,” in *Modern Latin America*, eds. Peter H. Smith, James N. Green, and Thomas E. Skidmore, pp. 16-44.

September 17. **Racism**

Walter Mignolo, “The Americas, Christian Expansion, and the Modern/Colonial Foundation of Racism,” in *The Idea of Latin America*, pp. 1-50.

+Quiz 1

Part II: Case Studies

Case Study 1. Rights and Resistance in “Mexico”

Week 5. **Resistance and Rebellion**

September 22. **Resistance**

“Resistance and Rebellion,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures* (2006)

September 24. **Rebellion**

Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, “Demands at the Dialogue Table” (1994)

Week 6. Uprising and Human Rights

September 29. **Uprising**

Marián Peres Tsu, “A Tzotzil Chronicle of the Zapatista Uprising” (1994-1998)

October 1. **Human Rights**

Shannon Speed, “Introduction: Human Rights and Chiapas in the Neoliberal Era,” in *Rights in Rebellion: Indigenous Struggle & Human Rights in Chiapas*, pp. 16-37.

+Quiz 2

Case Study 2: Museums, Memory, and Restitution in “Argentina”

Week 7. History

October 6. **Memory**

Lucio V. Mansilla, *A Visit to the Ranquel Indians* (1870), trans. Eva Gillies (1985): Chapter II (pp. 5-9) and Chapter III (pp. 9-14).

Carolyn R. Larson, *The Conquest of the Desert: Argentina's Indigenous Peoples and the Battle for History*. Introduction: “Tracing the Battle for History” (pp. 1-16).

October 8. **Display**

Carolyn R. Larson, “Magic in the Desert: Indigenous Bodies on Display in the Museo de La Plata, 1877-1906,” in *Our Indigenous Ancestors: A Cultural History of Museums, Science, and Identity in Argentina, 1877-1943*. Penn State UP, 2015, pp. 17-50.

Week 8: Damiana Kryygi

October 13. No Classes. Fall Break. Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 15.

Damiana Kryygi (2015), Dir. Alejandro Fernández Mouján (Watch part in class)

Part III. Fresh Banana Leaves: Indigenous Science and Environmentalism

Week 9:

October 20. Damiana Kryygi (continued)

Damiana Kryygi (2015), Dir. Alejandro Fernández Mouján (ctd).

+Quiz 3

October 22.

Jessica Hernández, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-40.

+Oct. 24 Last Day to Withdraw from individual courses (with “W” on transcript)

Week 10: Science

October 27.

Jessica Hernández, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, pp. 41-98.

October 29.

Jessica Hernández, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, 99-154.

+Quiz 4

Week 11: Indigenous Women and Conservation

November 3.

Jessica Hernández, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, pp. 155-210.

November 5.

Jessica Hernández, *Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes through Indigenous Science*, Chapter 8, pp. 211-241.

+Quiz 5

Part IV. Gender, Territory, Memory, Art

Week 12: Memory

November 10.

Fausto Reinaga, “Iconoclast and Prophet” (1970) [

November 12.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, “Horizons of Memory” (1984)

+Keyword Entry Due

Week 13: Gender, Territory

November 17. **Gender and Governance**

Gladys Tzul Tzul, “Indigenous Systems of Government: The Organization of the Reproduction of Life,” in *Momentum: Art & Ecology in Contemporary Latin America*, eds. Katzenstein, del Carmen Carrión, and Turner, New York: MoMA, pp. 517-527.

November 19. **Body-Territory**

Julieta Paredes Carvajal, “Territory Body-Body Territory,” in *Feminisms in Movement: Theories and Practices from the Americas*, eds. Livia de Souza Lima, Edith Otero Quezada, and Julia Roth. New York: Columbia UP, 2024, pp. 147-158.

Week 14. Art

November 24: **Bodies-Territory-Memory**

Seba Calfuqueo, “You Will Never Be a Weye” (2015)

Santiago Yahuarcani, “Cosmovisión Huitoto” (2022)

November 26: No Class. Thanksgiving/taking

Week 15

December 1. Review of concepts

+**Quiz 6**

December 3. Conclusions

No Final Exam

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, Stony Brook Union Suite 107, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information, visit Environmental Health and Safety.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Professions, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Technology Help

- **Digication**
- **General Technical Help for Students (including Brightspace)**
- **Respondus Lockdown Browser/Monitor**
- **Turnitin**
- **Turning Technologies**
- **Vevox**
- **VoiceThread**

Use of Artificial Intelligence, including Large Language Model systems (such as Chat GPT)

The use of AI, including LLMs such as (and including) Chat GPT is strictly prohibited. There is no issue, topic, idea, concept, reading, or activity in this class that will be improved by a student's use of AI. What is more, AI is destroying the planet. It is wasteful and hinders your critical thinking skills. In a course about Indigenous peoples, the use of AI runs counter to the ethical proposals we are engaging with, and will not be accepted at all, under any circumstances. Not even a little bit. At all. I'm serious.