

Fall 2020

Stony Brook University

Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature

College of Arts and Sciences

SPN 405 Issues in Hispanic Cultural Studies/SPN 532 Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hispanic Studies

This course satisfies the DEC category S3

This course satisfies the SBC category ESI, HFA+

Course Instructor: Joseph M. Pierce

Section: 01

Office Hours: Mon./Tues./Weds. 11am-12noon. (via Google hangout or email for appointment)

Instructor office: HUM 1139 (not using Fall 2020)

Instructor email: joseph.pierce@stonybrook.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Readings, viewings, and theoretical discussion of Spanish or Latin American culture with special focus on one or more issues (colonialism, imperialism, national identity, indigenism, subjectivity) as manifested in a specific cultural form or forms (testimonial literature, popular culture, cinema, novel, short story, poetry, television). May be repeated as the topic changes.

Course Topic

Hispanic Visual Cultures (Decolonial Visuality in Latin America)

Vision makes meaning out of the world. It can render intelligible the material realities that surround us, as it can impinge on those realities producing something more, something in excess of our capacity to comprehend, to believe, what we are seeing. This course is about those contradictions. We will interrogate visual cultures in the context of Latin America by asking how visuality stages and enacts the uneven power dynamics, and racial, gendered, and sexual economies that emerged over five centuries of colonial rule in the Americas. In doing so, this course will ask how Latin America is constituted through conflicting visual cultures; how the colonial gaze has endeavored to render Black and Indigenous subjects as objects of fascination and degeneracy; and how those same marginalized subjects have responded, resisted, and reshaped Latin American visuality through decolonial imaginaries that are rooted in history and which project new, future-oriented worlds.

Course Pre/co-requisites

Prerequisite: [SPN 395](#) or [SPN 396](#) or [SPN 397](#) or [SPN 398](#)

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce “visual culture” as an interdisciplinary form of analyzing the generation, reproduction, and adaptation of images in the context of Latin America—including Indigenous communities and Afro-diasporic communities, as well as immigrant communities in the United States.
- Contextualize relations between visual productions—in particular photography—across historical periods in Latin America. In so doing, question the use of visual tropes in the

production of particular types of populations (i.e. Indigenous, Afro-diasporic, criollo, and mestizo) in the context of political and economic developments in Latin America.

- Introduce methodological approaches to decoloniality (decolonial praxis) in relation to visual production, and thus, to the politics of image production.
- Develop critical writing and research skills regarding visual cultures; improve analytical vocabulary and critical awareness of archival materials and new digital media; apply these approaches via close readings and critical analyses.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Make Up Policy

- Attendance: What does it mean to “attend class” online, during a pandemic? I would like to discuss this in class with all of you and come to an agreement about what we expect of each other. I will not be taking attendance this semester in the normal sense. I will be asking students to complete a participation checklist, which includes your own description of attendance and participation. You are empowered to make choices about how you log on to class and under what conditions. However, the optimal situation (of course this depends on many factors) includes logging on via zoom during class time, turning your video on, and actively participating in class. Not everyone will be able to do this all the time. I understand that, which is why I am asking you to describe your own attendance and participation in this course.
- Late Work: You may turn in ONE assignment late per semester with no questions asked. In order to invoke this right, you MUST email me before the assignment is due and inform me that you need to take your one-time exception. I know that “life happens”. This is why I have this exception. To use it, you do not need to explain anything, simply state that you are taking the “life happens” exception. Other than that, no late work will be accepted. At. All. If you will be missing class for a university approved/sponsored event or religious/spiritual holiday, you must turn in your assignment on the due date or before. Because there are no exams or quizzes, there will be no makeups in this course.

Description and schedule of Required Readings and/or Assignments.

Image Reflections: One goal of this course is to construct our own “visual culture”. To do that, we will debate the pros and cons of different social media platforms (Blackboard, Wordpress blog, Instagram, Pinterest, tumblr, etc.) at the beginning of the course, and weighing issues of accessibility and connectivity, decide as a class which platform we would like to use for the following assignment. In 100 words (exactly) you will reflect on an image we study in class. Each reflection MUST BE EXACTLY 100 WORDS. This is an exercise in choosing elements of a text/image and writing about them with impact and economy. It is also an exercise in working within a formal restraint—100 words—and thus creating a textual block that is itself an image of an image. Each student will post 4 of these image reflections over the course of the semester. The assignment includes three components: 1) post an image (20 points); 2) post a 100-word reflection (60 points); 3) post at least one comment on another student’s image/reflection (20 points).

Short Essays: You will select an image from the Museo de la Plata (Argentina), Museo de Bellas Artes (Argentina), MOMA (USA), or Smithsonian NMAI (USA) that we have NOT studied in class, and you will provide a one-page description of the image (including its formal qualities), followed by a one-page analysis of its historical/cultural context (12 pt. double-spaced). Include the image on a cover page of your essay.

Cognitive Map: This is an exercise meant to help you visualize the academic conversations that are ongoing in the field of visual studies. You will construct a cognitive map of either A) a theoretical text, B) a historical text, or C) a visual/museological archive. We will be using <https://coggle.it/> to do this, a collaborative platform for organizing ideas. It may take some time for you to get the hang of it, so please plan accordingly. (Watch this [video](#) first). Each student will present their map during class in 10 minutes (timed!) as an introduction to one of that day's readings. Each map should be uploaded to the course Blackboard site before class. I will circulate a sign-up sheet at the beginning of the semester for this purpose. There are 34 different options for you to choose from between archives and critical texts. We will begin these presentations on 9/14 (after Labor Day). If you enter the course late and are not signed up, please let me know.

Annotated Bibliography: This is an exercise intended to help you identify and evaluate resources for your final essay. Each of the seven entries should include a brief rationale (3-4 sentences) for its use to your project. Each entry should answer: a) what is its main point of this text, and b) why are you using this text in your research? I will provide an example on Blackboard. Your Annotated Bibliography must include the following elements:

- 1) One historical text;
- 2) One book about the author, artist, generation, or artistic movement;
- 3) Four (4) peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters;
- 4) One book review (of a historical or theoretical text);
- 5) One theory text;
- 6) One dissertation;
- 7) One website/digital archive.

Note: It must be rigorously formatted according to MLA style. I will take off points if this is wrong. And I will shake my head in disappointment.

Final Essay: Rather than a traditional final essay, SPN 405 students will create a 10-image visual essay/zine. This builds on the 100-word image reflections that we have done throughout the semester. Each visual essay/zine will have 10 images and 100 words per image. Thus, 1,000 words total. But these must be visual essays that engage with all of the previous material, including the outside research done for the cognitive map and the annotated bibliography. This is a creative assignment done on the basis of previous research.

Participation: This course will be taught online. It is synchronous, which means that the class time itself is the main mode of instruction for the course. Class time will be devoted to analyzing the assigned texts, group and small group discussion, and interfacing with the instructor about these works. I will try my best to ensure that our time together is productive. To that end, please avoid distractions during class (i.e. social media). I understand that these are difficult times. They

are difficult for me as well. We will all be understanding with each other as we try to do the best we can.

I will provide each student with a participation checklist at the beginning of the course. You will keep track of your own participation, and you will turn in the checklist at the end of the semester along with a self-evaluation of your participation in class. In this course, participating means three specific things: 1) each student will post one question they have about an assigned reading BEFORE EACH CLASS in the course Discussion Board (this will help guide our class discussions); 2) post your 100-word reflections before class when they are due; and 3) comment on at least one other student's 100-word reflection there. As noted above, you will keep track of this work and will evaluate yourself at the end of the semester.

To receive an A in participation you should come to class prepared and on time, ask questions in the chat and/or on Blackboard, and provide insightful commentary about course materials. Students who come to class but intervene infrequently should receive a B. Those who come to class sometimes and seldom intervene should receive a C. Students who arrive unprepared or late and don't participate should receive a D. An F will be given to students who stop attending class or rarely if ever intervene. You will grade yourself according to these criteria.

Workload: I aim for you to read approximately 50 pages per week in this class. Some of these readings are dense, and will require careful, slow reading. By limiting the amount of reading in this course, I want you to be able to engage deeply with fewer readings. However, if more reading is assigned, then I ask that you identify main concepts and arguments, reading the entire text, but not stopping to interrogate the details (in this case we will discuss them in class). According to recent [studies](#) in student productivity, this quantity and mode of reading should take you about 5 to 6 hours per week outside of class. That is what I expect.

Languages: This is an advanced-level Spanish course. You will note, however that half of the readings are in Spanish and half are in English. This is due to the availability of certain texts (i.e. Kopenawa) in English but not Spanish, my choice to assign the original rather than a translation (i.e. Mirzoeff and Mignolo), and to the academic publishing industry and how it privileges "theoretical" publications in English over other languages. If we are discussing a text that was written/published in English, I ask that you write about it in Spanish, though you may cite the original when needed. Please note that the expression of ideas in class should be done in Spanish.

Diversity: I am committed to constructing a course according to anti-racist and anti-patriarchal citational practices. Of the 24 main readings, 12 are by men and 12 are by women; 6 are Indigenous and/or Black, and 17 are by non-Black and non-Indigenous writers.

Exams

No exams in this course.

Assignments

4 Image Reflections 20%

2 Short Essays 20%

1 Cognitive Map 10%

1 Annotated Bibliography 10%
1 Final Visual Essay 20%
Participation 20%

Grade System

A = 94-100 B+ = 87-89 B- = 80-83 C = 74-76 D+ = 60-69 F = 0-59
A- = 90-93 B = 84-86 C+ = 77-79 C- = 70-73 D = 60-65

*I do not round up grades. Don't ask. Seriously.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Each week will include theoretical, historical, and/or critical texts, and one visual archive, selection, or text. It is your responsibility to carefully and thoughtfully read each of these forms of expression by class time each week. Before each class, you must post at least one question per week (about any reading or text) on the course Blackboard discussion board. For other important dates, see the [University Calendar](#).

Week 1. 8/24 Viral Visuality: Seeing the World Now
Instagram, Memes, and Tik-Tok (how do you produce/consume images?)

Week 2. 8/31 Visuality from Abya Yala
Pozo Menares, Gabriel and Margarita Canio Llanquinao, eds. *Wenumapu: Astronomía y Cosmología Mapuche*. Ocho Libros, 2014.
Chapter 1, "Küyen: Luna," pp. 40-63

Kopenawa, Davi and Bruce Albert. *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*. Trans. Nicholas Elliott and Alison Dundy. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, University Press, 2013.
Chapter 3, "The Xapiri's Gaze," pp. 34-54.
Chapter 23, "The Spirit of the Forest," pp. 381-400.

Week 3. 9/7 No class/Labor Day

Week 4. 9/14 Decolonial Visual Studies

Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia. *Ch'ixin Akax Utxiwa: Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores*. Tinta Limón, 2010.
"Sociología de la Imagen. Una visión desde la historia colonial andina," pp. 19-51.

Barriendos, Joaquín. "La colonialidad del ver. Hacia un nuevo diálogo visual intepistémico" *Nómadas* 35 (2011), pp. 13-29.

León, Christian. "Visualidad, medios y colonialidad." In *Desenganche: Visualidades y sonoridades otras*, edited by La Tronkal: grupo de trabajo geopolíticas y prácticas simbólicas. Quito: La Tronkal, 2010, pp. 34-52.

Week 5. 9/21 “Visual Studies” and “Latin America”

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Routledge, 2009.
“Introduction: Global Visual Cultures: Paradox and Comparison,” pp. 1-16.
“‘1492’: Expulsions, Expropriations, Encounters,” pp. 45-61.

Darío Yepes, Rubén. “Arte y política: La perspectiva latinoamericana de los estudios visuales.” *El Ornitorrinco Tachado* 10: 2019, pp. 21-33.

+Carlos Martiel (performances)

Image Reflection 1 Due

Week 6. 9/28 Maps...

Mignolo, Walter. *The Idea of Latin America*. Blackwell, 2005.
Ch. 1, “The Americas, Christian Expansion, and the Modern/Colonial Foundation of Racism,” pp. 1-50.

+Instagram: @DecolonialAtlas, @ndn.o, #LandBack,

Image Reflection 2 Due

Week 7. 10/5 ...Monsters, and Marvels

Davies, Surekha. *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps and Monsters*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
Ch. 3, “Spit-roasts, barbecues and the invention of the Brazilian Cannibal,” pp. 65-108.

Carpentier, Alejo. “Lo barroco y lo real maravilloso.” In *Ensayo Cubano del siglo XX*. Ed. Rafael Hernández y Rafael Rojas. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002. 333-356.

+Lino Arruda, *Monstrans: Experimenting with Hormones* (graphic novel)

Short Essay 1 Due

Week 8. 10/12 Sebastián Calfuqueo

*Mapuche visual artist Sebastián Calfuqueo will visit our class. The discussion will revolve around their work and will be led by students.

Recommended:

Wake, Elanor. “The Dawning Places: Celestially Defined Land Maps, *Títulos Primordiales*, and Indigenous Statements of Territorial Possession in Early Colonial Mexico.” In *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes*. Ed. Gabriela

Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014, pp. 202-236.

Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
Chapter 4. "A Fish-Eye Episteme: Seeing Below the River's Colonization," pp. 91-109.

+Sebastián Calfuqueo: Video work

Week 9. 10/19 Photography and Modernity (I) Truths and Racial Fictions

Penhos, Marta. "Las imágenes de frente y de perfil, la 'verdad' y la memoria. De los grabados del Beagle (1839) y la fotografía antropológica (finales del siglo XIX) a las fotos de identificación en nuestros días." *Mem.soc.* 17:35 (2013), pp. 17-36.

Poole, Deborah. *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
Chapter 5, "Equivalent Images," pp. 107-141.

+ Galería Whitcomb, Martín Chambi Archive

Image Reflection 3 Due

Week 10. 10/26 Photography and Modernity (II) Men, Militias, and Museums

Tell, Verónica. *El lado visible: Fotografía y progreso en la Argentina a fines del siglo XIX*. San Martín, Argentina: UNSAM EDITA, 2017.
Chapter 1, "Coordenadas de espacio y tiempo. Registros (y ficciones) de la expansión territorial," pp. 21-64.

Kerr, Ashley Elizabeth. *Sex, Skulls, and Citizens: Gender and Racial Science in Argentina (1860-1910)*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. 2020.
Chapter 3, "Displaying Gender: Indigenous Peoples in the Museo de La Plata," pp. 66-99.

+Museo de La Plata archive

Image Reflection 4 Due

Week 11. 11/2 Photography and Modernity (III) The ethnographic gaze

Giordano, Mariana. *Discurso e imagen sobre el indígena chaqueño*. La Plata: Al Margen. 2004.
Chapter 2, "La imagen visual sobre el indígena chaqueño," pp. 71-113.

Grandin, Greg. "Can the Subaltern Be Seen? Photography and the Affects of

Nationalism.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84:1 (2004): 83-111.

Masotta, Carlos. “El atlas invisible. Historias de archivo en torno a la muestra ‘Almas Robadas-Postales de Indios’ Buenos Aires, 2010)” *Corpus: Archivos virtuales de la alteridad americana* 1:1 (2011): 1-31.

Short Essay 2 Due

Week 12. 11/9 Photography and Modernity (IV) *Cartes de visite*, Intimacy, and the Family

Pierce, Joseph M. *Argentine Intimacies: Queer Kinship in an Age of Splendor, 1890-1910*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2019.

Chapter 3: “Spectral Desires: Queering the Family Album,” pp. 137-188.

González-Stepan, Beatriz. “Cuerpos in/a-propiados: carte-de-visite y las nuevas ciudadanías en la pardocracia venezolana postindependentista.” *Mem.soc* 17:34 (2013): 14-32.

Annotated Bibliography Due (upload to Blackboard)

Week 13. 11/16 From Image to Mediation

Martín Barbero, Jesús. *De los medios a las mediaciones: comunicación, cultura y hegemonía*. México: Gustavo Gilí, 1987.

“Los métodos: de los medios a las mediaciones,” pp. 203-260.

Week 14. 11/23 No Class/Thanksgiving Break

Week 15. 11/30 Mediated Mobilities

Reinoza, Tatiana. “Immigrant Invisibility and the Post-9/11 Border in Sandra Fernandez’s *Coming of Age*,” *Alter/Nativas: Latin American Cultural Studies Journal* 7 (2017). Online.

Julio Salgado, YouTube series, “Osito”

Week 16. 12/7 Contemporary Controversies

Emiliano Zapata después de Zapata, (selected journalism)

Final Essays due on the day of our Final Exam (12/14).

CLASS RESOURCES

Blackboard

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT CENTER STATEMENT

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Student Accessibility Support Center, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, 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 Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities>.

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 Technology & Management, 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 University 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.

You need to join a zoom meeting every class through BB. Please see instructions here: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/zoom/students>

All sessions will be recorded. In case of internet disruption, technology failure or any other problem to connect synchronously, the material will be posted on Blackboard and will be available for the rest of the semester.

FOR IT SUPPORT: Students can visit the Keep Learning website at <https://sites.google.com/stonybrook.edu/keeplearning> for information on the tools you need for alternative and online learning. Need help? Report technical issues at <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm> or call 631-632-2358.

To access mental health services, call Counseling and Psychological Services at 631-632-6720; Counselors are available to speak with 24/7.

If your instructor fails to connect to one of your weekly meetings, there are no new announcements on Black Board and you cannot reach him/her/they by email after 48 hours (weekdays), please email the department chair daniela.flesler@stonybrook.edu.

