OLLI FALL II, 2021

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES II

Topics in Latin American Studies

COURSE AGENDA

Overview of the radical transformation of epistemological and methodological assumptions in Latin American Studies from the end of the 1980s to the present.

Week 1 - Race & Indigeneity in LAS

Week 2 - Afro-Diasporic Religions in the Caribbean

Week 3 - U.S. Imperialism and Hegemony in Latin America

Week 4 - The Subaltern: Hegemony, Cultural Studies, and Decoloniality

Week 5 - LAS Approaches: Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

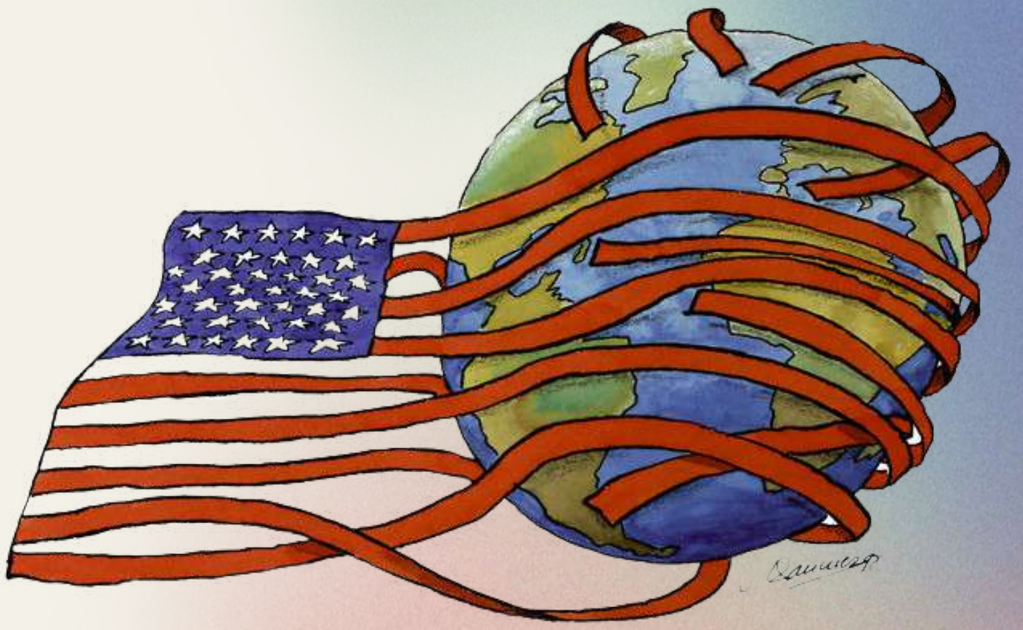
Week 6 - LAS Approaches: Affect and Post-Hegemony

CrashCourse World History: American Imperialism

Cândido Portinari
Discovery of the Land, 1941
Mural decorating the Hispanic Foundation at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

VOCABULARY

- **imperialism** – the expansion of power from a core to a peripheral region through military and cultural means, which is to say through violent, genocidal means
- **hegemony** – the dominant notion, power, or narrative of a given society; first developed by Marxist Antonio Gramsci as 'cultural hegemony,' by which he meant the dominant ideas of culture in a particular society (what Marx calls the ***superstructure***)
- **coloniality** – the persistence of the relation between the colonized and colonial power in all aspects of life, culture, language, and historical narrative
- **glocalization** – coined by sociologist Roland Robertson, the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems; Glocalization indicates that the growing importance of continental and global levels is occurring together with the increasing salience of local and regional levels
- **modernity** – the Modern era, as characterized philosophically in the notion that all of human history is a narrative of progress; opposed to ***dialectic materialism***, which argues all of history is characterized by shifts in class power
- **Anglo** – British/English
- **Spanish** – of Spain
- **Hispanic** – Spanish-speaking/writing



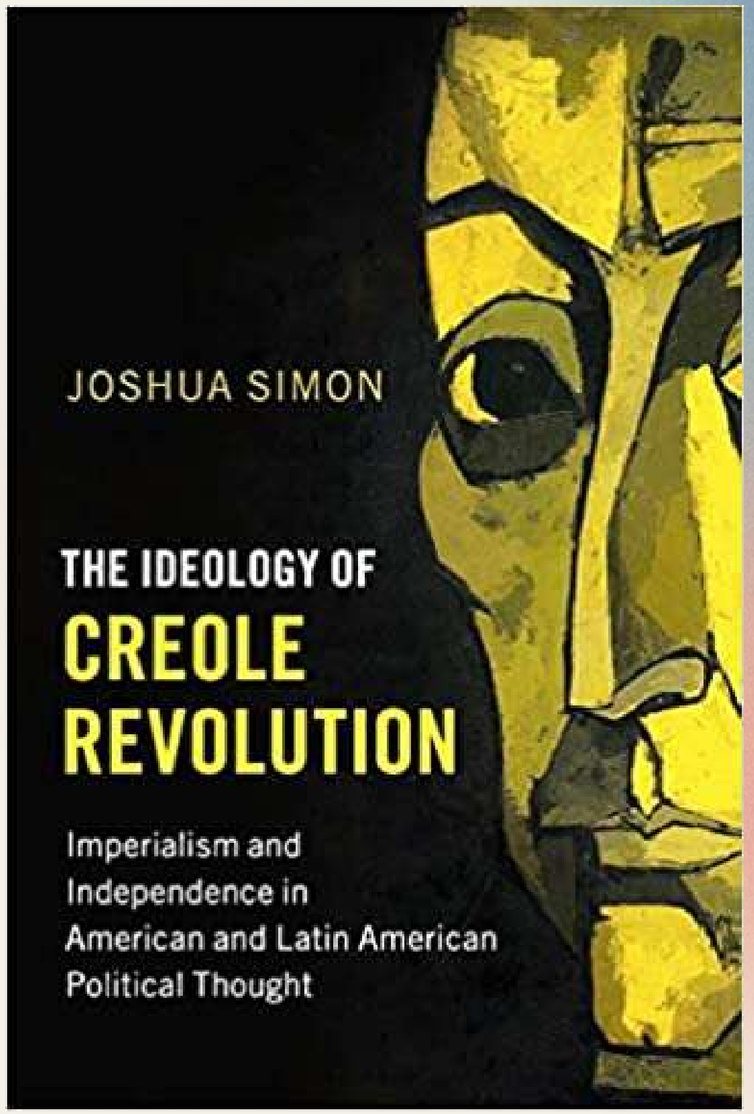
"INVERSE COLONIALITY"

***Imperialism and the Wider Atlantic : Essays on the Aesthetics, Literature, and Politics of Transatlantic Cultures* (2017), edited by Tania Gentic, and Francisco LaRubia-Prado**

- Alejandro Mejías-López has shown… an approach [that] views Latin America as the constant underdog to a history of modernization and progress from which it is repeatedly excluded. His book therefore seeks to trace what he calls an "inverted conquest." In that model, the framework of coloniality exists, but, like "glocalization," it can work both ways to interrupt a hierarchical transmission of power from metropolis to colony. He focuses on the development of the Spanish American literary movement known as modernismo to show how Latin American poets like Rubén Darío reformed the Spanish language in a way that, in turn, reformed the poetry of Spain as well."
- The constant flow and change that occurs in any cross-cultural, translinguistic, or transnational interaction also suggests the importance of not attempting to produce a single broad transatlantic frame for comparative study, but rather engaging in localized examinations of certain phenomena that evidence the mixing of frames we mentioned above. The result is not what Julio Ortega has called a "post-theoretical" approach that seems to revalorize the notion of empirical information— itself a falling back into certain Eurocentric understandings of knowledge— but rather readings of the tensions that emerge at particular moments of cultural exchange to understand how transculturations, impositions, or subversions of discursive and material power occur locally. Much of the push for a postcolonial perspective from Latin American scholars has been directed not just at the English-language colonialists who, focusing on India and Africa, routinely leave Latin America out of discussions of what it means to be colonized or subaltern; but at peninsular Spanish scholars who continue to view Spain and Spanish America solely as Hispanic, an extension of Spanish culture. 9 This difference even among historians and literary scholars working within the same field not only questions the idea of a pan-Latin or pan-Hispanic identity or ideology, but also the possibility of theorizing the Atlantic from a singularly Hispanic or singularly AngloEuropean view.

ANTI-IMPERIAL IMPERIALISM

"As they grappled with the philosophical and political dilemmas imposed by their contradictory institutional position, Creole political theorists converged upon an ideology that was **both anti-imperialist and imperialist** at the same time. Here again, some terminological reflection is in order. Michael Doyle's definition of **empire** – "relationships of political control imposed by some political societies over the effective sovereignty of other political societies" – is a common touch point, admirable for its ability to capture a wide range of cases without describing "all forms of international inequality" as ipso facto imperial. But Doyle's parsimonious concept does not convey some of the connotations that "empire" has carried in the history of political thought, and, by describing empire as a relationship between two or more "political societies," Doyle's discerning definition rules out patently imperial forms of territorial expansion that abolish borders and erase distinctions by eliminating or assimilating conquered communities.



ANTI-IMPERIAL IMPERIALISM

***The Ideology of Creole Revolution: Imperialism and Independence in American and Latin American Political Thought* (2017), Joshua Simon**

- For all their assimilative effects, empires are "polities that maintain distinction and hierarchy as they incorporate new people … the concept of empire presumes that different people will be governed differently." Not all empires are colonial, settling specially privileged metropolitan émigrés in conquered territories amongst indigenous or other populations. But social stratification and legal pluralism, either within conquered territories or between conquered territories and the metropole, is characteristic of imperial rule. In all these senses of the term, **the ideology of Creole Revolution was anti-imperial**. The polities that Creole political theorists sought first to reform and then to destroy were empires, products of territorial conquests that united widely separated communities under a single, overarching authority. It was precisely the imperial features of those polities – the inequalities that they imposed upon peripheral populations – that formed the central object of Creoles' condemnation and eventual case for independence.
- However, the ideology of Creole Revolution was also imperial. Creole political theorists aimed, from the outset, to preserve the privileges that, as the descendants of Europeans, they enjoyed at the expense of Indigenous and African Americans, often making the threat posed to these privileges by continued submission to Europe an important part of their calls to arms. They designed constitutions with an eye to containing the conflicts that they knew their still-stratified colonial societies might produce. To this end, they adopted modes of organizing authority over immense territories and dividing powers within central governments modeled on the constitutions of their imperial predecessors. And they defended efforts to expand their new states' territories beyond existing borders and to consolidate control over previously unincorporated populations as means of spreading what they regarded as a uniquely enlightened way of living under political institutions animated by ideals they had discovered in the course of fighting for their freedom.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE

"Denaturalizing the Monroe Doctrine: The rise of Latin American legal anti-imperialism in the face of the modern US and hemispheric redefinition of the Monroe Doctrine" (2020), Juan Pablo Scarf

- The Monroe Doctrine was originally formulated in 1823 as a US foreign policy principle of non-intervention of Europe in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere, but in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century it was redefined in relation to both the hemispheric policy of Pan-Americanism and the expansionist and interventionist policies of the US in Central America and the Caribbean. Indeed, it became a central subject of controversy among international lawyers across the Americas alongside the proliferation of supporters and anti-imperialist critics of the doctrine in this period. Within the broader Latin American anti-imperialist traditions, a distinct legal and diplomatic trend emerged between 1880 and 1933 that was especially concerned with the nature and application of the Monroe Doctrine as an elastic and flexible principle to legitimize US interventions in the region.
- In the context of the Seventh Pan-American Conference (1933) held in Montevideo, the principles of non-intervention, sovereign equality, and state independence were famously institutionalized. This achievement has typically been portrayed as a direct derivation of the debates over the codification of American international law within the Inter-American System.1 However, this article argues that this Latin American anti-imperialist legal tradition, which gained prominence following the Mexican Revolution and reached its peak in the 1920s, made a pioneering contribution to the development of anti-interventionist legal approaches in the region, anticipating the achievements of Montevideo before they became central within the Pan-American Conferences.

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- Latin American legal anti-imperialism emerged hand-in-hand with the institutionalization of international law in the region. Yet, these jurists moved beyond the dominant legal habitus of the elites of their own countries, that is, the legal field and the field of power, and engaged with the broader intellectual field and, in certain cases, with the political transformations taking place after the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, the legal habitus among the emerging disiciplinary legal community in the US and Latin America tended to be supportive of both the Monroe Doctrine as a hemispheric multilateral principle and the US-led Pan-American movement, and advocated the construction of a common continental tradition of American international law.
- Among the figures involved in this movement, grouped around the American Institute of International Law (AIIL), were Alejandro Alvarez, Luis María Drago, and Baltasar Brum. By contrast, Pereyra, Fabela, Roig de Leuchsenring, and even Sáenz Pena and Quesada expanded ˜ the horizons of their approach to international law as a discourse embedded of public intellectual and political concerns, rather than a technocratic and scientific language of a selected elite. In certain cases their work had a greater impact among anti-imperialist intellectuals than on international lawyers and politicians. Those who were attached to the dominant legal habitus of the AIIL, notably Alvarez, adopted a monist solidarist approach to international law in an attempt to integrate US and Latin American legal values, and even considered US values as the most fundamental for the Americas. However, most of these anti-imperialist legal figures sought to create grounds for a more inclusive pluralist political understanding of international law; they maintained a sense of solidarity with Latin American small ‘outlaw states’ in the face of the tendency of ‘great powers to intervene on behalf of the international community’.

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- The convergences between the emerging discourse of international law and anti-imperialist ideas contributed to forging a Latin American tradition of legal anti-imperialism, which had a perdurable influence on Latin American international thought. ...Pereyra, Roig de Leuchsenring, and Fabela, as well as Quesada and Sáenz Pena, belonged to a ˜ common and consistent Latin American anti-imperialist tradition. Firstly... they regarded the usages of the Monroe Doctrine as an elastic and exceptional principle that posed a threat to Latin American territorial integrity and sovereignty. They argued that it did not have any legal status and was also invoked in the name of both unilateral interventions and Pan-American co-operation towards the Latin American nations, generating enthusiasm and confusion among some Latin American figures, such as Alvarez. Secondly, although Pereyra, Fabela and Roig de Leuchsenring and Quesada and Sáenz Pena belonged to Mexico, Cuba, and Argentina and their ˜ own countries were affected in different ways by US interventions, they proposed a legal and regional approach beyond the concerns of their own countries.
- Pereyra, Fabela, and Roig de Leuchsenring, as well as Sáenz Pena and Quesada, took a ˜ step back from the dominant legal habitus of the AIIL and the Pan-American movement, and established instead close contacts with public intellectuals, the political transformations that emerged from the Mexican Revolution, and some of the new political parties and movements of the early-twentieth century, adopting a distinctive Latin American legal anti-imperialist posture. As such, they sought to redefine and deploy international law in the name of weak nations. They can be regarded as legal revisionists in that, unlike the jurists engaged within the AIIL and the Pan-American movement, they identified a long-standing problem in US attachment to the Monroe Doctrine as an elastic and exceptional principle in Latin America.

"THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF U.S. IMPERIALISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA" BY MICHAEL HENDRICKS

- Academic inquiry into United Fruit has documented the company's imperialistic strategies throughout Central America —"its political meddling, repressive labor practices, heavy-handed relationships with independent farmers, and ecological fallout" (17). For example, when its investments in Guatemala were threatened by the left-leaning democratically elected President Jacobo Árbenz's land redistribution programs, it requested assistance from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and CIA Director Alan Dulles, both of whom had strong business ties with the company. The Dulles brothers used their influence in the government to engineer a CIA-directed coup that overthrew Árbenz in 1954 and led to a 36-year civil war and decades of state-sponsored genocide. The U.S. government, in July 1954, helped install as president Carlos Castillo Armas, a dictator who would protect United Fruit's investments and U.S. economic interests. It used Honduras as its headquarters for the coup because United Fruit had assisted it in establishing Honduras as a captive nation under the United States. Throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, Honduras continued to be of strategic importance to the United States for securing and protecting its economic and political interests in Central America.
- His narrative demonstrates how the operation of U.S. empire in the region shaped the minds of those involved as "white 'temperate' Americanness and nonwhite 'tropical' otherness were at once constituted and challenged" (17). Centering the U.S. corporation as part of a wider cultural history of U.S. imperialism, his study significantly contributes to the literature on the role of the corporations in colonialism and neocolonialism.

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- Although United Fruit has been extensively studied, most scholarship on it has largely ignored, except in passing (Colby, 2011), the day-to practices of its white employees and their relationship with the company's management. Martin achieves originality by thoroughly documenting the stories of employees in its colonial enclaves at the turn of the twentieth century. *Banana Cowboys* demonstrates how technological and organizational innovations during the company's beginning years in Central America limited the effects of physical distance for U.S. citizens (mainly white male employees) working in the region.
  - He describes the "banana cowboy" as "a tough, efficient herder of fruit, a white-collar employee, by the 1920s usually college-educated, who worked on the land, wore a Stetson, rode a horse or mule, often carried a pistol, and managed nonwhite laborers" (9).
  - He discusses the emergence of this figure as a kind of "cultural conscription." With an "ethos of strenuous masculinity" (14) structured in terms of the imagery of the U.S. Western frontier, corporate colonial medicine and the quest for knowledge by white employees helped shape United Fruit's goal of white supremacy in its division of labor throughout its colonial projects.
  - Company executives assumed that Central Americans were predisposed to promiscuity, alcoholism, violence, and poor hygiene and therefore less capable of managing company operations and more susceptible to disease.
  - Martin also highlights other ways in which it created a "custom" color bar between its white and nonwhite workers, examining, for example, the medical projects that solidified the racial differences within its workforce. While many of the company's white employees supported its prejudices and carried out its will, some, despite their privileged status within the company's division of labor and racial ideology, clashed with management over employment benefits. Additionally, some maintained interests in knowledge generation in archaeology, ethnology, and the natural sciences that conflicted with the company's desire for white supremacy in the region.

"THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF U.S. IMPERIALISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA" BY MICHAEL HENDRICKS

- In *The Long Honduran Night*, Frank demonstrates how Honduras, at the turn of the twenty-first century, remained captive to the United States and its economic interests. Honduras had large export processing zones largely controlled by U.S. companies, and "mining corporations, especially from Canada, were moving in on mineral resources. Corporate interests flourished as neoliberal economic policies . . . promoted the elimination of basic governmental services and privatizations of state-owned entities" (19). However, during the early 2000s it "enjoyed a brief hiatus in which to exercise a relatively greater degree of sovereignty . . . and used that to open up democratic processes, institute more progressive policies, and establish greater independence from the United States" (18). Yet, this increased sovereignty was short- lived. When Barack Obama became U.S. president in 2009, his administration believed that the "pink tide" of leftist governments in Latin America jeopardized the neoliberal policies that the United States had worked so hard to impose on the region.
- Thus, Honduras was caught in the crosshairs as the U.S. sought to regain its dominance over the region and to protect its economic interests. Frank says that the United States targeted President Manuel Zelaya because he had the least political capital of the Latin American leftist leaders. He came from the business elite and assumed the presidency in 2006 as a conservative, but he eventually abandoned the predominant economic and political ideologies associated with his landed socioeconomic status and shifted to the left to help the country's poor. He forged Honduras's membership with the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA), which fostered international cooperation among Latin American and Caribbean countries. His government also instituted extensive social welfare programs that reduced poverty by about 10 percent. Zelaya's policies challenged the recent trend toward neoliberalism in the region, and this threatened the economic interests of elites, corporations, and the United States. Frank points out that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton applauded "the success of a military coup in Honduras—throwing U.S. policy back to the twentieth century, when the United States armed and celebrated vicious Latin American dictatorships" (18).

"THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF U.S. IMPERIALISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA" BY MICHAEL HENDRICKS

- She reports that, the night before the coup, top Honduran military officials—some of whom had received training at Fort Benning, Georgia—attended a party hosted by the U.S. embassy. Additionally, the commander of U.S. forces in Honduras, Kenneth Rodriguez, left the party to meet with General Romeo Vásquez Velázquez, the leader of the coup. Soto Cano Joint Air Base in Honduras played a pivotal role in the coup, hosting 600 U.S. soldiers on the evening of the coup and serving the Honduran military as a refueling station for the plane that escorted Zelaya to Costa Rica on June 28, 2009. The United States supported the coup because of its geopolitical interest in recovering its hegemony in the region and its desire to protect corporate interests.
- Frank asks, “What difference did the [Honduran] coup make?” (4). The book depicts the havoc that the Honduran elites, with support from the United States, wreaked on the country and its people to establish an illegitimate rule. Frank does an exceptional job in capturing how the postcoup regime ruined the country’s rule of law, diminished any space for free speech and association, infringed upon human rights (e.g., indigenous rights), destroyed the country’s welfare state, cemented its reputation for corruption, and contributed to the flight of thousands of Hondurans to the United States (see also Cantor, 2014; Hiskey et al., 2018). The six chapters of the book capture the stories of Hondurans, record Frank’s changing experiences over time, and provide twentyfirst-century insights on the legacy of U.S. intervention for the emerging democracies of Latin America
- In addition to the coup’s lasting impact on the Honduran people, Frank tells the important story of Hondurans’ organized and sustained resistance. She highlights the resistance’s connections to historical leftist social movements in Honduras and the region. Honduran activists created the National Popular Resistance Front, which, she suggests, was “built on decades of previous struggles to mount enormous resistance” (4). She discusses how small farmers, the indigenous Tolupan, and the Afro-indigenous Garifuna organized to reclaim or defend their lands from corporate predators. She also emphasizes how the women’s, LGBTI, and labor movements organized to challenge the elite establishment. Her narrative portrays the adversities and challenges that ordinary Hondurans tolerate daily and how they persist with hope in the struggle against inequality, injustice, and U.S. imperialism.

NEXT CLASS

The Subaltern: Hegemony, Cultural Studies, and Decoloniality