

Indigenous Encounters



CHID 280A
Autumn 2014

Professor Lucero | SLN 12343 | CHID Gateway, Encounters Across Cultures, I&S | Jointly with JSIS A 280 A | T/Th 11:30-1:20

The year 1492, according to historian Steve Stern, marked the dawn “of a day whose sun has not yet set.” Since the first encounters with Europeans Indigenous peoples have played critical roles in shaping ideas of civilization, nationhood, and progress. Despite the importance of Native peoples to political processes in the Americas, they have often been marginalized or even invisibilized in contemporary discussions of democracy and development. Too often, “Indians” are seen as anachronistic leftovers of a previous century, rather than central actors in contesting a remarkably long-lasting colonial order. This lecture course explores a broad set of encounters between peoples and ways of knowing. We will critically examine central concepts like “culture,” “gender,” “nature,” and “race” that shape the ways in which scholars, state officials, Indigenous leaders and intellectuals engage each other. We will delve into comparative political, sociological and ethnographic explorations of Indigenous struggles, and contemplate the implications of Indigenous resistance that has included the “post-modern” rebellion of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the emergence of transnational Indigenous intellectuals, and organized protests against mining and oil in the Amazon and Andes. We will also connect these struggles to Native issues in Washington State, Canada and the ways in which they form part of a dimension of global politics that is often far from front page news, but central to the workings of a world that is simultaneously modern and colonial.