

CHID 280A: Indigenous Encounters



Professor María Elena García | Autumn 2013 | Gateways | I&S | Encounters Across Cultures

The images of, ideologies about and insecurities over “Indians” have had a powerful impact all over the globe. In particular, since the first encounters between European and Native peoples in the territory now known as America (North, Central and South), the “imagined” Indian has played a critical role in shaping ideas of civilization, nationhood, and progress. This seminar explores these early discourses as well as more recent ones regarding the “return” of indigenous peoples to public life. Additionally, in this course we will interrogate important debates about the relationship between social science and indigenous struggles by exploring representations of indigenous peoples in film, literature, the media, and academic writings. We will delve into 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 in universities and cyberspace, and the controversial tactics of gaming among Native Americans in the U.S. Finally, in this seminar we will critically examine central concepts like “culture,” “gender,” and “race” that are part of the discourses of authenticity and survival that shape the ways in which scholars, state officials, and indigenous leaders and intellectuals engage each other.