

SPAN 8650: Latin American Indigenous Mobility and Immobility

Prof. Michelle Wibbelsman



Spring 2021

Wednesdays, 2:30-5:15 PM

Hybrid – Mendenhall Lab 174

This course explores Latin American Indigenous mobility and immobility, its broad connotations and its implications. As we consider the flow of people, goods, ideas and capital, students will gain nuanced perspectives on Indigenous migration, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism in historical and contemporary contexts as well as an appreciation for the unique social, political, economic and personal circumstances of Indigenous travel, displacement, relocation, diaspora and repeat-return migration. Attention to Indigenous people on the move challenges stereotypes that bracket these populations as sedentary, disconnected from the world and somehow “out of place” in the context of global mobility and participation. The asymmetrical rates and routes of Indigenous cultural products “crossings” versus human ability to move freely and easily, moreover, raises topics of immobility and marginalization. Beyond the literal interpretation of migration, we consider the im/mobility of indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and worldview and the structural/ideological exclusions that inform indigenous experience, expression, and ethnic resurgence. The course engages decolonial theories and methods that ultimately bring Indigenous Cosmovision into dialogue with notions of Cosmopolitanism under a Pluriversal model of interpretation, practice and radical change.

During the semester we will have opportunities to bring Indigenous guests into the conversation from their own perspectives and in their own words. The course will be taught in Spanish or English depending on the makeup of the class. Course papers will be accepted in English, Spanish or Portuguese.