

For students interested in the intersections of indigenous knowledge
and critical medical anthropology

DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN ETHNIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

WINTER 2019 QUARTER

**CHSTU 498A. Indigenous Knowledge
and Public Health in Mexican-Origin Communities**



Instructor. Devon G. Peña, Ph.D.

Email if you have Qs. dpena@uw.edu

Seminar meetings. T-Th 3:30 – 5:20PM DEN 259

Summary.

This research and writing seminar focuses on the knowledge produced by women, LGBTQ, and indigenous peoples (*qua* ethnomedicine) in Mexican-origin communities on both sides of the border. It emphasizes discourses and research relevant to the task of **'decolonizing' the medical anthropology of public health care disparities** through the lens of environmental justice methods and ethnomedical knowledge. This includes readings and studies of emerging work at the intersections of epigenetics, nutritional anthropology, 'womb ecology,' and feminist theories and practice. Focus will include readings from emergent voices in the study of women's reproductive health and caring labor (*parteras, doulas, curanderas, herbaleras, etc.*).

The aim of this advanced seminar is to collaborate as a group developing intellectual sources and critical methods and insights relevant to a practical critique of **neoliberal**

biopolitics and how these are shaping health care systems in Mexico and the U.S. We will also explore the prospects for democratic organizing of community-based solutions to address structurally-induced disparities affecting community and environmental health in México and Mexican origin communities in the U.S.

A variety of guest lecturers will offer knowledge gained from experiences on the ground and will include a *doula*, *herbalera*, and a doctoral student conducting a collaborative ethnographic study of grassroots community responses to neoliberal reforms impacting the public health care system in rural Mexico.

Course texts. No book purchases required. All required readings are embedded in the online course calendar. **Course requirements.** (1) Attendance and participation with keeping of weekly log of student's critical reading notes. (2) A 7-10 page mid-term reflection paper—basically a critical review essay of the course readings built from your weekly logs. (3) Final reflection paper. Ditto.

Sin pueblos sanos, democracia, ecología, y bienestar sufren.