

## UHI Spring 2023 Capstone Course

### INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT POCKETS OF RESISTANCE AND AFFIRMATION

#### *El Corredor Oaxaqueño & El Corredor Maya*



**Instructors:** *Gustavo Leclerc & Maite Zubiaurre*

Guest presenters: Michelle Vasquez (USC), Brenda Nicholas (UCI), Gaspar Rivera Salgado (UCLA Labor Center), Odilia Romero & Aurora Pedro (CIELO), Sara Z. Mijarez (Mundo Maya Foundation), Michelle Caswell (UCLA Information Studies).

TA: Daniel Rodriguez Mora

Location: Perloff Hall, room 1209B

Time: Wednesday, 9-11 am (there will be a second session of 50 minutes with the TA on a day/time determined together with the students)

#### **Introduction**

On October 9, 2022, the *Los Angeles Times* published an article exposing the racist and discriminatory views of high-level LA Latina/o politicians against African Americans and Indigenous Oaxacan people. This was a watershed moment in Los Angeles as it brought to the surface the well-known "secret" of the racist history and systemic discriminatory socio-cultural practices against Black and Indigenous people that had existed in Mexico and the rest of Latin America since European colonization in the sixteen century. This pervasive legacy from the

south has crossed the border and mixed with the systemic racism that has existed in the US since its beginnings.

In the last decades of the 20th century, many Indigenous people have been migrating to the US to escape the violence against them in their countries and search for better economic opportunities. Los Angeles has the largest Indigenous immigrant community in the US. Many of its members have settled, temporarily or permanently, in the W/PU neighborhood, making it the city's most culturally and linguistically diverse enclave. Over the years, their presence and identities have left an indelible mark on the physiognomy and character of the neighborhood. Westlake has become a safe haven to forge a new sense of community and a place to renew the cultural identity and traditions of Indigenous migrant people. Their rich tapestry of the various cultural practices is deeply woven into the fabric of the community, but factors like language, documentation status, trauma, and policing keep the stories outside public awareness. This Urban Humanities Capstone course aims to address some of these issues by focusing on three culturally and linguistically distinct Indigenous immigrant groups in the W/MP area: Zapotec, Mixtec, and Maya.

### **Outcomes:**

Oaxacan Indigenous immigrants are the largest Indigenous immigrant community in Los Angeles. Mayan immigrants from Mexico and Guatemala constitute the largest Maya community outside both countries, creating a strong presence in the city.

Working with Zapotec and Mixtec from Oaxaca and Maya from Guatemala and Mexico Indigenous immigrants, students will work in multi-disciplinary groups, conduct research and develop design ideas for two ethnic enclaves around the MacArthur Park area: *El Corredor Oaxaqueño* and *El Corredor Maya*. These urban enclaves function as small pockets of cultural and linguistic resistance and affirmation. In spatial terms, each corridor comprises the sidewalk, the curb, the street, and the walls/facades of the buildings in the block. All these urban elements work together to create a distinctive, powerful cultural expression in the neighborhood.

Working closely with Indigenous immigrant individuals and groups, UH students will be tasked with facilitating and co-creating design ideas that express, affirm, and celebrate the Indigenous immigrant experiences, stories, and traditions of the Oaxacan and Maya communities on their respective corridors. There will be two primary outcomes: 1) a Story Map where students will collect, archive, organize, and digitally display the relevant information related to the two corridors, and 2) produce a series of drawings, renderings, collages, and digital models (if

needed) of the design ideas, accompanied by a descriptive narrative of the design project. More detailed information regarding the two main outcomes will be sent in the next few weeks.