

COIL Curriculum Development Awards

Sample Application

UNC-Chapel Hill Applicant

Name: Gabriela Valdivia

Title: Professor

School/Department: College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Geography

Course

UNC-Chapel Hill course: GEOG 457: Rural Latin America

Semester taught: Fall 2022

Briefly describe the course and explain if the COIL activities will introduce a global element, or if the course already contains global content (200 words max):

GEOG 457 Rural Latin America traces the racial and gendered dimensions of how the expansion of extractive frontiers (e.g., hydrocarbons or agriculture) transforms environments across Latin America. Central questions include: How is the current expansion of resource frontiers entangled with rural wellbeing and environmental justice in Latin America? And how are the inequities generated by global capitalist expansion expressed and experienced, physically, emotionally, and politically? By the end of this course, students will be able to: (1) Recognize, identify, and describe how capitalist extractive practices shape rural spaces in Latin America; (2) Interpret and analyze data and information, using critical thinking and digital storytelling, on capital flows and societal interests; and (3) Design, build, and present student-created digital humanities projects that meaningfully communicate the relationship between human rights and wellbeing in rural Latin America. The course already contains global content, and the COIL activities add participatory activities and methods that emphasize the co-creation of digital projects and knowledge with students in Colombia. The course fulfills the Creative Expression, Practice, and Production (CEPP) learning outcomes; the Power, Difference, and Inequality (PDI) learning outcomes, and the Research and Discovery learning outcomes under the IDEAS in Action curriculum.

Course is for: Undergraduate and graduate students

Anticipated number of students involved: 24 UNC / 30 Partner Institution

Collaborating Faculty and Partner Institution

Collaborating faculty: Eloisa Berman Arevalo, Assistant Professor of History and Social Sciences

Partner institution: Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia

Previous engagement with faculty or institution:

Dr. Berman-Arévalo was Dr. Valdivia's PhD advisee between 2012 and 2018 at UNC. While at UNC, we co-organized the Social Cartographies of Latin America Working Group (2014-2016), which brought together Latin Americanist faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students at UNC through interactive workshops with guest presenters from Latin America. In 2020, we presented our collaborative work on ethnographic methods, extractive sectors, and black spaces in Colombia and Ecuador at the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers (CLAG), work that we are currently co-writing to submit for a peer-reviewed journal publication. Our on-going research interests in everyday life in Afro-diasporic sites of northern South America, where resource extraction is intensifying, informs our current interest in co-teaching on race and nature. The activities proposed in this application are the result of conversations and reflections carried out over the past year on the pedagogical potentials of inter-cultural collaborative research on questions of race, nature and power.

COIL Activity

Planned COIL activity (350 words max):

The COIL activities involve student-led research, creation of original content, and the designing and production of a collaborative digital humanities project (Story Maps) focused on race and environment in Latin America. Students will explore "everyday stories" of race and nature in Colombia, conducting research on three contemporary artistic/public figures whose advocacy focuses on race, racism, and environment (the final selection will be determined collaboratively by students and instructors).

The focus of the COIL activities is on "Race and Identity in Colombia," which is the focus of Dr. Berman Arevalo's course. Her course explores the contemporary operations of "race" and "identity politics," the racial dimensions of social differences and power imbalances in Colombia, and how identity is mobilized politically and can constitute the grounds for emancipatory projects. Throughout the course, students explore how race intersects with particular configurations of space and nature.

Students in both courses will conduct research and develop together, over a period of 4 weeks, products for a Story Map. Products may include: short interviews/videos; interviews; PhotoVoice; and zines. The inter-institutional collaboration will take place via Zoom and includes discussions of digital production, readings in small groups, and opportunities to write and offer feedback on content produced for the digital project.

Dr. Valdivia will work with UNC students (1) leading close readings of content that supports the semester long digital projects; (2) facilitating shared Zoom sessions with Dr. Berman Arevalo and her students to exchange knowledge about project status and content between the two groups; and (3) coordinating opportunities for sharing and dissemination of their creations.

Dr. Berman Arevalo will work with U del Norte's students (1) leading close readings of the topic content that support the proposed semester-long digital projects; (2) facilitating shared Zoom sessions with Dr. Valdivia and her students to develop informal reading groups and exchange knowledge about project status and content between the two groups; (3) coordinating opportunities for Uninorte students to comment on reading responses from other participating students; (4) and disseminating student's digital creations through Uninorte's communications office and social media.

Please provide any additional clarification. For example: If there is a language difference with students at the partner institution, how will this be managed to ensure cross-cultural student engagement? If there is a large difference in the number of students enrolled at UNC compared to the partner course, how will this be mitigated? (150 words max)

Both courses are taught in English and all reading materials will be in English with a few readings in both Spanish and English. Both instructors are fluid in both languages. In previous iterations of GEOG 457, many students also had advanced knowledge of Spanish, which expanded everyone's ability to learn from materials in both languages. In addition, Story Maps has been an accessible platform for intercultural communication in GEOG 457. I have previously collaborated with Latin American organizations to produce content for their digital communication using Story Maps. Through these partnerships, GEOG 457 students had to confront more explicitly their own U.S.-centered assumptions about how they study and write about places outside the U.S. As a result, the content they developed was richer. Collaborating with Colombian students will support this self-reflexivity and careful representation of difference. For both courses, student numbers are comparable.

Type of support requested: ___ Faculty ___ Graduate Student Faculty and Graduate Student

Describe the graduate student's role:

The graduate student will work with both instructors to develop digital humanities and social science research pedagogical approaches to be used in the course, e.g., best methods to gather and visualize data, and lead the facilitation of select meetings. The student will develop and send a survey to participants to ensure that we develop realistic interactive activities and an appropriate schedule of activities and timeline for required products and assignments. The graduate student will also coordinate small meetings with groups of students to support the development of their group projects. The graduate student will also develop a survey at the end of the experience to gather feedback and inform future collaborations.