Isadora Mota

DISMANTLING SLAVERY: BLACK ACTIVISM IN LATIN AMERICA

M/W 1:30-2:50

Racial protest has deep historical roots in the experiences of Africans and their descendants who resisted, reshaped, and eventually helped overthrow slavery in the Americas. Of the estimated eleven million people forcefully transported from Africa to the New World between 1500 and 1870, at least two thirds ended up settling in Latin America, where they engaged in a long and protracted process of liberation culminating in Brazilian abolition in 1888. This course explores the history of slave emancipation in places such as Cuba, Peru, Brazil, and Argentina all the while reflecting about its legacies in the present. Centering the black experience over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we will focus on how the enslaved navigated and contested a political landscape characterized by the rise of global capitalism, abolitionist discourses, and disputes over rights to citizenship. We start with the world created by the Haitian Revolution in the late eighteenth century, explore the multidirectional flows of black activism all over the Atlantic, and conclude at the dawn of the twentieth century with a discussion of the meanings of freedom in post-emancipation societies. Some of the topics covered by this course include: slave organizing, warfare and emancipation, public health, African ethnicity, and family life. Although focusing on Latin America, the class looks at a broad range of black experiences in comparative perspective, including the United States.