Race and Ethnicity in Romance Studies

Mediterranean Identities: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Pre-Modern World

The pre-modern Mediterranean was a space of imperial competition, cultural encounter, and material exchange. This course will examine the construction and reproduction of racial, ethnic, and religious identities in the pre-Modern Mediterranean. We will study the ways in which those forms of identity structured political, economic, and social life in an age of great Mediterranean Empires. On the one hand we will study discourses of racialization and religious difference that were constructed and deployed in the process of imperial formation and consolidation. On the other, we will focus on the experiences of ethno-religious minorities in Christian and Muslim-controlled lands to understand issues of tolerance and intolerance, conversion (forced and voluntary), assimilation, integration, and exclusion, religious persecution and expulsion, slavery and captivity, etc. We will study, for example, the ways in which identity markers such as religious practices and language were often concealed or exchanged in order to conform to ethnic and religious categories in an age of confessionalization. We will read poetry, chronicles, captivity narratives, travel literature, archival documents and polemical texts, to understand the complexities of race and religion in the pre-modern world.

ROMLANG 377.001  #26406
SPAN 373.005  #23758  Mayte Green-Mercado  MW 1-2:30pm