CSI 274 Cuba: Revolution and Its Discontents
Term: Fall 2016
Professors: M. Cerullo; R. Cardenas
Location: Franklin Patterson Hall 101; Wednesdays 1:00-3:50pm

This course will take an interdisciplinary approach (historical, cultural and geopolitical) to study the complex and contested reality of Cuba. Why does this small island nation fascinate, annoy, inspire and disturb so much of the rest of the world? Displacing images of Cuba circulating in US popular and official culture, we examine the constructions of race, gender, and sexuality that have uniquely defined the Cuban nation. We propose to locate Cuba as part of the Caribbean (with its history of settler colonialism, old plantation economies and new tourist economies), as part of Latin America (linked by a shared history of Spanish conquest, problematic republicanism and revolutionary movements), and as part of the African diaspora (with its long history of slavery, liberatory struggles and new articulations of Black identities). Finally, we will interrogate how Cuba should be understood in relation to the U.S., and to its own transnational diasporas in Miami and elsewhere. The course will engage with primary texts, historiography, literature, film, and music to examine Cuba within these multiple frameworks. Students will complete frequent short response essays and a substantial research paper. This course is required for students wishing to study in the Hampshire in Havana semester program (open to all Five College students). The course will provide support for framing independent projects and applications for the Cuba Semester. Though conducted in English, some readings will be available in Spanish and English. Concurrent enrollment in a Spanish language class is recommended.