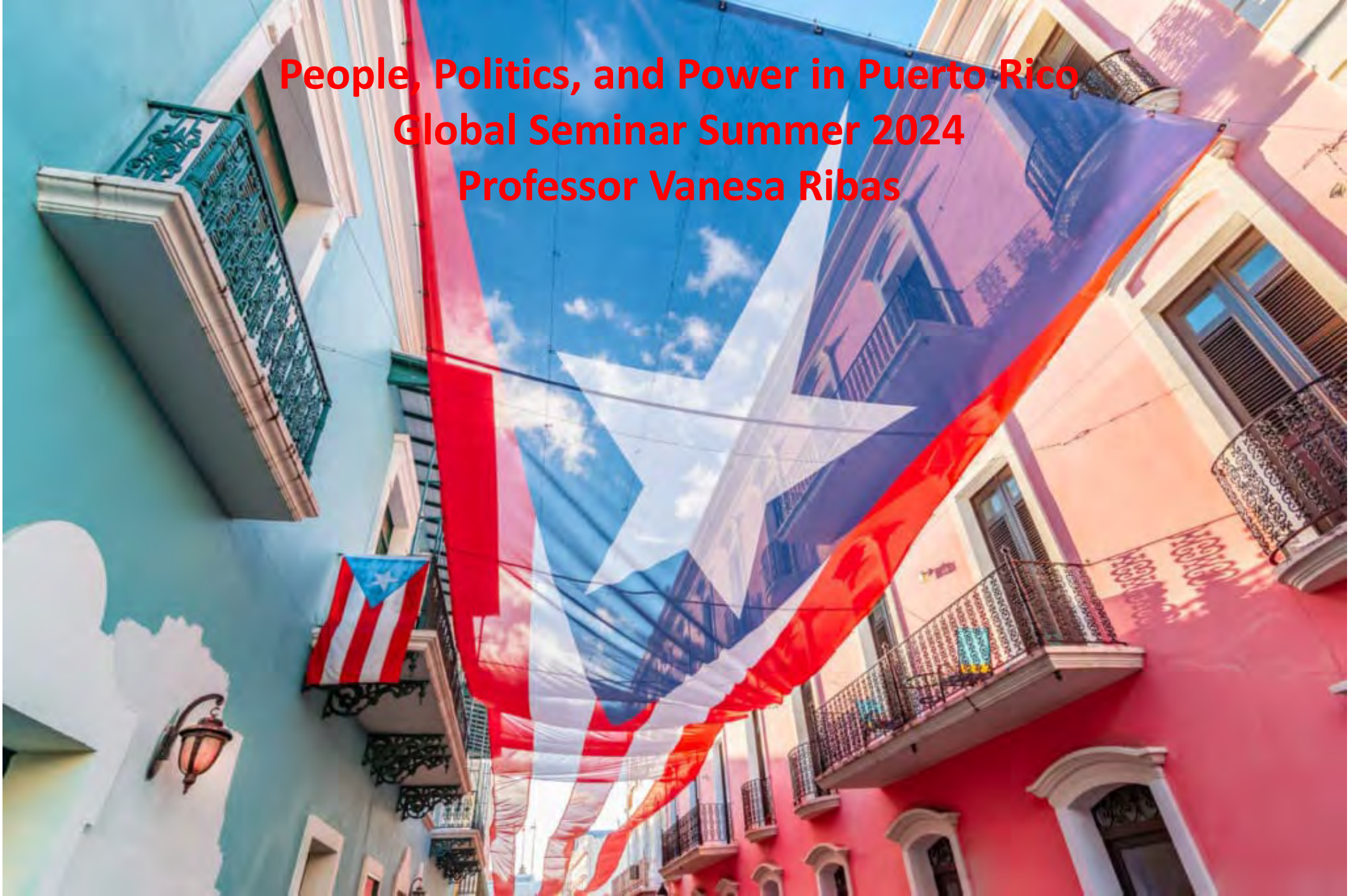


People, Politics, and Power in Puerto Rico
Global Seminar Summer 2024
Professor Vanesa Ribas



San Juan, Puerto Rico

- Founded by Spanish colonists in the early 1500s.
- Indigenous pre-Colombian society in what was known as Boriken were called Tainos. Probably a couple thousand years.
- Puerto Rico became a U.S. possession in 1898 following the Spanish-American War. Puerto Rico's political status remains unresolved today.
- San Juan today is a large, metropolitan area of about 2.5 million encompassing not just the city of San Juan but several others (Guaynabo, Caguas, Bayamon, Carolina)
- The city of San Juan itself is made up of numerous barrios and subbarrios
- One of these zones is Rio Piedras, the location of the flagship University of Puerto Rico, where our GS will be based.

BORIKEN TAINO ISLAND

TAINO YUCAYEKES (VILLAGES) GOVERNED
BY THE GREAT CHIEF AGÜEYBANÀ
AT THE TIME THE SPANISH ARRIVED ON THE ISLAND



CHIEFS NAME	VILLAGE NAME	CHIEFS NAME	VILLAGE NAME
(AGÜEYBANÀ)	GUAINIA	(JUMACA)	MACAO
(ARAMANA)	TAO	(MABODAMACA)	GUAJATACA
(ARASIBO)	ABACOA	(MAJAGUA)	BAYAMÓN
(AYMAMÓN)	AYAMACO	(OROCOBIX)	GUAYNABO
(CANÓBANA)	CAYNIABÓN	(URAYAOÁN)	YAGÜECA
(CAGUAX)	TURABO	(YUQUITO)	DAGUAO
(GUACABO)	SIBUCO	(YUISA)	HAIMANIO
(GUARACA)	GUAYANEY		
(GUAMANI)	GUAYAMA		
(GUARIONEX)	OTOAO		

Puerto Rico

Atlantic Ocean



tobles

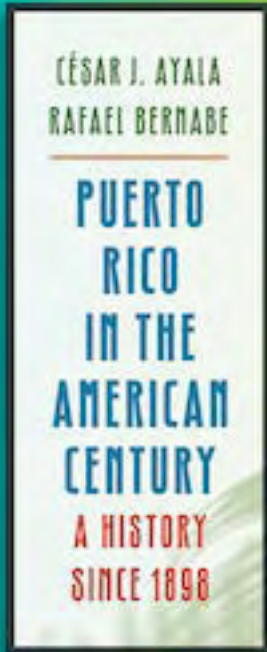
Caribbean Sea

Courses

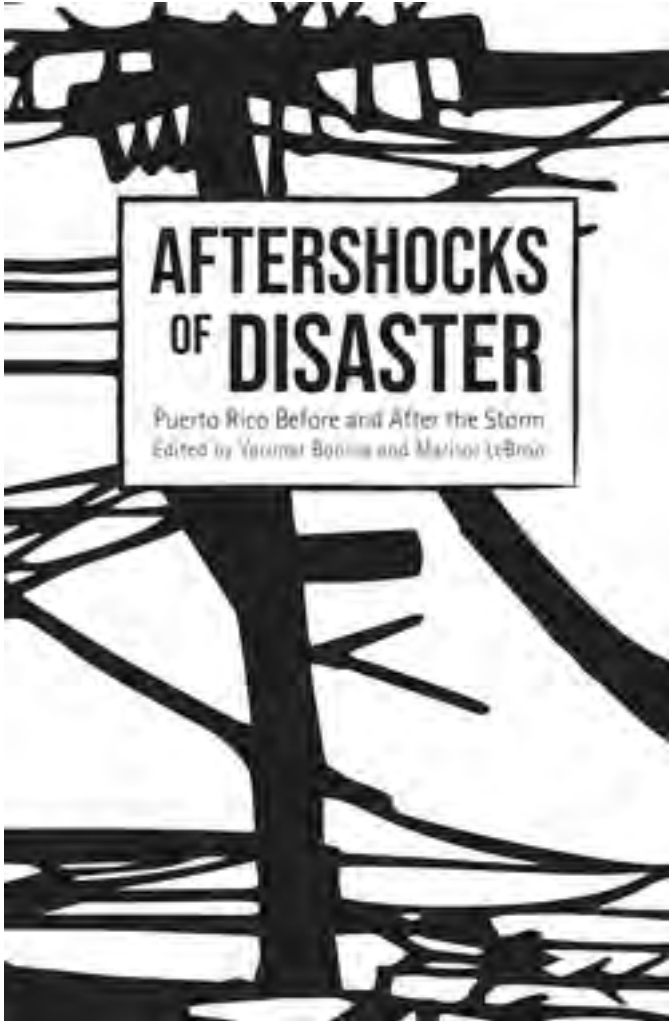
- Making of a Modern Colony: Puerto Rico in the Twentieth Century
 - Historical overview of key economic, political, and social events and conditions during the 20th century, the first full century of U.S. colonial domination.
- Contemporary Problems, Politics, and Potentialities in Puerto Rico
 - A dive into key events that have shaped Puerto Rico's recent past and present, as well as exploration of social movements and organizations working for change.

Course Format and Assignments

- Each course will have one main book and several supplementary readings.
- Assignments will include journal reflections and short assignments. No exams or quizzes or long papers.
- Class will be discussion based. We will have several guest speakers visit our class. Students will give short presentations on designated topics (e.g. what is a current problem Puerto Rico faces and what is a solution being proposed?)



- Offering a comprehensive overview of Puerto Rico's history and evolution since the installation of U.S. rule, César Ayala and Rafael Bernabe connect the island's economic, political, cultural, and social past. *Puerto Rico in the American Century* explores Puerto Ricans in the diaspora as well as the island residents, who experience an unusual and daily conundrum: they consider themselves a distinct people but are part of the American political system; they have U.S. citizenship but are not represented in the U.S. Congress; and they live on land that is neither independent nor part of the United States.
- Highlighting both well-known and forgotten figures from Puerto Rican history, Ayala and Bernabe discuss a wide range of topics, including literary and cultural debates and social and labor struggles that previous histories have neglected. Although the island's political economy remains dependent on the United States, the authors also discuss Puerto Rico's situation in light of world economies. Ayala and Bernabe argue that the inability of Puerto Rico to shake its colonial legacy reveals the limits of free-market capitalism, a break from which would require a renewal of the long tradition of labor and social activism in Puerto Rico in connection with similar currents in the United States.



- **Two years after Hurricane Maria hit, Puerto Ricans are still reeling from its effects and aftereffects. *Aftershocks* collects poems, essays and photos from survivors of Hurricane Maria detailing their determination to persevere.**
- The concept of "aftershocks" is used in the context of earthquakes to describe the jolts felt after the initial quake, but no disaster is a singular event. *Aftershocks of Disaster* examines the lasting effects of hurricane Maria, not just the effects of the wind or the rain, but delving into what followed: state failure, social abandonment, capitalization on human misery, and the collective trauma produced by the botched response.

Excursions and Activities

- A variety of excursions will enrich our experiences in Puerto Rico. We will travel to the interior highlands of Puerto Rico to visit the ruin of an indigenous ceremonial site, and to the South coast of Puerto Rico to visit what remains of one of the largest sugar cane mill towns that operated until the late 1960s. Other trips will be in the San Juan metro area and Northeast coast, such as several trips to Loiza and to Luquillo for a day at El Yunque rainforest and Luquillo Beach.
- There will also be ample free time to explore on your own! Puerto Rico is a very fun and social place. Go tour the rum distilleries, drink coffee on the plazas of Viejo San Juan, or just go to one of the many beautiful nearby beaches.
- I will hopefully also be arranging certain community-based service work, but this is still to be determined. It might be a day where we help with a community survey, or a cleanup.
- Through the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, we will also participate in several cultural activities, such as a Bomba music and dance workshop.



Visit artist Antonio Martorell Studio in San Juan

Themes of Puerto Rican struggles





- Visit artist Samuel Lind's studio.
- Themes of AfroPuerto Rican traditions and environment.



Viejo San Juan



Parque Ceremonial Indígena Caguana





El Yunque rainforest









Luquillo Beach and Kioskos

Kioskos de Piñones and beach



- Placita de Santurce: Huge hangout area not far from UPR.
- Also, Viejo San Juan, Calle Loiza area of Santurce, and even the Rio Piedras neighborhood surrounding the UPR housing where students will live have lots of bars, restaurants, and cafes).

“In the evening, beginning at 6:00 pm, the famous Placita de Santurce fully comes to life. You'll find recognized restaurants and local kiosks that sell fried foods like empanadillas, alcapurrias, and bacalaítos. The atmosphere is livelier from Thursday through Sunday, when locals flock here to hang out, have drinks, and dance salsa.” I would add reggaetón to that description and sometimes plena.

