



SEMINAR SERIES

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Curriculum and Structural Violence: Teaching Social Studies in Latin America's Secondary Schools

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Host | Dr. E. Wayne Ross

► **February 25** | Scarfe 1214 | 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Light refreshments will be served at 12:00 p.m. | Lecture will commence at 12:30 p.m.

My research seeks to understand how social studies and citizenship education respond to structural violence that characterizes contemporary Latin America and recognizes or negates new forms of citizen participation. In the last thirty years, after what has been called the return of democracy, some Latin American countries saw a decrease in inequality, but poverty and lack of social and human rights remain constants. In addition, various types of violence (gender, state, criminal) are part of everyday life. Latin America's democracy returned, but remained dislocated as democratic practices were moved to the edges of the institutional spectrum, creating different forms of political participation. Within this context, educational systems across the region have been in a process of permanent educational reforms since the 1990s. Social studies and citizenship education are no exception. These subjects have been transformed, in some countries, from nationalist and traditional perspectives with a focus on critical thinking for a liberal democracy, while in other countries social justice or indigenous perspectives have been incorporated into the curriculum. However, these reforms constrain citizen education to the institutional framework, regardless of the new paths of citizen participation inside the contexts of structural violence. How does this historical process of

educational reform deal with structural violence across the region? What similarities and differences exist among the concepts of citizenship in social studies curricula across the region? How might teachers teach structural violence in classrooms in different national contexts? I base the answers to these questions on a comparative study of the current social studies curricula in Latin American secondary schools.

Dr. Sebastián Plá is Professor of Education at the Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Mexico City. His research interests focus on theory, curriculum and knowledge in teaching history and social studies education and the political analysis of the education discourse, always with an international perspective, particularly in the Latin American region. He has written three monographs, several articles, book chapters, and secondary education history textbooks. He recently published *Educational Quality: History of a Policy for Inequality* (Calidad educativa. Historia de una política para la desigualdad) (2018) and co-edited *Education, Social Knowledge and Social Justice in Latin America* (Educación, saberes sociales y justicia social en América Latina) (2018). Prior to becoming a professor at UNAM, he was a secondary school teacher and Head.