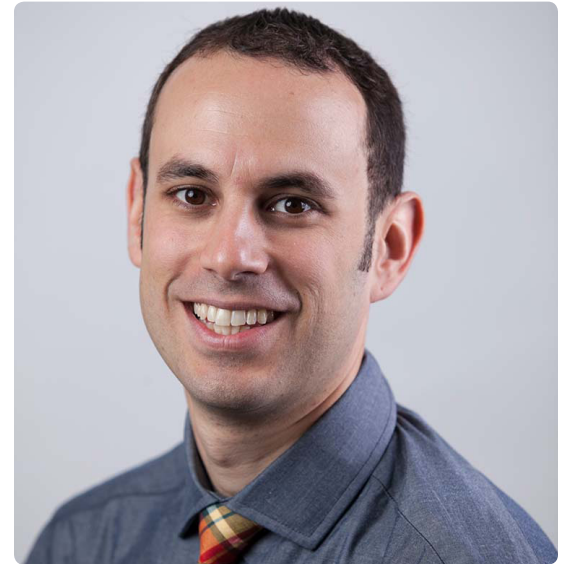


The Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society presents:

## A CRRES Speaker Series Lecture

# Alberto Varon

Department of English  
Indiana University, Bloomington



Thursday, January 24  
4:00 pm  
Maple Room, IMU

## “Sonic Border Raids: NAFTA, Neoliberalism, and Transmediation in Latinx Opera”

The enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 signaled a change in the logic of government policies and the formal adoption of neoliberal policies at the federal level that had wide-ranging consequence for the U.S. and its continental neighbors. However, the myriad developments in the strategies of governance referenced by the term neoliberal have reached well beyond our borders, impacting global politics, culture, and society. This paper considers the relationship between NAFTA and American cultures by examining the transborder opera “Pancho Villa from a Safe Distance.” The performance and production enact a politics of spectatorship that evokes issues of cultural appropriation while at the same time reframing the potential for transborder cooperation. Analyzing the performance and through interviews with the composer, librettists, and performers, this paper argues that transmediation—the act of translating a cultural work across media and time—becomes a resistive act against political and economic ideas that simultaneously encourage the free movement of goods and commodities and criminalize immigrants as commodified labor.



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