

# Barrio Rising:

## Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela

### Lecture & Luncheon

RSVP REQUIRED

when: November 2nd, 2015 at 12:15PM

where: 100A Jones Hall, Greenleaf Conference Room



**Dr. Alejandro Velasco**  
New York University

Please join us for a lecture with Dr. Alejandro Velasco, Assistant Professor at New York University, who will discuss his most recent book: *Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela*. Lunch will be served.

Based on years of archival and ethnographic research in Venezuela's largest public housing community, *Barrio Rising* delivers the first in-depth history of urban popular politics before the Bolivarian Revolution, providing crucial context for understanding the democracy that emerged during the presidency of Hugo Chávez. In the mid-1950s, a military government bent on modernizing Venezuela razed dozens of slums in the heart of the capital Caracas, replacing them with massive buildings to house the city's working poor. The project remained unfinished when the dictatorship fell on January 23, 1958, and in a matter of days city residents illegally occupied thousands of apartments, squatted on green spaces, and renamed the neighborhood to honor the emerging democracy: the 23 de Enero (January 23). During the next thirty years, through eviction efforts, guerrilla conflict, state violence, internal strife, and official neglect, inhabitants of *el veintitrés* learned to use their strategic location and symbolic tie to the promise of democracy in order to demand a better life. Granting legitimacy to the state through the vote but protesting its failings with violent street actions when necessary, they laid the foundation for an expansive understanding of democracy—both radical and electoral—whose features still resonate today.

**Alejandro Velasco** is a historian of modern Latin America whose research and teaching interests are in the areas of social movements, urban culture and democratization. Before joining the faculty at Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University, Dr. Velasco taught at Hampshire College, where he was a Five College Fellow, and at Duke University. Dr. Velasco's research has won major funding support from the Social Science Research Council, the American Historical Association, the Ford Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation, among others, and he has presented widely at both national and international conferences and symposia. His most recent publications are "'A Weapon as Powerful as the Vote': Urban Protest and Electoral Politics in Venezuela, 1978-8193" (*Hispanic American Historical Review*, November 2010) and "'We Are Still Rebels': The Challenge of Popular History in Bolivarian Venezuela" (Dan Hellinger and David Smilde, eds., *Participation, Politics, and Culture in Venezuela's Bolivarian Democracy*, Duke 2011). His book *Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela* was published in 2015 by the University of California Press.

**To RSVP or for more information, contact:**

[cipr@tulane.edu](mailto:cipr@tulane.edu)

<http://cipr.tulane.edu>

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