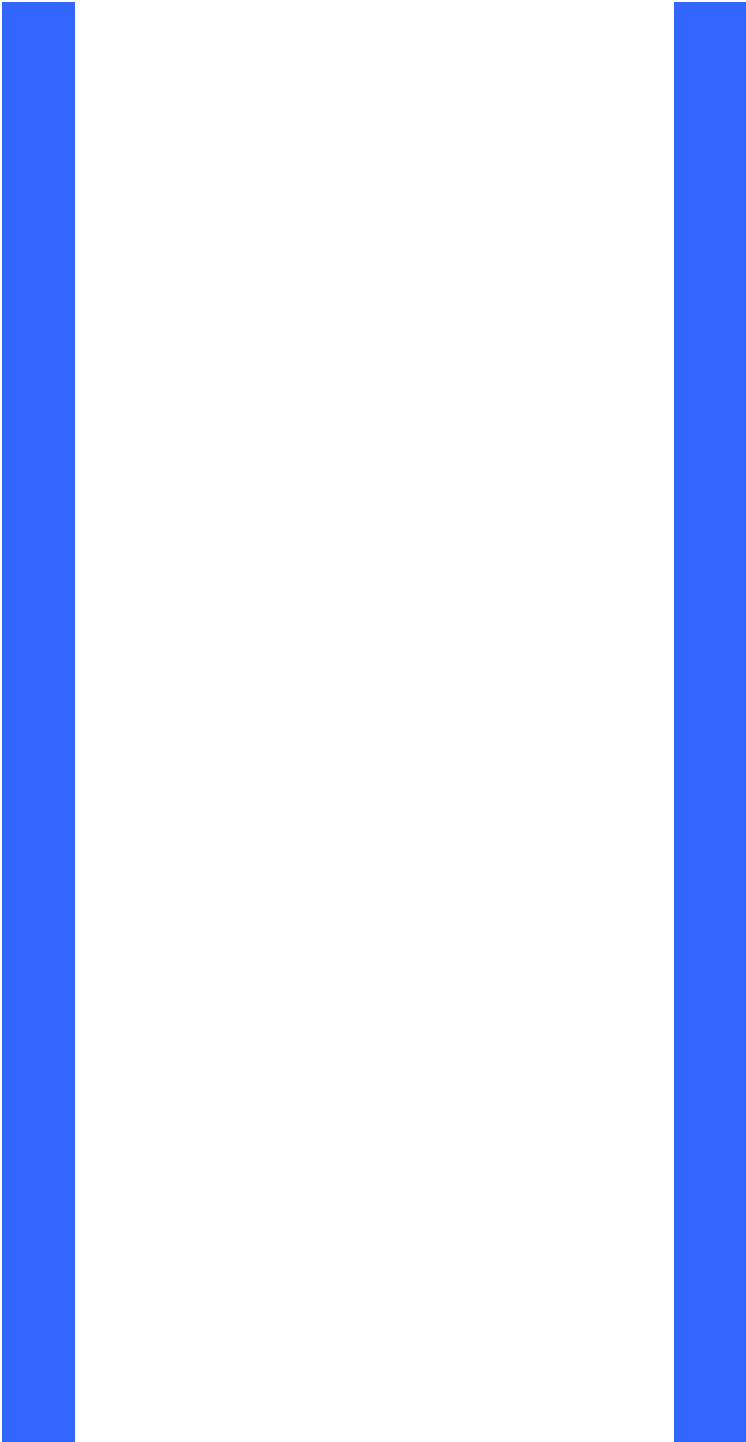


**FACULTY**

**PROFESSOR JORDANA DYM**  
([jdym@skidmore.edu](mailto:jdym@skidmore.edu))

**PROFESSOR VIVIANA RANGIL**  
([vrangil@skidmore.edu](mailto:vrangil@skidmore.edu))

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Puerto Rico, an ambiguous part of the United States for over 100 years, is not a state or colony or independent country or occupied territory. A former Spanish colony that the US acquired as part of the settlement with Spain after the Spanish American War, Puerto Rico has been a commonwealth in association with the US since 1952, and is, in the words of one author, “a four-storied country” whose past and present raise important questions about Puerto Rican (and US) national identity, cultural autonomy, political processes, and economic integration. Arguably part of Latin America and the Caribbean, with which it shares a colonial past and current popular culture, Puerto Rico is an island of contrasts—rich and poor, urban and rural, scientific and cultural—whose population is now almost evenly divided between people who live on the island and those who live on the US mainland.

This course explores the tensions and paradoxes of Puerto Rico as a commonwealth with the soul of a nation and an increasingly mobile and diasporic people. The on-campus segment will study the social, political, cultural, and economic impact of the U.S.