

On Race, Borders, Migration, and Football (Soccer)

PUBLIC LECTURE

Professor Luis Alvarez (University of California San Diego)

2026 Fred Alexander Fellow of the History Program at University of Western Australia

On the heels of the 2026 World Cup in North America, this lecture chronicles the entangled histories of race, borders, migration, and football (soccer). Focusing on the rivalry between the United States and Mexico, it reframes familiar and often-calcified debates over race, migration, and borders from the vantage point of the beautiful game. Tracing the rivalry as the product of neoliberal globalization and demographic revolution in the U.S. shows how citizenship and belonging were routinely contested and reimagined. Those who played, cheered, advertised, and broadcasted the games enflamed anti-immigrant sentiment and embraced practices of multi-national belonging, simultaneously blurring and hardening divisions between the two nations. The growth of the rivalry from the early 1990s to Trump's rise to power reveals how boundaries of the national polity were violently policed and never static. Ultimately, the U.S.-Mexico football rivalry shows us who was included in the nation, who was excluded, and how the line between "us and them" was not always clear, whether they wore another national team's jersey or not.



Professor Luis Alvarez is the 2026 Fred Alexander Fellow at the University of Western Australia. He received his BA in history from UC San Diego and PhD in history from the University of Texas at Austin. His research and teaching interests include race, pop culture, and social movements in the history of Chicanas/os, Latinas/os, and the US-Mexico borderlands. He is author of *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (University of California Press, American Crossroads Series) and *Chicanx Utopias: Pop Culture and the Politics of the Possible* (University of Texas Press, Historia USA Series), as well as co-editor of *Another University is Possible* (University Readers Press). At UC San Diego, he has also served as Chair of the Department of History; Associate Dean for Academic Personnel and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the School of Arts and Humanities; inaugural Director of the Institute of Arts and Humanities; Director of the Chicanx Latinx Studies Program; and lead coordinator of the Latinx Cluster Hire Initiative. He is also a core member of the Race and Oral History in San Diego Project, a collective of faculty, librarians, students, and community partners working together to create a community-based archive of the history of race, migration, militarism, and the border in San Diego. He is at work on a new book called *Border Pitch: A History of the Mexico-U.S. Soccer Rivalry*, which explores sport, diaspora, migration, and citizenship through the rivalry between El Tri and the US Men's National Team. He is a supporter of FC Barcelona.

Event details:

- Date & Time: 6pm, Wednesday, 12 August
- Location: G59 Fox Lecture Hall, Arts Building, UWA
- Registration required



Register Here