

**Talking Heads / Cabezas Parlantes Series:
Three Big Problems with Modern Foreign Languages:
1) Modern, 2) Foreign, and 3) Languages.
Talk by Prof. Fernando Gomez Herrero (Hispanic Studies).**

LA CASA
HISPANICA
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How to deal intelligently with the category of the "modern"? How do you like the "foreign"? Which "languages"? If modern is expected to be the good thing, we are modern, right?, what is the bad thing (non- or pre-modern, any post-modern)? If the foreign is not "us" but the other, how much do "we" want it, and against what is assumed to be the non-foreign or the native or the "security" of the "homeland"? How desirable is this foreign? And what to make of this global plurality of languages "out there" against the monolingual normality in officialdom, including institutions of higher learning? Uncle Sam: E pluribus unum, still exceptionally apart from the big world picture also in the tremendous commotions of the 21st century? The conventional label of "modern foreign languages" is deeply problematic and pernicious from every single angle of vision -- and yet it will not go away tomorrow. Are we witnessing the streamlining, if not the liquidation of non-English dimensions of knowledge production inside US academic venues? This presentation will constitute a critical look into institutionalizations of knowledge production with an eye on the humanities --or the liberal arts-- with "languages" as the excuse and pretext.