Thursday 7 March - 12:30pm | Lunchtime Seminar

**Andean Primordial Titles and the Rise of Native Communes: Rethinking the First General Land Inspection in Colonial Peru**

*José Carlos de la Puente* (Texas State University)

Room 204 - CLAS, Second Floor, Alison Richard Building

**Abstract**

This talk will present the first comprehensive analysis of a series of land deeds prepared by the Laraos of Yauyos, Peru, during the First General Land Inspection to secure title to farm- and pasturelands. Scholars have shown the centrality of this first general inspection for the country’s agrarian history, but almost invariably reducing it to the appropriation of native lands and the formation of colonial rural estates. Little attention has been placed, however, on the strategies of native Andean commoner groups that not only used the General Land Inspection to protect their holdings but also relied on it to break away from their original villages, acquire new lands, establish new settlements, and accrue recognition as independent communities. Through the analysis of the Laraos primordial titles, I show that, key in this process was the collection of narratives and the performance of walkabouts that, when committed to writing in the form of title-maps and witness testimonies, gave communities-in-the-making the necessary tools to succeed in these self-directed projects of commoner colonization.

*José Carlos de la Puente* is a professor of history and director of graduate studies at Texas State University. He is the author of the book *Andean Cosmopolitans: Seeking Justice and Reward at the Spanish Royal Court* (2018). His most recent articles on the subject of his presentation include “Of Widows, Furrows, and Seed: New Perspectives on Land and the Colonial Andean Commons” (*Hispanic American Historical Review*, 2021) and "Customs Apart: Rethinking Inheritance and Competing Land Claims Among Commoner Women in Colonial Andean Villages" (*Colonial Latin American Review*, 2024). Long interested in Indigenous land tenure and customs of commoning, he is currently working on a book tentatively titled “Pueblos from Pueblos: Commoner Colonization and the Making of Community in the Colonial Central Andes.”