Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/lavoz

Part of the American Studies Commons, Caribbean Languages and Societies Commons, Latin American Studies Commons, and the Latina/o Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/lavoz/1
Estimada/os colegas,

This edition of La Voz highlights a key component of El Instituto’s collaborative, local and transnational efforts at social justice education. The newsletter provides a sampling of graduate, undergraduate and faculty initiatives across the campus and the hemisphere. The cover image shows graduate students at an event they organized in solidarity with the families of the students murdered from a teachers college in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, Mexico. In another meeting, El Instituto affiliates arranged a teach-in to respond to recent changes by the U.S. government to normalize relations with Cuba. Later in the semester, history MA student, Cara Palmer, connected her studies of Cold War Central America with a recent visit to El Salvador to support the School of Americas Watch in their attempts to close the SOA as an institution that has trained human rights violators in Latin America. One of our graduating seniors, Daniela Aguila, spent a semester interning at the Refugee and Asylum Clinic at the UConn Law School, an experience she will draw on during her future legal studies. These and other events and individual research projects will continue to deepen our relationships with academic and non-academic activist communities throughout the hemisphere.

On a separate front, I was honored to be reappointed by Dean Teitelbaum to a new five-year term as director. I look forward to working with you all to build on our past successes and initiate new, dynamic research projects in the semesters ahead.

Un abrazo,
Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

El Instituto Happenings

Professor Anne Gebelein and M.A student Pauline Batista (right) peruse books at the final HACHA at Babbidge Library. Read more about Marisol’s trip to Mexico on the next page! On the left, undergraduate students demonstrate merengue and bachata during the 2nd annual Afro-Latin@’s Week.

Faculty Achievements

The Office of the Vice President for Research named several faculty and affiliates among the recipients of the 2015 Research Excellence Program (REP) awards. The primary goal of the REP is to provide seed funding to promote, support, and enhance the research, scholarship, and creative endeavors of faculty at UConn.

Xaé Alicia Reyes and Eliana Rojas, “Making STEM Accessible to All Students: Teaching K-12 Students about STEM Careers”
Veronica Herrera, “The Politics of Environmental Action: Cities, Water Pollution and Environmental Inequality in Latin America”
Richard Wilson, “Words of Conviction: the Law and Psychology of Inciting Speech During Armed Conflict”

César Abadía-Barrero was awarded a UCONN Faculty Fellowship from University of Connecticut Humanities Institute for his project “Health Ruins: From Post-Colonial to Post Neoliberal ‘Medical Care’ in Columbia”

Contact Us

www.elin.uconn.edu
860-486-5508
J. Ray Ryan Building, 2nd floor
2006 Hillside Road, U-1161
Storrs CT 06269-1161
Email: elinstituto@uconn.edu
Below, librarian and curator Marisol Ramos shares details of her recent purchasing trip to the Feria Internacional de Libros (FIL) in Guadalajara, Mexico. Marisol is the Subject Librarian for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Latino Studies, Spanish and Anthropology, and the Curator of the Latina/o, Latin American and Caribbean Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center.

By Marisol Ramos
Marisol.Ramos@uconn.edu

During the Fall 2015 semester, I had the opportunity to attend Feria Internacional de Libros (FIL) in Guadalajara, Mexico, the biggest book fair in the Americas and the second biggest in the world. I was able to attend thanks to an ALA-FIL travel grant and additional support from UConn.

ALA has for many years partnered with the Mexican government and FIL coordinators to bring American librarians, from both the public and academic sector, to the fair as a way to improve the quality of American libraries by being able to buy directly, not only from Mexican publishers, but also from publishers from all over Latin America and the Caribbean.

It had been almost two years since my last visit to the FIL so I had a lot to catch up in the buying department. Because I arrived during the weekend I was able to get an early start. I headed straight for the Central American publishers. Generally, Central American publishers have smaller print runs and may run out if you don’t get there early!

With almost 2,000 publishers in attendance, I planned my week based on countries I wanted to visit: I bought books from Cuba, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Chile and Peru on subjects such as immigration, gender studies, social justice, human rights, social movements, labor and literature. I asked my Mexican distributor to highlight Mexican books sold only in the FIL—since Mexican exhibitors took up half of the convention center!

This strategy helped me focus on countries where we don’t purchase many books because of cost and/or availability. My distributor used a purchasing profile for Mexico that I gave him so he could acquire the type of materials that support researchers and students’ needs. This profile is based on the feedback I received from faculty about their research and teaching needs in Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Anthropology, History, Political Sciences, Human Rights and Spanish.

Speaking directly with the different publishers from different countries helps me identify emerging areas of interest that may have not reached the US academia yet, e.g. promising new authors who have won national or regional awards, new mixed media and literature genres such as encoded images in fantasy fiction.

Meeting directly with publishers provides an opportunity to buy books for a fraction of what it would cost to obtain them through a distributor. For example, I had the pleasure of meeting Agustina Ponce, the director of Ediciones Vigía, one of the most famous indie publishers in Cuba. Since I met directly with the publisher, I was able to pay the actual cost of these books and saved quite a bit of money.

There is nothing more satisfying than to be at a book fair and walk among thousands of books and seeing young and old buying and reading books!

I am working with Prof. Odette Casamayor-Cisneros on hosting a small exhibition showcasing books acquired from Ediciones Vigía during this trip and others already housed in the archives, so stay tuned!

Front Cover: Graduate students, led by first year MA student Ilan Sanchez, gather at a Fall vigil held in solidarity with the families of 43 college students kidnapped by the Mexican police. Left to right: Ilan Sanchez, Jorell Meléndez-Badillo, Orlando Deavila Pertuz, Ruth Hernandez
On January 29th, 2015, members of the UConn community gathered to discuss the historic shift in US-Cuba relations announced by the leaders of both nations in late December of 2014. To spark the discussion, a portion of President Barack Obama’s historic speech was played for the audience, where he announced that the United States would begin to normalize relations with Cuba. Obama highlighted a generational divide that resonated with many of the undergraduate students in the audience, curious about the new changes to what Obama called “a rigid policy rooted in events that took place before most of us were born.”

Melina Pappademos, Associate Professor of History, provided an overview of just some of the “complicated,” history between the United States and Cuba alluded to in the President’s speech. Other contributors explored the long-standing cultural and artistic connections between the United States and Cuba. In focusing on the thaw in bilateral relations, Dr. Casamayor-Cisneros expressed optimism about the change in policy but emphasized the need for observers to be equally concerned about the effects of any policy changes on the lives of ordinary citizens. As Professor Robert Stephens explained, “A drum is not made, it is born from another.”

Stephens and his fellow panelists eloquently underscored the importance of unpacking the lineage of Obama’s dramatic policy shift and called for greater transparency moving forward in the ensuing call and response between the two nations.

The panel featured an eclectic mix of UConn faculty members including Professors Melina Pappademos, Odette Casamayor-Cisneros, Robert Stephens, and John Bell. They were joined by special guest Ariana Hernandez-Reguant, cultural anthropologist from the University of Miami. Hernandez-Reguant has published widely on Cuban music, media and visual arts. She runs the cultural blog EthnoCuba.

Professor Jacqueline Loss provided deft facilitation and commentary throughout the event, which attracted students, faculty, and staff alike from across the University.

Professor Odette Casamayor-Cisneros was the 2014-2015 Wilbur Marvin Visiting Scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. This year, she worked on her forthcoming book project, On Being Black: Racial Self-identification Processes in Post-Soviet Cuban Cultural Production. She returned to campus during her leave to provide her expertise on the topic of US-Cuba relations during the January panel event.
"Climate Change Vulnerability and Human Migration"
January 22, 2015

Rachael Shenyo, Independent Climate Change Consulting Economist, USAID Local Governance Project, and Ronald Fernando Vasquez Siguenza, Architect and Regulatory Compliance Specialist, Guatemala Ministry of the Environment, discussed the intensification of climate vulnerability in Guatemala. Professor Lisa Park Bousch and students in her Climate Change and Ancient Civilizations course attended this event due to the timely nature of the presentation.

"Historical Origins of Anarchism in Puerto Rico: Voces Libertarias"
March 11th, 2015

Ph.D student Jorell Meléndez-Badillo was raised in Puerto Rico and developed a deep interest in the history of radical ideas through his involvement in the local punk community. His desire to document the history of anarchism on the island led him to self-publish his first book in 2013. After receiving international attention, it was recently republished by Fundacion Anselmo Lorenzo-CNT and the third edition is forthcoming in Summer 2015. At the Tertulia, Jorell shared his insights into publishing, fundraising, and the fascinating history of anarchism in Puerto Rico.
This Spring Ryan Carlin, associate professor of political science at Georgia State University, presented research on how Colombians view the ongoing negotiations between the government and FARC and how public opinion constrains the ability of the government to make concessions to former combatants.

Through exhaustive survey research, he found that trust in the parties affects the legitimacy of transitional justice mechanisms and support for the ongoing peace process. Carlin is the co-editor of *The Latin American Voter: Pursuing Representation and Accountability in Challenging Contexts* with Elizabeth Zechmeister and El In affiliate faculty member Matthew Singer, as well as the author of numerous articles in leading political science journals. His main research field is comparative political behavior with an emphasis on Latin America; other research interests include natural disaster politics, social preferences, rule of law, and political institutions. This research is funded by the Institute for International Education and USAID.

In her lecture Tinsman briefly summarized the main arguments of her book and explored the gender dynamics that informed labor relations and patterns of consumption in both the United States and Chile. Framing her analysis on a world history and transnational framework, Tinsman used the consumption of grapes during the Cold War as a case study to comprehend three different yet related topics: transnational relations between Chile and the United States, gender negotiations, and the political dimensions of consumption.

In addition to the public lecture, graduate students and faculty from various departments across campus participated in a seminar discussion with the renowned scholar. Two previously circulated documents were discussed: One consisted of a chapter Tinsman co-authored with anthropologist Sandhya Shukla about the study of gender in Latin American historiography from a transnational perspective. The other was a book proposal for Tinsman’s current research on Chinese migration in Latin America. Not only did she present her current findings but was eager to hear the audience’s reactions, comments, and questions on the work in progress.
EYZAGUIRRE LECTURE AND FILM: MARTÍN REJTMAN: DOS DISPAROS

By Jihan Asher

Argentine filmmaker Martin Rejtmán was the Spring 2015 Luis B. Eyzaguirre lecturer. Rejtmán screened his seventh feature film Dos Disparos (Two Shots Fired) in the Konover Auditorium at the Thomas J. Dodd Center. Rejtmán is an accomplished writer and has published several collections of short stories outside of his cinematic work.

Like the shots fired in the opening sequence of the film, Dos Disparos reverberates with audiences even if they struggle long after to locate where the storylines have landed.

Rejtmán, who wrote and directed the film, deftly navigates silences through understated dialogue and camera work. The result is a masterful deconstruction of the art and craft of storytelling, which uses one’s own expectations against oneself.

The film’s protagonist, Mariano, impulsively shoots himself after finding a gun in his shed. We know from the title that two shots are going to be fired—Chekhov’s gun indiscreetly appears on the scene in the first few minutes of the film. Anton Chekhov, master of the short story, famously stated “If you say in the first chapter that there is a rifle hanging on the wall, in the second or third chapter it absolutely must go off.

As other reviewers have noted, the pacing of the film is exasperating at times. Far from driving the story, the two shots fired become almost incidental. “It is infinitely more interested in the behavioral detritus of daily existence that most of us subconsciously work to forget as soon as it has ended: whole minutes pass in which obsolete cell phones ring and can’t be silenced; shopping lists are discussed; ice trays are refilled,” writes John DeFore for the Hollywood Reporter. Rejtmán works to remind us of this behavioral detritus, which is above all, oddly comforting in its unvarnished truth.

The Luis B. Eyzaguirre Lecture was established to honor the memory of Professor Eyzaguirre who taught Latin American Literature and Spanish at UConn for 32 years. The purpose of the lecture is to provide students at UConn and the larger community of scholars an opportunity to experience the excitement of Latin America’s literature and culture.

Professor Eyzaguirre felt that literature is more than the text; it is the people and the emotions behind the words. The Eyzaguirre Lecture allows the University community to experience and know the human side of Latin American Studies by bringing notable literary and cultural figures to UConn to share their research.

This year’s lecture was sponsored by: El Instituto, LCL-Spanish Studies, and UConn Humanities Institute.
Cristina Beltrán, whose work is situated at the intersection of Latino politics and political theory, provided timely insight into the cognitive dissonance that often accompanies the term “Latino conservatives.”

On Tuesday, March 10th, Beltrán joined us here at UCONN to present “Making Sense of Latino Conservatives: Individual Agency and Stories of the Self” based on her current book project (provisionally titled Latino Conservatives: Racial Shame, Racial Success, and the Politics of Transformation) which is an exploration of how Latino conservative thought is shaped not only by ideology but through a potent combination of emotion, expression, and aesthetics. While Latinos were once considered “natural republicans,” they are alternately construed as cultural and demographic threats.

Beltrán is an associate professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University. She is the author of the critically acclaimed book Trouble With Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity, which explores the U.S. Latino population within a Political Studies framework.

Beltrán has been a regular contributor on MSNBC’s Melissa Harris Perry, where she has appeared as an expert analyst on race relations in the U.S. Her work has appeared in Political Theory, the Du Bois Review, Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies, Political Research Quarterly, and various edited volumes.

Beltrán’s visit was sponsored by El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies; Asian and Asian American Studies Institute; Sociology Department; UConn Political Theory Workshop.

Photo credit: Liam Williams
This year’s 2nd annual Afro-Latin@’s week featured exciting programming which explored the intersections of Afro-Latin@ identity. The event was organized by second year M.A student and event founder Tyra Lewis with the support of the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, the Africana Studies Institute, and El Instituto.

The theme was “Expressions” and concentrated on highlighting the richness of Afro-Latino contributions to the arts, showcased throughout the week by faculty, students, and staff. The festive kick-off celebration highlighted music and movement, through videos, performances, and discussion on the history of popular dances to call attention to the ways Afro-Latin@ roots can be traced in the movements.

At a “Café con Leche”, undergraduate students shared selected readings from prominent Afro-Latino writers such as Juan Flores, Carmen Mojica, Junot Diaz, and Veronica Chambers.

Later in the week, Marta Moreno Vega, Ph.D, gave a centerpiece lecture on self-acceptance and social change. Moreno Vega is the President and Founder of the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute which focuses on African descendant communities’ histories, legacies, arts and education.

She is also an adjunct professor at NYU in the Arts and Public Policy Department, where she developed and teaches a course focused on developing the next generation of cultural arts leaders.

The week fittingly closed with a talk by UConn senior Ashley Frato on art and activism, featuring the work of Cuban artist Magdalena Campos-Pans.
Ashley Frato is a UConn senior completing a BFA in Fine Arts with a concentration in Sculpture and minors in Art History and Latin American Studies. This spring, Ashley showcased her project, *It’s a dream: Memories of the Cuban Revolution*, which tells the stories of her grandparents in a way that shares their hardships and points to the filtering that inevitably happens as the information passes onto American soil.

Ashley was the closing speaker during Afro-Latin@s Week 2015, a reflection of the strong leadership of undergraduate students on campus in facilitating timely and compelling programming at the Puerto Rican/Latin-American Cultural Center.

In her talk she explored the highly political artwork of Magdalena Campos-Pons. Ashley had the opportunity to study with the Cuban artist at a workshop called "Sonic Installations" at the Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill in Cape Cod, MA. Her participation was made possible by a grant from the Provost’s office.

As relations with Cuba have just shifted for the first time in over fifty years, it is Ashley’s hope that loosened travel restrictions will give her the opportunity to visit extended family and the country at the heart of much of her work.

She highlighted how being an artist is a form of activism in bringing a distinct point of view into elite spaces, recalling Campos-Pons’ exhibition at the Venice Biennale where she appeared unannounced in the Piazza San Marco wearing a costume combining elements of Chinese, Spanish and Afro-Caribbean attire. Campos-Pons was accompanied by a Cuban band that left critics in awe noting the way the “call-and-response music, based on traditional Yoruba chants, reverberated off the walls of St. Mark’s Basilica, where Monteverdi had pioneered Western polyphony.” (New York Times, Art in Review)

"As an Afro-Latina artist, I also feel like a communicator of our history, our politics, our culture and our future," say Ashley.

Indeed, the future looks bright. In Fall 2015, Ashley will bring her talents to the School of Art + Design at SUNY Purchase where she will pursue a dual MFA in Art/MA in Art History with a focus on Modern Latin American art.

"Six things are difficult in this world: to be a woman; to be black; to be Cuban; to believe in love; to believe in people; and the possibility that the world can be better.” —

From the solo exhibition, *María Magdalena  Campos-Pons: Dreaming of an Island* at the Spelman Museum of Fine Art (2008)
Cristina Ibarra is a Chicana filmmaker who has been making award-winning independent films that explore the U.S.-Mexico border for the past fourteen years. To Ibarra, the border is not only a subject – it is home. She was raised in El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Her new documentary, Las Marthas, premiered on PBS Independent Lens in 2014. The New York Times calls it a “striking alternative portrait of border life.”

Her documentary The Last Conquistador had a national broadcast on POV. USA Today called the film “Heroic”. Dirty Laundry: A Homemade Telenovela, her first short fiction, won multiple awards at festivals, including Best Short Fiction, the Audience Award, and the Jury Award, and was broadcast nationwide on PBS. Since then, Ibarra has created short interstitials for the New York International Latino Film Festival, Latino Public Broadcasting and with the Latina interdisciplinary collective fulana.org.

Growing up on the border, my identity was formed by this third space that straddles two cultures and yet remains by-and-large outside of both the American and Mexican mainstream. My childhood playgrounds were my father’s junkyards, or yonkes, on both sides of the US/Mexico border. Transforming mismatched truck carcasses and metal parts into dollhouses or pirate ships gave me more than scraped knees and dusty jeans. I also experienced how my makeshift toys could convert a sick vehicle into a functional road warrior. In other words, it gave me something even more valuable — the power of metaphor, the aesthetics of recycling, and the will to dream. In short, a language of my own, that would lead me to filmmaking. I am constantly searching for ways to come home, looking for meaning in my culture-clashed memories. I have since learned to embrace this yonke approach in all my work – recycling, blending and modifying meaning and cultural symbols associated with both Mexico and the United States. Because that’s my identity; I am Spanglish, most comfortable on the border, mixing up Spanish and English, melodrama and realism, tradition and assimilation, narrative and documentary, to create my own vehicle of culture. As my work evolves, I continue to use both humor and drama, and to reference “high” culture and “low,” I combine the dramatic, documentary and spectacle, in order to examine culture through a new lens. -Cristina Ibarra
Aimee Loiselle, Department of History

Aimee spent three days (March 16-18) in the archives at El Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College CUNY in Manhattan. She worked with the senior archivist at Centro Library & Archives, Pedro Juan Hernández, to find resources related to U.S. and Puerto Rican government policies regarding the development of needlework, textile, and garment industries on the island in the early twentieth century and related to Puerto Rican women workers in mainland textile and garment industries during the 1930-1990s. During her time there, Aimee read papers from the Centro Collection, viewed microfilm from the Bureau of Insular Affairs & Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration (BIA & PRRA) reels and Library of Congress reels, and gathered materials from the ILGWU/UNITE collection.

The trip, supported by a Pre-Doctoral Research Grant, was extremely productive. The ILGWU/UNITE collection revealed a long-running union interest, starting in the 1940s, in the use of “incentives” by textile and garment companies locating operations in Puerto Rico. The union’s attention to corporate transnational labor and regulation arbitrage contradicts the dominant narrative of union ignorance of global realities. The BIA & PRRA and Library of Congress reels exposed the early roots of U.S. government and corporate participation in and structuring of globalization. Using her findings, Aimee hopes to revise dominant historiographies of neoliberalism and globalization by highlighting Puerto Rico as the early incubator for collaborations between the U.S. government, multinational corporations, elites in the “Global South,” and local governments.

Edward Guimont, Department of History

Edward visited the West Indies Federal Archive Centre in Barbados in March. While there, he went through a total of twenty folders of archived records from the government of the 1958-62 West Indies Federation (WIF) of the British Caribbean colonies. The majority of work was on records relating to four issues: the Federation’s response to the 1958 Notting Hill race riots in London; their consultation over Britain’s 1961 negotiations on entering the European Economic Community (EEC); the 1961-62 issues surrounding the collapse of the Federation into its constituent island governments; and their involvement in both the public and political debate over the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act.

For West Indian involvement Notting Hill incident, Edward has noted that the existing historiography tends to focus almost exclusively on Jamaican Premier Norman Manley’s trip to London and his speeches to the press and UK government officials denouncing the violence against West Indian immigrants. However, he was excited to learn that the files revealed the extent to which the Federal government not only set the stage for Manley’s visit and assisted him, but were major actors in their own right, lobbying Labour and Conservative members of Parliament, coordinating campaigns to prevent calls for immigration restriction and deportation, and arguing that racial harmony in Britain was intimately connected to development and independence of the West Indian colonies. According to him, this and other new discoveries in the archives serve as a counterpoint to his earlier research on the view of white-led “racial partnership” in British Central African regimes and an important complement to his doctoral work made possible by the award.
The featured writer at this year’s Aetna Celebration of Creative Non-Fiction was Rigoberto González. González is the author of four books of poetry including Unpeopled Eden, winner of the Lambda Literary Award and the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize; Black Blossoms; two bilingual children’s books; four novels including Crossing Vines and The Mariposa Club, three books of non-fiction including Butterfly Boy: Memoirs of a Chicano Mariposa, winner of the American Book Award; a book of short stories and the editor of two anthologies. His honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts, and the Poetry Center Book Award. He is a contributing editor for Poets & Writers Magazine, and on the board of directors for the National Book Critics Circle. He is currently Associate Professor of English at Rutgers-Newark, the State University of New Jersey. The reading was sponsored and organized by the UConn Co-op, the Aetna Chair of Writing, El Instituto, and the Creative Writing Program.

Katie Acosta (Ph.D., UConn Sociology), Assistant Professor of Sociology at Georgia State University, recently published Amigas y Amantes (Friends and Lovers), a 2014 Choice Outstanding Academic Title. This book explores the experiences of sexually nonconforming Latinas in the creation and maintenance of families. It is based on forty-two in-depth ethnographic interviews with women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or queer (LBQ). With this data, Acosta examines how LBQ Latinas manage loving relationships with the families who raised them, and with their partners, their children, and their friends.

Acosta investigates how sexually nonconforming Latinas negotiate cultural expectations, combat compulsory heterosexuality, and reconcile tensions with their families. She offers a new way of thinking about the emotional work involved in everyday lives, which highlights the informal, sometimes invisible, labor required in preserving family ties. Acosta contends that the work LBQ Latinas take on to preserve connections with biological families, lovers, and children results in a unique way of doing family. Paying particular attention to the negotiations that LBQ Latinas undertake in an effort to maintain familial order, Amigas y Amantes explores how they understand femininity, how they negotiate their religious faiths, how they face the unique challenges of being in interracial/interethnic relationships, and how they raise their children while integrating their families of origin.
**NEW COURSES—FALL 2015:**

**“HUMAN RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA”**

Instructor: Martínez, Samuel
TTh 2:00pm-3:15pm

Through literature, film, and the writings of historians, cultural theorists, and social researchers from across the Americas, this class will examine historical antecedents to late 20th-21st century human rights, discuss the reach and limits of human rights concepts and movements as instruments of liberation, and highlight north-south and south-south exchanges of knowledge and solidarity.

For more information:
samuel.martinez@uconn.edu

**“LEGAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE”**

Instructor: Oquendo, Ángel
Wednesdays 3:35pm-6:05pm

Angel Oquendo, George J. and Helen M. England Professor of Law, offers a special seminar for undergraduates at the Storrs campus, “Legal Institutions and Social Change: From Latin America to the United States by Way of Europe.” This course deals with constitutional law, as well as with specific areas of private law, such as civil law, civil procedure, and business law, and considers how legal institutions further social change. It first introduces the civil law tradition, and legal history, comparing Latin America to the United States and Europe. The class closes with an exploration of corporate law.

Oquendo has lectured and published extensively in five languages and is an authority worldwide on comparative law and international litigation. He graduated from Yale Law School and clerked for Judge Stephen Reinhardt of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
**Graduate Student Achievements 2014–2015**

**Charlie Fuentes** completed the requirements for the Master of Arts program in Latino/a and Latin American Studies. He has accepted a position as head coach and instructor in Latin American Studies and Spanish at Choate. While at El Instituto, Charlie provided research assistance and grant writing support for El Instituto core and affiliate faculty in a wide range of disciplines.

**Tyra Lewis** presented "Invisibility and Silence: The Cloak and Dagger of Afro-Puerto Rican Representation in Yvonne Denis Rosario’s Capá Prieto" at the 75th Annual College Language Association conference in Dallas, TX in April. Tyra plans to complete the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in International Studies during the summer 2015.

**Matt Perse** has accepted a job as Spanish teacher at the Fort Worth Country Day School in Fort Worth, Texas. He is currently designing a multidisciplinary curriculum to teach human rights in Latin America through literature and history. Matt plans to complete his MA thesis during summer 2015.

**Jihan Asher** attended the University of Maryland’s Latin American Studies Student Conference this month and presented her paper “Microgeopolitics of Sovereign Power: Community-Based Policing and Territoriality in Kingston, Jamaica.”

**Pauline Batista** completed her first year as a teaching assistant for El Instituto’s First Year Learning Community, “La comunidad Intelectual” under the tutelage of Professor Diana Rios. Pauline will continue work on her project entitled "Mestiços, Imperialismo & Preservação de Patrimônio Imaterial" in Brazil.

**Hannah Reier** served as a teaching assistant for Samuel Martinez's "Anthropology Through Film" course. Hannah will conduct research on American ex-patriate communities in Ecuador during the summer of 2015.

**Ilan Sanchez Moreno** served as a teaching assistant for the course "History of Modern Mexico" led by Professor Mark Overmyer-Velázquez; he also edited and translated the Spanish version of the book *Latina/o Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies* edited by Professor Marysol Asencio.

**Visiting Scholars**

**Joe Feldman**, 2014-2015 Gratis Scholar at El Instituto, has accepted a position in Quito, Ecuador as Academic Coordinator for the Trent-in-Ecuador study abroad program. The program is run through the Department of International Development Studies at Trent University, located in Peterborough, Ontario.

**Ramsey Tracy**, 2014-16 Gratis Scholar, has had an article accepted and forthcoming in the Fall 2015 edition of Penn State’s online journal: Indigenous Knowledges: Other Ways of Knowing. The article is titled: “It Was Then When the People Were Jumbled: The Caste War and Ethnic Identity in Modern Yucatec Maya Oral History”.
**Pre-doctoral fellow updates**

**Blanca Rincon**, El Instituto’s 2014-15 Pre-doctoral fellow has accepted a tenure-track position of Assistant Professor in UConn’s Neag School of Education, Department of Educational Leadership.

This spring, Blanca successfully completed her Ph.D. in Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her dissertation is entitled “Creating A Climate for Success: Does racial composition matter for Latino STEM retention?”, which combined quantitative research and a critical approach to address questions of equity within the field where Latin@s are most underrepresented.

**Melissa Huerta**, 2013-14 Pre-doctoral fellow, has been selected to participate in an NEH Summer Seminar in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The seminar will explore Latin American theater from the 1990s to the present, focusing on changes and debating new emerging trends, such as new economic and political conditions in Latin American, driven by globalization and Neoliberal policies; and how these have transformed the ways in which teatristas in Latin America conceive space, writing, and the dramatic text.

While at UConn, Melissa completed her PhD in the Dept. of Hispanic and Italian Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Denison University.

**ALUMNI NEWS**

**Yazmín García Trejo** graduated with a Ph.D. in Political Science. Her dissertation entitled “Gender Differences in Political Knowledge: The case of Mexico” examines the gender gap in political knowledge: why surveys find that women know less about politics when compared to men. In particular, she focuses on the origins of the gender gap in political knowledge among adolescents.

Yazmín conducted her fieldwork among high school students with the support of several grants, among them a Tinker Foundation Field Research Grant, a Nathan Whetten Fellowship (both awarded by El Instituto), and a Dissertation Fellowship from the American Association of University Women. She also taught a course for El Instituto and received her M.A. in Latin American Studies, where she was named a Robert G. Mead fellow. She is currently a research fellow at American University’s Center for Latin America and Latinos Studies. In May 2015 Dr. García Trejo will join the staff of the Center for Survey Measurement at the U.S. Census Bureau as a Post-Doctoral Survey Statistician.

**Juhem Navarro-Rivera** graduated with a Ph.D. in Political Science. Juhem is a former graduate assistant and adjunct instructor at El Instituto where he taught Latino Political Behavior and Contemporary Issues in Latino Studies. His dissertation *The Diversity of Latino Ideology* explores the role of culture and experience in the development of distinct Ethno-Ideologies informing Latino political behavior. Juhem is a Senior Policy Analyst on democracy issues at Dēmos.
LLAS INTERN SPOTLIGHT: DANIELA AGUILA

Congratulations to all of our Spring 2015 grads! The future looks bright for all of our new alumni, especially Daniela Aguila, who exemplifies hard work and determination — instincts she credits to her parents, Cuban immigrants from a small farming village in the Villa Clara province. Daniela was a double major in Political Science and Latin American Studies with a minor in Human Rights. Her thesis was called “Safe Haven: Suggestions for Protecting, Advocating, and Meeting the Needs of Undocumented and Unaccompanied Minors in the United States.”

At UCONN, Daniela gained ample real-world experiences and completed two internships, the first during the summer of 2014 with the Safe Passage Project in New York City and the second in the spring of 2015 with the UCONN Asylum and Human rights law clinic in Hartford.

Daniela is currently on the waitlist for Fulbright research grant to study Nicaraguan migrant workers in Costa Rica.

The Editors would like to share a few words of gratitude from Daniela:

I would like to thank everyone at El Instituto for all their advice, guidance, and moments of their precious time.

To Anne Gebelein: for helping me find my passion in immigration advocacy through her class Migrant Farm Workers in CT in the fall of 2013, for turning me onto my amazing internship in New York during the summer of 2014, her guidance on my senior thesis in spring 2015, and for the countless recommendation letters she wrote me.

To Mark [Overmeyer-Velázquez] for taking me along to Oaxaca, Mexico in the summer of 2014 where I learned hands on about Latin American migration to the U.S and spoiled us with delicious "nieves" and amazing field trips. He also guided me throughout our independent study that helped lay the foundation for my senior thesis.

And thank you to the rest of the staff, Charlie and Anne [Theriault], who were always so kind and welcoming, sparing a couple of minutes everyday to chat and catch up with me.

“El Instituto became a place where I could exchange ideas with fellow students and feel encouraged by the knowledgeable staff that would always have a moment to hear me out.”
### Aug 9-16
National Puppetry Festival
**UCONN--Storrs**
For more information go to [http://www.nationalpuppetryfestival2015.com](http://www.nationalpuppetryfestival2015.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td><strong>Maceo Montoya</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3:30pm</td>
<td>Artist, Writer, and Educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Nov. 2nd</td>
<td><strong>Mead Lecture: Javier Auyero</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>University of Texas at Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Nov. 7th</td>
<td><strong>2015 NECLAS Annual Meeting - Tufts University</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For more information or to register, visit: <a href="http://www.neclasi.org">www.neclasi.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M.A. IN LATINO & LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES AT UCONN

In the interdisciplinary M.A. program at UConn’s El Instituto, our students explore Latina/o, Caribbean and Latin American worlds.

Program highlights

- Wide range of courses that examine local, hemispheric, or global dimensions of Latina/o, Caribbean, or Latin American realities
- Advisors from over 70 core and affiliated faculty scholars from departments throughout the university
- Original research in an academic discipline of student’s choosing, in countries of Latin America or the Caribbean, and among the diverse Latina/o population along the New York to Boston corridor
- Research travel support, tuition remission and graduate stipend opportunities for both domestic and international students
- Graduates go on to work in education, administration, business, government, and not-for-profit organizations and earn Ph.Ds. or other advanced degrees

El Instituto
Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean & Latin American Studies
University of Connecticut
2006 Hillside Road, Unit 1161 Storrs, CT USA 06269-1161
860.486.5508
elinstituto@uconn.edu
www.elin.uconn.edu