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Despite the snow and once it melted, the Latin American Studies Center had a vigorous spring. We were pleased to co-sponsor two major lectures with the Departments of Economics and History. On April 5, Carmen Reinhart of the Department of Economics gave a stunning synthesis of her much acclaimed new book written with Kenneth S. Rogoff, *This Time is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* (Princeton, 2009). On April 15, Prof. Rodolfo Stavenhagen of the Colegio de México gave the Department of History’s annual “Nathan and Jeanette Miller Lecture” on the question of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Rights and its implementation. Prof. Stavenhagen, a widely published leader in Mexican anthropological and development studies for over fifty years, has been Special Envoy of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties for Native Peoples and Assistant Secretary General of UNESCO.

In the spring, we selected our first cohort of Latin American Studies Summer Research Fellows from a strong pool of UMDCP graduate students. These included three scientists, an art historian, and five historians. They presented their findings at a conference on Oct. 15th. Their reports were impressive in content and professional in delivery, and they received excellent feedback from Prof. Ivette Rodriguez-Santana (Latin American Studies), Daryle Williams (History) and Douglas Gill (Biology).

On Oct. 30, the Center sponsored its second workshop in Nahuatl Studies organized by Prof. James Maffie. Participants explored current research on Nahuatl speakers from pre-contact, early post-contact, colonial and contemporary perspectives. On Nov. 13, the Center sponsored another workshop, this one organized around our Distinguished Visiting Scholar Daniel Mato’s project entitled “Knowledge and Interculturality in Latin America.” Panels of major scholars, museum specialists, and environmental experts addressed questions of higher education, indigenous and Afro-descendant knowledge, and improvement of local life; biodiversity and indigenous knowledge; and diversity, knowledge and museum representations.

The Center has continued its collaboration with Washington-area museums. On Oct. 9, 2009, we cosponsored with the Smithsonian Latino Center and the Historical Society of Washington D.C. the program “Interpreting 500 Years of Panamanian History.” During his visit, Prof. Stavenhagen spoke at the American Indian Museum. On Sept. 23-24, 2010, we collaborated with the Smithsonian Latino Center and with George Washington University, Boston University and the Mexican Cultural Institute in a conference entitled “Creating an Archetype: The Influence of the Mexican Revolution in the United States.” The conference featured scholars from throughout the country addressing the Revolution’s influence on U.S. politics, aesthetics and the social sciences, and focusing particularly on the cultural, literary, and political life of the Texas-Mexico borderlands. Conference papers will be featured in a forthcoming publication.

Leticia Goulias, who was the Coordinator of the Latin American Studies Center for many years, left the Center in March after a record of outstanding service. We are pleased to announce that Mary Hilton has assumed the job of Coordinator. Mary comes to us with an impressive knowledge of Latin America. She wrote her MA thesis at Towson University in conjunction with the Pontificie Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro on “Racial Identification in Higher Education in the State of Rio de Janeiro.” She was International Program Coordinator at Towson University and is the founder of Kids for Peace Camp that promotes an appreciation of world cultures and issues of peace and justice for K-12 students in the Baltimore-Washington area during the summers. She is enthusiastic about the opportunity LASC offers to attract new students to Latin American studies and to expand the Center’s relations with students, faculty, and the broader community. Correspondingly, we at LASC are delighted she has come on board.

Our first Café Break featured visiting scholar Christina Wolff speaking on gender and resistance during the Southern Cone dictatorships. It took place on Sept. 29. Another with Fernando Silva Teixeira Filho, Visiting Research Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Georgetown, is scheduled for December 7. He will speak on “Policies, Citizenship and the LGBT Movement in Brazil.” On November 9, Livio Sansone, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the International Program at the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador gave a lecture on “Affirmative Action and Racial Inequalities in the Lula Era.”

In the spring, we hope to invite new Latin Americanist faculty: Abigail McEwen in art history, Ernesto Calvo in government and politics, and Fernando Rios in ethnomusicology. We will also sponsor a major conference on Latin America in the 1960s on April 14 and 15th. Shortly, we will be informing you of these and other events. We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you at Center events!
For ten days in October 2009, a group of UMD faculty and students from the Department of Theatre traveled to Cuba. This trip was made possible by a rarely granted “specific license” from the U.S. Department of State and generous support from a departmental international initiative fund. I have been conducting ethnographic research on the island since beginning my doctoral fieldwork in 1997. My subjects are professional theatre artists, musicians, dancers, and storytellers, who travel through and work in some of the most isolated mountain regions in the country, called “zones of silence.” After many years of warm Cuban hospitality, I looked forward to giving something back—sharing part of my world with them—especially now that I am surrounded by the talented artists and scholars in the Department of Theatre at the University of Maryland. In collaboration with performance professor and director, Leslie Felbain, I began to plan a trip which would bring us first to the Escambray Mountains, which are the home base of a theatre group called Teatro de Los Elementos (Theatre of the Elements), and then to Havana to perform in the International Theatre Festival, an event that is held every two years.

Professor Felbain selected a group of actors to perform in our chosen play, Winter Under the Table by French playwright Roland Topar. This play addresses issues of immigration, racism, and struggles for survival—fitting themes for an island faced with similar challenges. In the play, an Eastern European immigrant rents the tiny space under a table from his landlord, a woman who is translating a literary text from the immigrant’s homeland. A humorous and amorous, but conflicted relationship ensues. The plot was especially appropriate in Cuba where people are forced to be highly creative in their use of available living space, often renting out rooms, or even the majority of their houses, to foreign tourists.

Undergraduate theatre major Aaron Bliden and recent alumni Zachary Fernebok participated as actor and dramaturge, while graduate students Karalee Dawn (PhD candidate, history/theory) and Daniel Pinha (MFA candidate, design) joined the group as stage manager and set designer. Four actors from Professor Felbain’s professional company Infinite Stage rounded out the cast, while my role became cultural consultant, translator, and guide through the unpredictable bureaucracies of Cuban society. Although we did not have funding for more students to join the trip, several others helped as we prepared for the trip by working with our sets, costumes, and props.

When we arrived in Cuba, we first spent three days on the artistic commune of Teatro de Los Elementos in a rural area
called Cumanayagua, an hour north of Cienfuegos. I had lived with this group of artists for over a year during my fieldwork.

*Los Elementos* is nationally recognized for its commitment to community development and to its artistic-ecological projects. The group works as a collective, creating theatre that speaks to and educates the local population about the importance of social solidarity, history and memory, and maintaining the natural environment. Although resources have been very scarce since the beginning of the “Special Period in Time of Peace” (1990 to present), the group cultivates several acres of grains and vegetables, raises animals, and is slowly building small houses for its actors.

Professor Felbain gave a movement and character workshop for both the American and Cuban actors and the two theater groups performed for each other on subsequent evenings under the thatched roof of the open air performance space. Each night audiences arrived on foot and by horse, including local campesinos (farmers), friends, and fellow artists from nearby towns.

*Los Elementos* performed an original piece called “Arcoiris” (Rainbow), which stressed the seductive forces of material goods and money and the dangers of forsaking one’s cultural heritage. In this performance, the culture in peril was that of a Cuban-Haitian actor in the group named Nego. As Nego spoke in Creole, wielding the tools and conducting the rituals of his ancestors, another actor, Isnoel, circled, aggressively enticing him to abandon his history and assimilate into the “modern” world. The play was a critique of the worst elements of capitalism, along with a commentary on the importance of nurturing one’s own cultural heritage and identity.

In spite of the language barrier, the American group successfully performed *Winter Under the Table* in English, providing enough gestural clues to tell the story through the body instead of through the spoken word. This directorial strategy also proved successful in Havana later that week, as audiences in sold-out theatre houses laughed and cheered in all the appropriate places. Certainly one advantage of the theatrical genre is its ability to communicate across borders through expression, movement, and enacted relationships. Artists also developed new friendships over the course of the trip in spite of my inability to act as interlocutor in every instance.

The trip was highly successful; and both Cubans and Americans were inspired by the breaking down of barriers, even on such a small scale. Certainly, art and cultural performance have an edge in this endeavor; they have the ability to bring people together through creativity, beauty, humor, and by revealing universal interests in collaboration and understanding. I personally hope this is the first of many exchanges and collaborations to come out of the Department of Theatre at UMDCP.
On April 30 and May 1, 2009, the Latin American Studies Center celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a conference addressing key issues in Latin American Studies today in three panels featuring distinguished scholars in the humanities and social sciences. The conference also honored Saul Sosnowski, the Center’s founder and long-time director and included a moving keynote by writer Evelyn Trouillot on Haiti’s forgotten place in the history of human freedom and another by Juan Duchesne-Winter, professor of Latin American literature at the University of Pittsburgh, on vanguards and their contradictions in Latin American arts and politics.

The first panelists addressed the nature of Latin American Studies programs from a historical perspective. Political scientist and director of Latin American Studies at American University, Eric Hershberg discussed the collapse of Latin American Studies as a Cold War project and reflected on changes in area studies after 9/11. He noted a new interest in the cultural context of traditionally defined regions and the move away from rigid regional boundaries to analysis of global processes related to labor and migration and to market development. Katherine Bliss, Deputy Director of the Global Health Policy Center and Senior Fellow in the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, discussed multicultural and global collaboration among universities, policy makers, and NGOs around the strategic issues of water, energy, health, and population. Professors Franklin Knight, Acting Director of Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins University and Eric Hershberg, a former president of the Latin American Studies Association, discussed the history of Latin American Studies in the U.S. prior to the Cold War and stressed that U.S. hegemony, a foundational assumption of Latin American Studies programs, was fast disappearing as countries such as Brazil emerge as world leaders and China and Japan rapidly engage with Latin America.

The second panel addressed Latin America today and its reshaping of Latin American Studies agendas. Martin Hopenhayn, Director of the Social Development Division of the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, presented a panorama based on a multinational study of the challenges facing Latin American youth today as they negotiate contradictions between greater access to education but less access to employment, between greater freedom and less security; between increasing symbolic consumption and declining material consumption. Barbara Weinstein, Professor of History at New York University and former Professor of History at UMDCP, discussed the new interest in transnational history among Latin American historians. While endorsing the trend, she warned that it could diminish our understanding of Latin America in its specific local and national contexts. She also warned that it could turn into a study of “The United States and the World.” Like Hopenhayn, Roman de la Campa, Professor of Latin American, Caribbean, and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, addressed the question of subjectivity formation in the techno-media age and the development of Cultural Studies as a response to change and the collapse of the revolutionary project of the 1960s. He argued that as historians and social scientists abandon studies of class, these remain vibrant in literature, literary criticism, and Cultural Studies.

On Friday afternoon, a roundtable of professors from the University of Maryland College Park discussed the Caribbean region in its relationship to Latin American Studies. Profs. Lynn Bolles of Women’s Studies, Merle Collins of English, Dorith Grant Wisdom from Government and Politics, Juan Quintero Hernandez from Spanish and Portuguese, and David Sartorius from History approached the relationship from their disciplinary perspectives to suggest the discrete richness of each and their interdisciplinary linkages.

The final panel addressed the relationship between the burgeoning field of Latino studies and Latin American Studies. Frances Aparicio, professor and former director of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program at the University of Illinois-Chicago, discussed her new project on “Embodying Latinidad.” She addressed her ethnographies of youth in Chicago as unions and families are forged across national lines among Mexicans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, etc. Linda Martin Alcoff, Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College, addressed anti-Latino racism in the U.S. as similar to but distinct from racism against Muslims and African Americans. She argued for an expanded conception of racism as formed through multiple vectors, including color, other physical features, language, culture of origin, and immigrant status, and posited the need for more complex maps of identity and identity affiliations based on these multiple vectors. Ricardo Ortiz, Assistant Professor in the English Department at Georgetown University, examined the remapping of linguistic and literary fields in the relationship between Latin America and Latino Studies. His exploration of Latino literature demonstrated its rich and in-depth rendering of transnational experiences between Latin America and the U.S.
At ninety, University Professor Emerita Graciela Palau de Nemes, still comes by Jiménez Hall once in a while. Dressed in brightly colored suits and tapping her heels, she stops by to pick up mail, visit with her younger colleagues, or attend special events. Those who know her have come to expect every visit to include a brief and passionate speech about past glories that are better recorded in her memory than at the office of the university archivist. She was there at the beginning, at least, a beginning that concerns us, especially this year as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Latin American Studies Center.

A long-time faculty member of the University of Maryland’s Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Dr. Nemes has been recognized as one of the most prominent critics of the works of the Spanish poet and 1956 Nobel laureate, Juan Ramón Jiménez. Dr. Nemes documented and put forward Jiménez’s nomination with the support of her department, which was known as the Foreign Languages Department at that time. She also arduously translated and edited a three-volume memoir and letters belonging to Zenobia Camprubí, Jiménez’s wife. Her academic contributions include more than one hundred articles, including criticism of poetry and poetics, modernismo, and literature in general. These works have been recognized both nationally and internationally; her prizes range from being the first woman and first Hispanic to receive the President’s Medal at this university (1989) to receiving the Great Cross of Alfonso X, El Sabio in Spain (2006). Dr. Nemes’ legacy as a pioneer Latin Americanist is less well known, however. Thus, we must turn to the anecdotal to find such a beginning.

Dr. Nemes arrived at Maryland as a graduate student and Spanish language instructor in 1946. She rode a bus from Baltimore to confront a classroom full of G.I.s, tall men in military uniforms, who were, in many cases, much older than she was. Her entrance into the classroom was marked by fear and inexperience, but soon turned into an incredibly rewarding life choice. Her illustrious career began to flourish after the publication of her first book in 1957. It was then that Dr. Nemes also began to transform the curriculum by introducing selected Spanish American works into classes that had previously only included literary works from Spain. Soon, she was encouraged to pursue the development of a Latin American literature program, which she almost exclusively taught for an entire decade.

Dr. Biruté Cipliauskaitytė, a colleague and friend who held the John Bascom Professorship of Spanish at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, recounts the impact of Dr. Nemes’ tenure as an invited visiting professor there in the early 60s. She taught an introductory class on Latin American modernist poetry and passed with flying colors the severe judgment of the graduate students accustomed to other curricular choices. Dr. María Salgado, a former student at Maryland and now Professor Emerita at UNC-Chapel Hill, remembers the first graduate seminar she took with Dr. Nemes in 1962: “I enrolled in what was to be my first class in Latin American literature, a class that will never be forgotten by any of those students who ‘endured’ it. Dr. Nemes titled it ‘National Literatures,’ and she intended it to be an in-depth introduction to the most representative works written in Latin America from colonial to contemporary times...This very ambitious project ran into complications when, due to the difficulty of finding many of these books, we were forced into weekly reading pilgrimages to the Library of Congress. The breadth and pace of the course were maddening. To tease Dr. Nemes, we dubbed ourselves ‘the Visine Bunch,’ and made a show of putting drops in our eyes any time she came into sight. I and my classmates, came out of this learning experience stressed out, but armed with a true appreciation of Dr. Nemes’ impressive knowledge and teaching skills, plus a superb background understanding of the foundations of Spanish American literature.”

Dr. Nemes’ traditional Hispanism yielded gradually to a more politically charged Latin Americanism, which was taking root across American institutions from the 1960s onward. By the time Dr. Saúl Sosnowski joined the faculty of the department, and Spanish and Portuguese had become an independent unit, Dr. Nemes had already paved the way for what would become, in subsequent decades, an important literary and interdisciplinary space dedicated to the study of Latin America. The leadership of Dr. Sosnowski was instrumental in attracting students and intellectuals alike, some of the stature of the late Uruguayan critic Angel Rama, Mexican poet laureate José Emilio Pacheco, and Mexican writer and critic Jorge Aguilar Mora, who has a place among the prestigious University Distinguished Scholars-Teachers. In 1989, Dr. Sosnowski founded the center that expanded and complemented a program that his colleagues—including Dr. Nemes—had been building at the departmental level, thus forging a partnership that lasted until 2001 when the department joined the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

As a pioneer and guiding force for the teaching of language and literature at the University of Maryland, Dr. Nemes is a symbol of the extraordinary contributions of Latin American women to the intellectual development of the humanities. She served as a bridge between Spanish and Latin American literatures and cultures. Her dedication fostered the emergence of specific and enduring research agendas that helped shape the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. She belongs to a visionary generation that promoted, advanced, and embodied the early transformation of our fields of study.
Saúl Sosnowski joined the Department of Spanish at the University of Maryland in 1970 when the department’s overwhelming focus was on Spanish rather than Latin American literature. Saúl played a central role in creating greater parity. In 1973, he published Julio Cortazar: Una Busquéda Mitica (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Noe), based on his doctoral dissertation from the University of Virginia. The book analyzed the role of myth as an alternative or complementary form of knowledge to the predominance of reason. In 1986, Prof. Sosnowski published his second book, Borges y La Cabaña: La Búsqueda del Verbo (Buenos Aires: Ediciones HISPAMERICA), a book which in its many editions had very long legs.

As chairperson of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Saúl launched, in March 1981, a series of programs entitled “Latin America in the 1980s.” He did so with the cooperation of the Division of Arts and Humanities, the Office of the Provost, and the Departments of History, Sociology, and Music. The program, which lasted ten days, inundated the University of Maryland campus with the culture, politics, and history of Latin America. Latin American films were shown, Mariachis performed along with a Cuban Rumba Ensemble and a Brazilian Carnival Troupe, and a master class was offered in South American vocal music. Saúl organized panels around key topics in US-Latin American relations: oil, immigration, and policy toward Central America and the Caribbean, to name a few. Participating in panels were such outstanding scholars as Jean Franco, then of Stanford University; Ángel Rama, Uruguayan writer and then a member of UMD’s Spanish and Portuguese Department; Abraham Lowenthal, then Director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center; political scientist David Scott Palmer, then chair of the Latin American Program at the Foreign Service Institute; and Larry Birns, Director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

As he developed the Latin American program at Maryland, Saúl wanted to give voice to Latin American scholars, artists, and cultural actors. In 1972, early in his career at Maryland, he founded the literary journal HISPAMERICA (it removed a “no” from Hispanoamérica). The journal published not only literary criticism, but interviews with writers and new areas of inquiry not yet solidified in the academy. It was one of the first academic journals to publish Chicano works. Through the journal, Saúl made extensive contacts in Latin America and, during a trip to Argentina in 1983, he asked writers, scholars, and artists, “Are you going to be discussing what happened to culture during the dictatorship and the role of culture in the current moment of redemocratization?” He got problematic responses: “We’ve forgotten about it,” “We’re on to other things,” or “Yo con ese tipo no me voy a reunir.”

Saúl believed the question he posed was vital. He invited to Maryland about 20 Argentine writers, historians, and social scientists who crossed a broad political spectrum. He recalls that it was a violent, almost bloody meeting with the participants attacking one another for their different political positions until someone got up and said, “¿Ustedes se olvidaron quien es el enemigo?” Then everyone began to talk. Out of this meeting came a book about what had happened to culture under the dictatorship published by the University of Buenos Aires. It opened up a vital dialogue among public intellectuals, artists, and university researchers in Argentina.

From this first successful attempt to address the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Argentina came several others in the southern cone nations. The concern was not simply with what had happened, but with the possibilities for the democratization of culture after the dictatorships ended. The encounter in Uruguay took place in 1986. This extremely productive meeting was sadly marked by the absence of Angel Rama who had been tragically killed in an airplane accident in 1983. Later meetings were held in Brazil.
in 1988, in Chile in 1991, and in Paraguay in 1994. Each of these resulted in publications in the countries concerned.

While the question of culture and redemocratization remained central, the new Latin American Studies Center branched out in several directions intended to facilitate dialogue and exchange with Latin America through study abroad programs and visiting scholars. The Center ran several NEH seminars in Latin America. The first took place in 1989 in Mexico City and Oaxaca and dealt with the encounters of cultures in the sixteenth century. The distinguished scholar Luis Villoro participated along with many other outstanding people and Saúl will always remember him saying and dreaming of a new Mexico, “Las democracias no tienen centro, en una democracia el centro está en todas partes.” The Center followed with an NEH Summer Institute in Brazil with a similar cultural, historical emphasis. It met in São Paolo, Ouro Prieto and Salvador de Bahia.

To intensify its exchanges and dialogue, the Center applied for and got funding from US Department of Education Title VI, the Tinker Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation Post Doctoral program. The Center received the first such Rockefeller grant in literature and culture.

In 1995, the Center completed the decade long series “Represión y Reconstrucción de La Cultura en Latinoamérica,” a series marked by meetings, publications, and workshops in multiple places in Latin America and in College Park. In that year, the Center organized a meeting of the various participants at the Memorial da América Latina in São Paolo, a building conceptualized as a gathering point for the Americas. Francisco Welfort, Brazilian Minister of Culture in the government of Fernando Enrique Cardoso, indicated his enthusiasm for a project that would be called “Cultura y Democracia en Brasil.” Saúl secured a quarter of a million dollars from the Inter-American Development Bank and the project resulted in meetings, workshops, and three published works on cultural policy, education, and economics. They also focused on the creation of new spaces for cultural participation among the disenfranchised. Consistently centered on Latin America, the effort nonetheless included the adoption of certain North American approaches to philanthropy in favor of artistic and cultural endeavors, and created the language later adopted into law for philanthropic sponsorship in Argentina.

Following the Brazilian project came an invitation from a private foundation in Venezuela and the Vice Minister of Culture to develop a similar initiative in Venezuela to promote the values of “libertad, participación, e igualdad.” The project published ten supplements inserted in newspapers, 240,000 copies, all with the seal of Latin American Studies, University of Maryland College Park.

As one Brazilian colleague told Saúl, “You people have no idea what you did. You created a different type of school of thought for us in Latin America in the way you are articulating the impact of culture and democracy.” Culture is not an electoral process, but it is the base for democracy. Such was the Latin American Studies Center’s signature program: an effort in culture, literature, history and the arts, carried out through Latin American initiative with multinational input and dialogue. The University of Maryland acted as “territorio libre de América.”
Thom Rath, Spring 2010

Thom Rath focuses on post-revolutionary Mexico, nationalism, gender, militarism, and state violence. At Maryland, Rath taught a LASC special topics course on Militarism, Citizenship and Nationhood in Latin America. He did his graduate studies at St. Antony’s College at Oxford; and, he received his PhD in History from Columbia University in 2009. His dissertation examined the relationship between the army and the creation of the Mexican state from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Challenging historians’ emphasis on the state’s successful project of military modernization, Rath argues that post-revolutionary Mexico should be understood as a site of contending military modernities whose complex interaction eventually forged Mexico’s peculiar form of civilian authoritarianism. To this end, his research explores the slow reconstruction of military institutions, practices and ideologies in the wake of the Revolution, and the protest, popular and elite resistance, transnational borrowings, public debate, rhetoric, and humor they generated. Rath’s research offers new perspectives on the role of military violence in provincial politics, the military’s impact on ideas of citizenship and nationhood, and the continuities between contemporary debates about militarization and earlier phases of state formation.

In addition to revising his dissertation for publication, Rath used his time at the University of Maryland to complete two forthcoming book chapters on Mexican state formation and an article on masculinity in the Mexican army. He is also developing a long-term project on the cultural impact of the growing militarization of the Mexican state from the 1960s to the present, focusing on expressions of national identity and historical memory in the public sphere. He has taught courses at Haverford College and Columbia University on the Mexican Revolution, nationalism, imperialism, and militarism in Latin America, and has published his research in the Journal of Latin American Studies.

An Interview with Distinguished Visiting Scholar Daniel Mato, Fall 2010.

By Enrique Salvador Rivera

Daniel Mato is professor of Social Sciences at the Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires. He is also the Chair of the Project on Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Higher Education at the UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO-IESALC).

1. You are working on a research project here at UMDCP. Can you tell us about it?

This project seeks to identify and study collaborative experiences between US researchers/universities and indigenous and/or Afro descendant peoples in Latin America. It focuses on certain kinds of research experiences developed by researchers/universities from the US in Latin America, those in which studying peoples’ knowledge contributes to improving the quality of life of their communities (i.e. through practical applications in initiatives in education, health, environment management, rights, economically productive activities, etc.), and/or including those peoples’ knowledge as a significant subject for students’ learning in US universities. This project focusing on the experiences of US universities is the first step of a more ambitious project aimed to complement the larger study that I carried out and coordinated for UNESCO-IESALC.
2. Can you explain this UNESCO study? What is your role in it?

Since 2007, I have carried out and coordinated the Project on Higher Education, Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Latin America for the UNESCO International Institute on Higher Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO-IESALC). This project has involved the collaboration of 56 colleagues in 11 Latin American countries. This Project aims at documenting and analyzing the experiences of higher education institutions (HEI) that serve the needs, demands and goals for higher education of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. We have up to now published three books presenting the results of our work: *Diversidad Cultural e Interculturalidad en Educación Superior. Experiencias en América Latina* (2008), *Instituciones Interculturales de Educación Superior en América Latina. Procesos de construcción, logros, innovaciones y desafíos* (2009), and *Educación Superior, Colaboración Intercultural y Desarrollo Sostenible/Buen Vivir. Experiencias en América Latina* (2010). These three books have appeared in print, but are also available on the UNESCO-IESALC website. In 2009, we held a regional workshop in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. There, over 50 participants resolved to create the “Foro para la Promoción de la Diversidad Cultural y la Interculturalidad con Equidad en Educación Superior en América Latina.”

3. What is interculturality?

The term *interculturality* can be used to describe certain kinds of social experiences characterized by the dynamics of relations between human groups that see each other as culturally diverse. The course I am currently teaching at UMDCP focuses on the study of relations, conflicts, and negotiations across “cultural differences” in Latin America. It builds upon a study of these relations drawn from various fields of social experience (i.e., education, health, development, tourism, museums), as well as the analysis of key concepts (transculturation, heterogeneity, and hybridity) made by Latin American scholars (Fernando Ortiz, Angel Rama, Antonio Cornejo Polar, and Néstor García Canclini). The seminar discusses the fruitfulness of developing specific intercultural analytical perspectives tailored to the study of particular cases. In the US, the idea of interculturality has often been obscured by that of multiculturalism, and it has usually had a limited field of application. Meanwhile, in Latin America the idea of interculturalism has often been taken as the equivalent of interculturality, which has been assumed as inherently positive by some agents and as inherently negative by some others. Besides these differences, in both cases, the idea of intercultural*ity* is used almost exclusively in reference to ethnic/"racial", religious, or language issues. The seminar takes up the development of intercultural analytical perspectives applicable not only to such cases but also to those in which “cultural differences” (however socially produced, thought, felt, perceived, realized by involved social agents) are associated with professional, institutional, corporate, gender, generational, socio-economic, local (not necessarily “ethnic”), political, and other factors.

4. Would you say your work is interdisciplinary?

I think the expression “interdisciplinary” describes research strategies in which specialists from diverse disciplines work in collaboration, around certain issue/s, each does from her/his disciplinary theoretical and methodological tradition. Therefore, I would rather say that my work is transdisciplinary, because my research questions cut across established disciplinary borders and deploy theories and methods from various disciplines, mainly anthropology, sociology, economics, communications, and international relations. I borrow from diverse disciplines transgressing their stable borders in integrative and synthetic ways.
On March 25 and 26, the Latin American Studies Center sponsored a conference of UMD, area, and international Latinamericanist graduate students. The Fifth Annual LASC Graduate Student Conference on Latin America and the Caribbean took place in UMD’s new journalism building, Knight Hall. In spite of a torrential rainstorm, the event was a resounding success. Approximately sixty people attended the conference. They presented papers and discussed issues in an interdisciplinary setting.

Twenty six graduate students presented papers on a host of topics and eight UMD professors provided insightful comments on those papers. The conference was organized into eight panels that included the following themes: international policy and non-government organizations, modernization, agriculture and food, race and the indigenous, literature, transnational identities, and labor and the economy. Graduate students from UMD and other institutions participated on the panels—some panelists came from places as far away as Germany and the United Kingdom to present their work.

Because the conference was interdisciplinary in nature, the topics of discussion were quite diverse. The conference served as an opportunity for graduate students from a variety of fields to exchange ideas and questions about Latin America, both past and present. For example, panels discussed how Latin American governments’ policies affect the region, what the current economic recession means for Latin America, and how issues of immigration and remittances are changing as a result of the worldwide crisis. In addition, the role of government corruption in Latin America, the Caribbean, the US, and elsewhere, was a topic of discussion in several of the panels.

Many of the papers that were presented also investigated the tensions created by “modernity” in Latin America. For instance, one paper examined the difficulties that Puerto Rican writers in the U.S. face as they try to abandon nationalist approaches to literature. Brian McCann, Associate Professor of Latin American History at Georgetown University, gave the keynote speech entitled “City of Enduring Exceptions: Urban Landholding and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro.” This speech tackled questions of how Brazilian favela-dwellers historically adapted to modern changes such as the rise of centralized states and the development of the drug trade. It provided a historical context for Rio’s favelas, from the 1930s to today. McCann’s research investigates the historical relationships between informal neighborhoods, local governments, residents, and criminal networks within the favela.

Many of the papers that were presented also investigated the themes of class. For instance, one presenter discussed the harms on Brazilian agricultural laborers perpetrated by well-meaning Brazilian federal and state policymakers who banned contract “jobbers,” thus forcing them underground. Another presenter mapped the networks that poor Brazilian youth use to cope with poverty—thus literally mapping out the geographies of survival. Another paper debunked the myth of contract labor in Chile’s late nineteenth and early twentieth century wine industry by demonstrating that the initial stages of immigration were more fluid and less exploitative of workers than previously thought.

Conference participants share their research on Latin American literature
Courses on Latin America and the Caribbean
Spring 2011

LASC Courses:

Issues in Latin American Studies II (LASC235 and 235H) (cross-listed with SPAN/PORT 235)
Dr. Ivette Rodriguez-Santana
Tuesday and Thursday | 11:00am- 12:15pm
Dr. Talia Guzmán-González
Tuesday and Thursday | 2:00pm- 3:15pm
This course covers major issues shaping Latin American and Caribbean societies, including the changing constructions of race, ethnicity, gender, and class, as well as expressions of popular cultures and revolutionary practices.

Special Topics in Latin American Studies: Latin American Thought and Philosophy (LASC448I)
Dr. James Maffie
Tuesday and Thursday | 12:30pm- 1:45pm
This course adopts an inter-disciplinary approach to contemporary Latin American thought. It focuses on issues of identity, knowledge, justice, and self-determination from the perspective of feminism, post-occidentalism, post-colonialism, liberation theology, liberation philosophy, sub-altern studies, and indigenous resistance. Readings include elite and non-elite sources.

Senior Capstone Course in Latin American Studies: Conservation and Indigenous People in Latin America (LASC458L)(cross-listed with ANTH468L and ANTH688L)
Dr. Janet Chernela
Monday | 2:00pm- 4:45pm

Elective Courses:

ARTH250 Art and Archaeology of Ancient America
ARTH370 Latin American Art and Archaeology before 1500
ARTH389M Special Topics in Art History and Archaeology: Latin American and Latino Art since 1945
AASP498D Special Topics in Black Culture: Women of the African Diaspora
ARTH488C Colloquium in Art History: Abstraction and Utopia in Modern Latin American Art
CMLT277 Literatures of the Americas
ENGL362 Caribbean Literature in English
GEOG498M Topical Investigations: Migration: Latin America and the United States
GVPT482 Government and Politics of Latin America
HIST251 Latin American History II
HIST471 History of Brazil
PORT224 Brazilian Culture
PORT230 Brazilian Portuguese Film
SPAN362 Latin American Literatures and Cultures II: From Independence to Nation Formation
SPAN363 Latin American Literatures and Cultures III: From Modernism to Neo-Liberalism
SPAN408I Great Themes of the Hispanic Literatures: Love, Science, Religion and the Pursuit of Criollo Independence in 18th-Century Mexico
USLT202 US Latina/o Studies II: A Contemporary Overview 1960’s to present
WMST448A Literature by Women of Color: Caribbean Women Writers

Graduate Courses:

GEOG788M Selected Topics in Geography: Migration: Latin America and the United States
HIST679 Readings in the History of American Foreign Policy
SPAN798M Open Seminar: Texts in Transit: Transnational Latina/o Literatures
SPAN798O Open Seminar: Writing H(er) Stories: Murder, Madness, and the Texts of Transgression by Women Writers of the Caribbean
Tiara Darnell  
Costa Rica, Fall of 2009

“So, how was Costa Rica?” This is the question Tiara Darnell receives regularly now that she’s returned from a semester abroad. Well, Tiara lived in Heredia, and one of her fondest memories is of her abuelita Tica making her fresh orange juice and jam from the fruit trees in their front yard every morning. Tiara walked over a mile to school everyday just to see the sun come up over the mountains and enjoyed sitting in the peaceful central park before it filled with people and pigeons.

Tiara studied at the National University of Costa Rica and remembers the day that Costa Ricans elected their first female president. Tiara even climbed an active volcano and watched the famous religious processions during Semana Santa in Guatemala, and danced the night away deep in the mountains of Rincón de la Vieja after a long road trip through southern Nicaragua.

Tiara says that this experience adds an extra dimension to her Certificate in Latin American Studies that she could never have gained by just taking classes on campus at Maryland. This was the best experience of her undergraduate career. Tiara would like to thank LASC and Costa Rica for providing her with such memorable experiences. ¡Pura vida!

Andrea Ochoa  
Buenos Aires, Fall of 2009

When she arrived in Buenos Aires, Andrea felt a mix of familiarity and uncertainty. Though she grew up in Colombia and found many of the sights and sounds of Argentina to be similar to those in her home country, many things about the country were new to her.

Over the course of the semester, Andrea had the opportunity to explore much of the vast country. She visited Ushuaia—the southernmost city in the world—where she saw glaciers, sea lions, whales, and penguins. She also visited the region of Mendoza, which is famous for its fine wines, and the majestic Valle de la Luna in the Ischigualasto Natural Park. As she visited small towns and major cities, Andrea was impressed with Argentina’s rich culture and great diversity.

In addition to studying and travelling in Argentina, Andrea also worked with an organization called Mujeres 2000. Andrea was able to learn a great deal about microenterprise at the organization, which loans money to low-income women so that they can start businesses or engage in other entrepreneurial activities.

Currently, Andrea is an intern at the Center for Justice and International Law. After graduation, she plans to stay in the area and continue working. She hopes to enroll in law school in the near future and plans to specialize in immigration law.
SEPTEMBER

23-25
“Creating an Archetype: The Influence of the Mexican Revolution in the US”
National Museum of American History, Carmichael Auditorium

29
3-4:30 pm
By: Cristina Wolff Francis Scott Key 2120.

OCTOBER

15
8:30 am-1 pm
Graduate Student Summer Grant Recipients Conference. (GS Grant Recipients)
Francis Scott Key 2110

NOVEMBER

3
5:30-7:30 pm
Undergraduate Reception/Open House
Taliaferro 3107

9 am-4 pm
Knowledge and Interculturality
Multi-Purpose Room, St. Mary’s Hall

9
7 pm-8:30 pm
“Affirmative Action and Racial Inequalities in the Lula Era”
By: Dr. Livio Sansone, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the International Program at the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador, Brazil.
Francis Scott Key 2120

DECEMBER

7
5:30 pm- 7:30 pm
“Policies, citizenship and LGBT movement in Brazil”
By: Dr. Fernando Texeira Filho
Francis Scott Key 2120

APRIL 2011

13-15
The Aesthetics of Revolt: Latin America in the 1960s
TBA
Featuring talks by over 20 scholars from throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America.
LASC provides a variety of courses on issues relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean in both English and Spanish, facilitates research on a diverse range of topics pertaining to the region, conducts outreach programs to US Latino/a communities, and holds several national and international conferences and symposia each year.

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